

Children and Young People's Scrutiny and Performance Panel

20 August 2013

Progress Update on Implementing the Recommendations of the Safeguarding Working Group

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr R Andrew – Portfolio Holder for Children's Services

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide the Children and Young People's Scrutiny and Performance Panel with an update on the implementation of the recommendations of the Safeguarding Working Group.

At its meeting in February 2013 the Children and Young People's Scrutiny and Performance Panel (C&YPSPP) established a Safeguarding Working Group to provide an enhanced focus on safeguarding issues in support of delivering the priorities set out in the Walsall Strategic Improvement Plan for Safeguarding. The first meeting of the Working Group took place in March 2013. The agreed objectives of the Working Group were for Members to contribute to, challenge, influence and seek assurances on the improvement process.

In May 2013 the Working Group published its report and the Scrutiny Panel agreed 14 recommendations. These formed the basis of an action plan. A copy of the Action Plan is attached (**Appendix 1**) with an additional column summarising progress to date in implementing the recommendations.

Recommendations

1. To note progress to date and to endorse proposed management action.

Background papers

'Safeguarding in Walsall' – Report of the Safeguarding Working Group – May 2013

Walsall Strategic Improvement Plan for Safeguarding – Updated August 2013

Resource and legal considerations

The recommendations of the Safeguarding Working Group provide an important detailed focus in direct support of the wider Strategic Improvement Plan for Safeguarding. The strategic and operational improvement plans are underpinned by resources, with the expectation that the Council and partner agencies will continue to contribute to ensure that resources across the partnership are prioritised to improvement needs.

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families has exercised his power to issue an Improvement Notice that contains a concise range of outcome driven targets to address the issues raised in the previous Ofsted inspection. If the Council and partners fail to comply with the Improvement Notice by the assessment dates, then the Secretary of State for Education can use statutory powers of intervention (s497A Education Act 1996) to direct the Council to enter into appropriate arrangements to secure the necessary and rapid improvements required in children's services.

Citizen impact

Improving Children's Services will ensure the partnership works '*better together*' for children in Walsall so that they are safe, happy, healthy and with a bright future.

Performance and risk management issues

Failure to adequately deliver the requirements of the Improvement Notice risks the safety and protection of children and young people. Delivery of the objectives in the Improvement Plan, including those recommendations arising from the Safeguarding Working Group will be risk assessed and mitigated as appropriate.

The Improvement Board monitor progress and impact on a monthly basis. This is in addition to developing service and partnership wide performance management and quality assurance arrangements. The Department for Education (DfE) will also assess and evaluate progress and impact on a 6 monthly basis. This will include written reports from the independent chair of the Improvement Board as well as other supporting evidence, including external review and inspection.

Equality Implications

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out? No

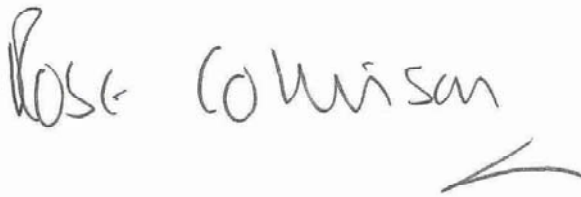
Consultation

There is on-going engagement with partners at a strategic level at the Improvement Board. One aspect of improvement is to ensure that other key partnership boards e.g. the Walsall Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB), the Children and Young People's Partnership Board (C&YPPB) and the Health and Wellbeing Board are


productive, mutually challenging and impact positively on better outcomes for children. At an operational level, a multi-agency group, chaired by the Assistant Director Specialist Services, representing all key partners, is championing the implementation of the delivery plans which underpin improvements.

Staff and partner briefings are now in place on a 6 weekly basis to ensure key messages are communicated and to provide regular opportunities to capture feedback and learning from those delivering the services. Regular visits to teams and services provide additional opportunities for feedback and feed-forward as do email updates.

Contact Officer:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rose Collinson". The signature is written in a cursive style. Below the signature is a horizontal line that tapers at both ends, resembling a stylized underline or a flourish.

Rose Collinson – interim Director, Children’s Services

 01922 652081

 collinsonr@walsall.gov.uk

Safeguarding Working Group - Actions

| Action | Officer(s) | Report deadline | Scrutiny Panel (6.00 p.m) | Update August 2013 |
|--|---|---|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. That updates on the move to single assessment be reported to the Children & Young Peoples Scrutiny and Performance Panel in the 2013/14 municipal year; | Rose Collinson/ Sue Butcher | Updates included as part of improvement report. | Each meeting | Information being sought from neighbouring and pilot authorities on learning from early implementation of a single assessment framework. Once designed and agreed then Workforce Development & WSCB training resources will be deployed on a staff development programme to support implementation of new assessment arrangements. |
| 2. That detailed analysis be undertaken in relation to the amount of hours lost by Social Workers following the implementation of the new flexi system and reported to the Children's and Young People's Scrutiny and Performance Panel within three months; | Steve McGowan/ Rose Collinson/ Sue Butcher/ | 9 th August, 2013 | 20 th August, 2013 | A report was presented to CMT on 13 th June. This report clarified the position regarding Flexi time and Time off in Lieu (TOIL). Following this report, both Children's Services and Social Care and Inclusion were satisfied they had the necessary flexibility for social workers. |
| 3. That the Head of Human Resources reconsiders the use of the flexi system for social workers providing a report detailing alternative models which better meet the needs of the service to the Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel within three months; | Steve McGowan | 9 th August, 2013 | 20 th August, 2013 | A report was presented to CMT on 13 th June. This report clarified the position regarding Flexi time and Time off in Lieu (TOIL). Following this report, both Children's Services and Social Care and Inclusion were satisfied they had the necessary flexibility for social workers. |

