



---

### **Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)**

---

**Time and Date**

3.30 pm on Thursday, 16th June, 2016

**Place**

Committee Rooms 2 and 3 - Council House

---

**Public Business**

1. **Apologies and Substitutions**
2. **Declarations of Interests**
3. **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 10)
  - a) To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2016
  - b) Matters Arising
4. **Improvement Board Progress Review from 11th May, 2016** (Pages 11 - 20)

Briefing Note of the Executive Director for People
5. **Establish a Task and Finish Group to Consider the Recruitment and Retention of Social Work Staff** (Pages 21 - 22)

Report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator
6. **Draft Work Programme** (Pages 23 - 28)

Briefing Note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator (attached)
7. **Any Other Business**

Any other items of business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.
8. **Meeting Evaluation**

To discuss and evaluate the effectiveness of the meeting.

**Private Business**

Nil

---

Chris West, Executive Director, Resources, Council House Coventry

Wednesday, 8 June 2016

Notes: 1) The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Michelle Rose, Governance Services, Council House, Coventry, telephone 7683 3111, alternatively information about this meeting can be obtained from the following web link: <http://moderngov.coventry.gov.uk>

2) Council Members who are not able to attend the meeting should notify Michelle Rose as soon as possible and no later than 1.00 p.m. on 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2016 giving their reasons for absence and the name of the Council Member (if any) who will be attending the meeting as their substitute.

3) Scrutiny Board Members who have an interest in any report to this meeting, but who are not Members of this Scrutiny Board, have been invited to notify the Chair by 12 noon on the day before the meeting that they wish to speak on a particular item. The Member must indicate to the Chair their reason for wishing to speak and the issue(s) they wish to raise.

Membership: Councillors N Akhtar, S Bains, D Gannon, S Hanson (Co-opted Member), K Jones (Co-opted Member), D Kershaw, M Lapsa, A Lucas, P Male, K Maton (By Invitation), C Miks, M Mutton (Chair), R Potter (Co-opted Member), E Ruane (By Invitation) and P Seaman (By Invitation)

Please note: a hearing loop is available in the committee rooms

If you require a British Sign Language interpreter for this meeting OR if you would like this information in another format or language please contact us.

**Lara Knight/Michelle Rose**

**Telephone: (024) 7683 3237/3111**

**e-mail: [lara.knight@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:lara.knight@coventry.gov.uk) [michelle.rose@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:michelle.rose@coventry.gov.uk)**

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)**  
**held at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 14 April 2016**

Present:

Members: Councillor M Mutton (Chair)  
Councillor S Bains  
Councillor L Bigham  
Councillor D Kershaw  
Councillor J Lepoidevin  
Councillor C Miks  
Councillor H Noonan  
Councillor E Ruane  
Councillor P Seaman  
Councillor S Thomas

Co-Opted Members: Mrs S Hanson

Cabinet Members and  
Deputy Cabinet Members: Councillor D Kershaw  
Councillor E Ruane  
Councillor S Thomas

Employees (by Directorate):

J Gregg, People Directorate  
G Holmes, Resources Directorate  
G Lewis, Chief Executive's Directorate  
M Rose, Resources Directorate  
Walker, People Directorate  
S Watson, People Directorate

Apologies: Councillor N Akhtar and J O'Boyle  
K Jones and R Potter

## **Public Business**

### **69. Declarations of Interests**

There were no discloseable pecuniary interest.

### **70. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2016 were approved.

Further to Minute 51/15 'Selection, Nomination and Removal of Local Authority Governors' Members noted that they would receive further information about governor appointments following the election.

Further to Minute 63/15 'Serious Case Review – Child C' Members had received information requested about the Serious Case Review.

## 71. **Serious Case Review - Child E**

The Scrutiny Board considered a briefing note of the Serious Case Review Co-ordinator for Adult and Children Safeguarding Boards, which detailed the outcome of the Serious Case Review (SCR) relating to Child E, which was appended to the briefing note. A SCR was undertaken when the abuse or neglect of a child was known or suspected and the child had died. The briefing note highlighted that the primary aim of a SCR was to help agencies learn lessons from these events, and to use this experience to improve practice.

Each agency may make recommendations to support improvements in practice within their organization. The on-going implementation and monitoring of these actions was the responsibility of the individual agency. Evidence of progress was regularly provided for the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB). This process enabled the LSCB to fulfill its responsibility for monitoring progress, and to be assured that the recommendations had been delivered in practice. Recommendations that were multi-agency were the responsibility of the LSCB, and an action plan to address these recommendations was currently being progressed.

Following the death of Child E in May, 2014 the Independent Chair of LSCB at that time agreed this case should be the subject of a Serious Case Review in July, 2014. Child E was a five-month old baby who died after he was found unconscious in a bed co-sleeping with adults following a party at his family home. At the time of his death there were indications of drug use, cannabis cultivation in the property, poor home conditions, possible neglect and domestic violence in connection with the family. The family were not open to specialist services at the time of Child E's death and there had not been significant concerns identified prior to his death. There was therefore concern as to whether previous contacts had correctly identified, assessed and acted on any risks, or offered support to the family, to mitigate the issues that became apparent at death.

