

KIRKLEES HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD	
MEETING DATE:	29TH June 2017
TITLE OF PAPER:	Children's Improvement Programme
1. Purpose of paper	<p>To bring in view the Children's Improvement Programme work to members of the Kirklees Health and Wellbeing Board and to ensure that priority activity is understood along with the key timescales.</p>
2. Background	<p>The Secretary of State has appointed a Commissioner, Eleanor Brazil to work with the Council until the end of September 2017. Following this she will make a recommendation to the Minister about the future of Children's Services in Kirklees.</p> <p>There has been a delay in submission of report to the Minister due to the announcement of the General Election. Once considered, the Minister will respond to recommendations and issue a letter to the Council's Leader; in the meantime, Eleanor will continue as Commissioner until September.</p> <p>On the 9th May Eleanor presented to the first of two staff briefings giving an overview of the commissioner's work to date and highlighting some of the key areas for improvement identified in her report.</p>
3. Leeds City Council	<p>Building on the informal partnership with Leeds City Council, we have been in regular contact with the Director of Children's Services (DCS) from Leeds to further strengthen our working relationship and to discuss our approach to the improvement work.</p> <p>Leeds supported the Council with various aspects of the improvement work particularly around the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The Improvement Director and Service Director have met with the DCS, Deputy Director and Head of Service for Leeds Front Door on 5th May to initially scope the type of options of support available from Leeds in the immediate, medium and longer term. Some of the options included peer coaching, mentoring, business operating processes, training and development and deployment of operational staff at both manager and practitioner level. The meeting proved to be very positive and paved the way for some very strong partnership in practice developments.</p>
4. Partner engagement session took place on 8th May	<p>This session was to look at partner priorities in Improvement Plan. The event was well attended by the partnership and looked at;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the gaps from each agency perspective • Identifying the priorities to achieve better outcomes for children • Deciding how the work will be co-ordinated and what the governance arrangements could be • Clarifying the process to monitor outcomes and success

4. Feedback from Ofsted Monitoring Visit

Ofsted conducted the first of four monitoring visits on 13th and 14th March. The findings and outcome letter are unpublished for this first visit and are therefore confidential. The monitoring visit concentrated on the following:

- Effectiveness of contact referral and assessment
- Response to Domestic Abuse referrals
- Response to Child Protection referrals
- Quality of assessments
- Management oversight of the above areas.

The aim of the monitoring visit was to look at the effectiveness of the front door services and the Assessment and Intervention services.

Feedback included:

- **Ofsted finding: Whilst there is very strong strategic partnership working, this is not yet visible at operational level**
Action: We will continue to work closely with partners to improve those operational relationships. This is essential, as effective partnership working makes a real difference to the lives and experiences of children and their families)
- **Ofsted finding: There is a need for continued and robust improvements in the assessment and decision-making process, in order that we manage risks and ensure each child is receiving the right service, at the right time avoiding drift and delay.**
Action: We will continue to look at ways of reducing pressures on the A&I Service so that children's needs are better understood, assessments and management oversight is of greater quality, and risk reduction strategies are effectively in place)
- **Ofsted finding: There was some concern about the voice of the child and the importance of children being seen alone**
Action: We recognise the absolute importance of listening to, and hearing the child in every situation)
- **Ofsted comment: There is still some concern regarding lack of management oversight and decision making, although they acknowledge that we have some good managers working for us**
- **Ofsted comment: They reiterated the importance of ensuring that we are in full control of our performance data** (Merlin Joseph, our Improvement Director will be leading on this area)

4. Ofsted Monitoring Visit 27th/28th June 2017

On the 27th and 28th of June HMI inspectors will be conducting the second of Kirklees' quarterly monitoring visits. This second visit is different in its focus from the first and different also in that the report will be published, unlike the March visit.

The scope of this monitoring visit has been agreed as follows:

- Ofsted Recommendation 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
- Ofsted Recommendation 17: Develop edge of care services and ensure that timely support is available in a crisis.
- Ofsted Recommendation 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.

5. Sign off

Gill Ellis, Director for Children's Services

6. Next Steps

Eleanor Brazil, the Commissioner, has completed her report regarding children's social care services in Kirklees and has made recommendations on how best to ensure a rapid and long-term improvement in services. Her report is now with the Department for Education and it was intended to be considered by ministers this month. However, the General Election has meant that this has been deferred. The report will not be published until after it has been considered by the incoming Minister.

In the interim, and with the support of Eleanor Brazil, who will continue as Commissioner, work continues to bring about improvements to children's services. As part of this the Council has begun to establish working arrangements with Leeds City Council, which it is hoped will bring considerable expertise and experience to Kirklees to add momentum to the improvement process.

Leeds is a recognised 'Partner in Practice', the DCS for Leeds has experience in leading improvement in other local authorities, and will work closely in the meantime to help support Kirklees Council improve outcomes for children as quickly as possible.

7. Recommendations

Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board are asked to note the importance of strengthening partnership work to support the improvement journey through, for example;

- stronger buy in at the operational level in MASH
- attendance at strategy meetings
- attendance at core groups and Child Protection conferences.

8. Contact Officers

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