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|---|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| <p>4. In relation to the PARIS System:-</p> <p>a) An in depth investigation be undertaken in consultation with all levels of staff within social services to understand the limitations and potential areas for improvement of the PARIS system, together with costs for implementation of any improvements within two months;</p> <p>b) That an options appraisal be produced and submitted for consideration by the Children's and Young Peoples Scrutiny and Performance Panel to include introducing an alternative system once the investigation above has been completed;</p> | <p>Rose Collinson/ Sue Butcher/ Paul Gordon/ Suzanne Joiner</p> <p>Rose Collinson/ Sue Butcher/ Paul Gordon/ Suzanne Joyner</p> | <p>8th July, 2013</p> | <p>17th July, 2013</p> | <p>Some market testing of alternative options has been completed. Strategic options appraisal scheduled to be presented to Directors of both Children's and Adult' Services w/c 2nd Sept. This will critically inform proposals on next steps to be presented to Scrutiny in Autumn of 2013.</p> |
| <p>5. That the workload weighting tool be revisited to ensure that it is fit for purpose within two months;</p> | <p>Sue Butcher</p> | <p>8th July, 2013</p> | <p>17th July, 2013</p> | <p>The tool was launched in July 2013 and is being actively used in the CWDT.</p> <p>Full implementation is scheduled across Safeguarding, LAC & CWD teams from Sept 2013.</p> <p>Quarterly reporting on implementation & findings to WSCB & Improvement Board from Oct 2013.</p> |

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| <p>6. That the Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel receives regular updates on caseloads to enable them to monitor levels and assess the impact of the screening team in assisting teams to reduce the backlog.</p> | <p>Rose Collinson/ Sue Butcher</p> | <p>Updates included as part of improvement report.</p> | <p>Each meeting</p> | <p>Caseload details have been provided for August Improvement Board (see Appendix A) The table shows the average caseload per social worker and senior practitioner for social care teams in June. This data is sourced from team managers based on total cases open to each team divided by the number of workers. The table also includes data on numbers of workers, vacancies and agency staff. The highest caseload numbers are in the Vulnerable Children's Service (average of 27.2) which is accountable for the majority of referrals and assessments. In particular, the caseload numbers for IRS are particularly high and average 35.9 for 3 teams.</p> |
| <p>7. That serious consideration be given to the relocation of social work teams as many buildings are not fit for purpose;</p> | <p>Mark Basset</p> | <p>-</p> | <p>-</p> | <p>Refer to update on points 7 & 8 below.</p> |
| <p>8. That the Smarter Workplaces Programme Manager be requested to provide the short, medium and long term vision for social services to the Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel within three months;</p> | <p>Mark Basset</p> | <p>9th August, 2013</p> | <p>20th August, 2013</p> | <p>Property, accommodation and facilities for supporting delivery in Children's Services is under review. Property Services are working closely with other support services to identify areas of improvement to help teams work more effectively. Many of the buildings currently in use by teams have already been identified as no longer fit for purpose, requiring alternative accommodation to be found.</p> <p>Understanding service needs and the related requirements for property, accommodation and facilities is reviewed at the Directorate Capital and Asset Group meetings monthly and considered as part of the overall corporate governance for property. Priority areas will be acted on before an understanding of the complete property and accommodation solutions for Children's Services is known (which may be over an extended period reaching into 2014).</p> |

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| <p>9. That the Family Room at The Quest be completely refurbished in order to make it more child friendly and welcoming thereby creating a good impression of Walsall Council at 'the front door';</p> | <p>Rose Collinson/ Sue Butcher</p> | <p>8th July, 2013</p> | <p>17th July, 2013</p> | <p>The refurbishment of the family room within the Quest was cancelled as IRS was scheduled to move from the Quest and therefore this would not be required. The current plan is for IRS to remain in the short term at the Quest and work is scheduled during August 2013 to make the necessary adaptations. On completion of this work, the refurbishment of the family room will be scheduled.</p> |
| <p>10. That the Interim Executive Director (Children's Services) and Interim Assistant Director (Specialist Services) undertake to establish a social work community to develop understanding and communication between teams and services with a view to improving understanding around thresholds and reducing tension at transfer points;</p> | <p>Rose Collinson/ Sue Butcher</p> | <p>Updates included as part of Imp & Perf report.</p> | <p>Each meeting</p> | <p>200 frontline staff from across Children's Services, Health, Police and independent organisations attended multi-agency Practice Improvement workshops run by independent facilitators during May and June 2013. Further to this, work is being completed on a refreshed thresholds policy for sign off by WSCB and Improvement Board in September. This will be supported by a training and staff development programme focused on joint working, practical application of thresholds and the continuum from early help through to statutory intervention.</p> |
| <p>11. That further work be undertaken to better understand why agency workers within Walsall are reluctant to take up permanent positions with a view to ensuring that Walsall's offer is as good as it can be within the parameters of local pay and conditions;</p> | <p>Rose Collinson/ Sue Butcher</p> | <p>Updates included as part of Imp & Perf report.</p> | <p>Each meeting</p> | <p>Full report on progress in delivering the Social Care Workforce Development Strategy to IB scheduled for Sept 2013. Following a high response rate to a recruitment drive for 15 social worker posts, 14 firm offers have been made and accepted.</p> |