The SCR report detailed the independence of the review, the family, circumstances surrounding the death and issues for consideration which included:

- The context for family support and child care in the wider family circle – How were the children supervised and their safety ensured?
- Home conditions in which the children were living – did these raise concerns for their welfare and safety?
- Opportunities to observe and assess the levels of care and support and possible risks of neglect, through contact with the family and particularly home visits
- Why the family did not access greater early help and support from children's centres and pre-school settings?
- What was known about any episodes of domestic violence, substance misuse or criminal activity that might have indicated safeguarding risks for the children?
- Were there aspects of the medical and home care required by Child E's sister for her health condition that may have affected the care provided to other children?
- What aspects of previous contact with members of this family might have indicated any needs for the children?

- Were there opportunities for the concerns that have led to the subsequent creation of child protection plans to be identified or shared between agencies at an earlier stage?

The recommendations were that the Coventry LSCB should:

1. Seek assurance that the arrangements for each GP practice to have a named health visitor for regular and consistent contact, provides for the accurate and timely sharing of information about families in need.
2. Request the Birmingham Children's Hospital Foundation Trust to review the work of the Family Support Workers to ensure that they proactively engage with families attending for ongoing medical treatment, and record clearly what offers of support have been made and explored.
3. Promote multiagency training on the combination of early risk factors that can arise for families and how these can be better recognised and assessed and incorporate the learning from this case in developing better awareness of early risk factors, neglect and accessing early help.
4. Review the evidence of awareness by parents of the risks of co-sleeping, and where there are seen to be gaps, develop effective communication strategies about the risks and dangers, addressing both professional audiences and parents/families.
5. Ensure that school attendance policies and guidance for all schools promote a more rigorous questioning of the reasons for absence, and that where medical reasons are provided these are explored to ensure that the family is receiving the best possible support to encourage attendance.

Janet Mokades, current Independent Chair of the LSCB attended the meeting and presented the recommendations and discussed the action plan and was supported by Hardeep Walker, the Serious Case Review Co-ordinator for Adult and Children Safeguarding Boards. They discussed work with GP's, multiagency training, co-sleeping and school attendance.

Councillor M Mutton, Chair of the Scrutiny Board reminded Members that their role was not to re-hear the review, but to scrutinize the recommendations and review them, bearing in mind that policies had moved on since April, 2014.

The Scrutiny Board discussed the following concerns with the Chair of the LSCB:

- Press coverage of the case and the role of the Police and the Crown Prosecution Service
- School attendance procedure's
- Similar recommendations identified in different SCR's and how recommendations are monitored
- Communication of co-sleeping information to parents
- Partner's different policies, communication and priorities
- Professional curiosity, judgment, subjectivity and tolerance levels

Councillor M Mutton noted that quality of practice was on the Scrutiny Board work programme for next municipal year and the recommendations from the Serious Case Reviews considered this year would also be reviewed.

**RESOLVED that :**

- 1) The Scrutiny Board recommend that the Cabinet Member for Education audit attendance policies and procedures in schools and how absences are followed up**
- 2) A letter be written to West Midlands Police to provide reassurance that measures are in place to address the technical errors reported**
- 3) Sleep safe application launch information be shared with Members of the Scrutiny Board**

**72. Children's Social Care Performance Report Two Year Comparison 2014/5 and 2015/6**

The Scrutiny Board noted a report on Children's Social Care Performance from 2014/15 to 2015/16 and the Re-Referral Action Note, requested previously by the Board, was tabled.

The Performance on the following areas was detailed in the report:

- Common Assessment Framework's (CAFs)
- Contacts to Children's Services
- Contact outcomes
- New Referrals and Re-Referrals
- Children and Families Assessment Timeliness
- Children subject to a strategy discussion
- Timeliness of completion of section 47 enquiries and outcomes
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) data
- Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) timeliness, participation and RAG rating
- New Child Protection plans and repeat plans per month
- Review Child Protection Conference (RCPCs) timeliness
- Children entering Care and previously looked after per month
- Legal status on entry to care
- Children entering care by age
- Children currently looked after and number dual registered
- Children Looked After: Placement Type and stability
- Children Looked After Timescales
- Care Leaver Status
- Pathway Plans and demographics
- Missing Children
- Caseloads
- Fostering Scorecard
- Adoption Scorecard

The Scrutiny Board discussed the following issues with the Cabinet Members and officers:

- The number of children experiencing more than 3 placement moves
- Analysis from return home interviews after children have been 'missing'
- Children entering care age 17+
- Unaccompanied asylum seekers
- The implications of the development of a Regional Adoption Board
- The number of children entering Care without an Order

Officers agreed to provide further information to Members on the following:

1. Analysis of Barnardos return home interviews
2. An update of the number of unaccompanied children seeking asylum to be supported by Coventry
3. The increasing number of children who have had 3 or more placements
4. The Regional Adoption Board
5. The age breakdown for children entering care without an order (section 20)

**73. Recommendations from the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group on Supervision of Social Work Staff**

Further to Minute 2/15 the Scrutiny Board considered a report of the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group on Supervision of Social Work Staff. The report made recommendations that would be considered by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People at the rising of the Scrutiny Board meeting.