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| <p>12. That all social workers be issued with laptops to enable them to work more flexibly as this prevents time waste travelling to and from the office;</p> | <p>Martin Sadler</p> | <p>8th July, 2013</p> | <p>17th July, 2013</p> | <p>ICT have to date issued 197 laptops to Children's Services since June 2012.</p> <p>These have been issued to Heads of Service, Operational Managers and Social Workers to allow flexible working. A small number of these laptops have been issued to other staff in Children's Services to aid the improvement journey for the directorate.</p> |
| <p>13. That care be taken given the implementation of the screening team to ensure that key relationships such as that between schools and the disability team are not lost;</p> | <p>Rose Collinson/ Sue Butcher</p> | <p>8th July, 2013</p> | <p>17th July, 2013</p> | <p>All referrals for CSC, Early Help and CwD now come through the MAST. Integrated within the team are representatives from both Health and Education and there are regular meetings scheduled to ensure that there effective working arrangements. There is a clear eligibility criteria now for CwD and there are regular discussion with the team as to the service area that can best meet the child's needs.</p> |
| <p>14. That the One Off Direct Payment Scheme be revisited to ensure that it is best administered within the Children with Disabilities Team or whether alternative resources, such as The Welfare Rights Team, are best placed to deliver.</p> | <p>Rose Collinson/ Sue Butcher/ Karl Dipple/ Bernard Cyeswski (welfare rights)</p> | <p>8th July, 2013</p> | <p>17th July, 2013</p> | <p>This piece of work is scheduled for commencement w/c 2nd September 2013.</p> |

APPENDIX A: Specialist Services Caseload Summary June 2013

| Service | Service Area | Team | SW Positions Occupied (FTE) | SP Positions Occupied (FTE) | Vacancies (SW/SP) | Agency Staff Nos. | Avg Caseloads |
|--|-----------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Corporate Parenting | Family Placement | Adoption | 6 (6) | 3(3) | (1/0) | 2 | 15 |
| | | Family & Friends | 6(5.5) | 3 (3) | (0/0) | 0 | 22.7 |
| | | Recruitment | 3(2.5) | 1(0.5) | (0/0) | 0 | |
| | | Support | 5(4.5) | 1(1) | (2/0) | 1 | 22.3 |
| | Disabilities | CWDT | 3(3.0) | 1(1.0) | (1/0) | 6 | 23.9 |
| | | CP Total | 23 (21.5) | 9(8.5) | (4/0) | 9 | |
| LAC & TLC | LAC | Team 1 | 4(4.0) | 2(2.0) | (1/0) | 1 | 19 |
| | | Team 2 | 6(6.0) | 2(0.99) | (0/0) | 0 | 19 |
| | | Team 3 | 4(4.0) | 1(1.0) | (0/0) | 0 | 18 |
| | TLC | TLC | 1(1.0) | 1(1.0) | (2/0) | 5 | 15 |
| | | LAC/TLC Total | 15 (15.0) | 6(4.99) | (3/0) | 10 | 18 |
| Vulnerable Children | Initial Response Service | Team 1 | 3 (3.0) | 1(1.0) | (3/1) | | 30.3 |
| | | Team 2 | 3 (3.0) | 1 (1.0) | (2/0) | | 43.3 |
| | | Team 3 | 6(6.0) | 1 (1.0) | (1/0) | | 34.0 |
| | | IRS total | 12 (12.0) | 3 (3.0) | (9/2) | 21 | 35.9 |
| | Safeguarding Family Support | SFS 1 | 6 (6.0) | 2(2.0) | (1/0) | | 25 |
| | | SFS2 | 6(5.81) | 1(0.81) | (0/1) | | 22.4 |
| | | SFS3 | 5 (4.50) | 2(1.92) | (1/0) | | 21.5 |
| | | SFS4 | 5(4.81) | 2(2.00) | (1/0) | | 20.3 |
| | | SFS5 | 5(5.0) | 2(2.0) | (1/0) | | 22.0 |
| | | SFS6 | 3(2.81) | 2(2.0) | (3/0) | | 25.0 |
| | | SFS Total | 30(29.83) | 11(10.73) | (7/1) | 24 | 22.8 |
| | | VCS Total | 42(40.93) | 14(13.73) | (16/3) | 45 | 27.2 |
| Children's Specialist Services (SW/SP) | | Total | 80(77.43) | 29(27.22) | (23/3) | 64 | |