The Ofsted inspection of Children's Services undertaken in February and March 2014 identified serious weakness in the supervision of staff.

"Social workers do not always receive the right level of supervision from their managers to enable them to discuss cases fully and make the right decisions for children and young people, to improve their outcomes and ensure their safety and welfare."

Improvements to supervision of social work staff were included in the improvement notice issued by the DfE on 20 June 2014 and included in the Children's Services Improvement Plan.

The Task and Finish Group met four times to look in detail at the work that had already been done to improve supervision of staff, talk to existing managers and analyse information from a staff supervision survey undertaken in 2014 and 2015, to be able to identify other areas of improvement.

The membership of the group was:

- Cllr Bains
- Cllr Bigham
- Cllr Lepoidevin
- Cllr Mal Mutton (Chair)
- Cllr Seaman

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People was recommended to instruct officers:

1. To update the Supervision Policy to take into account the following:
  - a. That regular sample audits of supervision be undertaken to monitor both quality and quantity of supervision.
  - b. The quality control section of the Supervision Policy reflects Members' oversight
  - c. That supervision training is part of the induction for new managers.
  - d. That reflective supervision is used as a standard part of regular supervision session.
  - e. That children's views and wishes are discussed and these discussions are recorded during supervision sessions
2. To ensure the updated supervision policy is implemented and complied with across the whole service.
3. That all managers with casework responsibility to have received recent supervision training within 6 months, then all managers across the service within 12 months.
4. That a statement of intent regarding levels of caseloads is developed.
5. That good practice is identified and shared across the service, not just teams.
6. That within 3 months all staff to have a supervision agreement.
7. That Research In Practice to be promoted to all staff to make use of current research and evidence to inform their practice.
8. That annual appraisals, using the Council's behaviours framework are undertaken alongside monthly supervision sessions.
9. That a staff survey is undertaken on an annual basis to enable oversight of the impact and implementation of the policies and practice across Children's Services.

The Scrutiny Board thanked Members and officers involved in the Task and Finish Group. Officers were also appreciative of scrutiny support.



**RESOLVED that the recommendations be endorsed and that Scrutiny maintain oversight on progress against the recommendations, with a report in 6 months and 12 months, including any changes in performance.**

**74. Improvement Board Progress Report from 30 March, 2016**

Further to Minute 66/15 the Scrutiny Board noted a joint briefing note which detailed progress on the Children's Services Improvement Plan, reported to the Children's Services Improvement Board on 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2016 based on data from February, 2016.

The progress report included an update on the six themes aligned to the Department for Education (DfE) Improvement Notice including an update on the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

The Director of Children's Services reported that the improvement journey was ongoing and key challenges were increasing the number of social workers and improving the quality of practice.

The Scrutiny Board questioned the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and officers on the following:

- Analysis of the information contained in return home interviews to understand patterns and trends in respect of missing children and to ensure performance is robust
- The Minister's letter regarding the outcome of the 18 month review in February, 2016
- Recruitment and retention
- Reducing use of Agency staff and promoting a 'good supportive' offer at Coventry Council
- Publishing what we do well at Coventry Council
- Communication with Members

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People was very supportive of the Scrutiny Board investigating ways to improve the stability of the workforce.

**RESOLVED that the report be noted and a Task and Finish Group be established to investigate recruitment and retention of Social Workers, to try to improve the stability of the workforce.**

**75. Work Programme and Review of 2015/16 Scrutiny Activity**

The Scrutiny Board reviewed the 2015/16 municipal year and felt that the following areas had been successful:

- Task and Finish Group on Supervision of Social Work Staff
- Improvement Board Updates
- Local Authority Governors
- President Kennedy Visit

The Scrutiny Board suggested work programme items for next municipal year including:

- White Paper *Educational Excellence Everywhere* 'Academisation' implications
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) young people and drug use
- Commissioned Services including Barnados
- Residential Care
- Wisteria Lodge Review

**RESOLVED that the successes be recorded in the Annual Scrutiny Report and the suggestions for next municipal year be considered on the work programme, by the Scrutiny Board in the new municipal year.**

76. **Any Other Business**

Thank you

Councillor M Mutton thanked all the Members of the Scrutiny Board for their contributions this municipal year and especially those who would not be around next year.

On behalf of the Members of Scrutiny Board (2) Cllr Mrs Bigham thanked Cllr Mutton for chairing the meetings this year.

(Meeting closed at 4.00 pm)



Coventry City Council

## Briefing note

---

**To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) 16 June 2016**

**Subject: Progress on Children's Services Improvement Plan in response to Ofsted Single Inspection and the Review of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board**

---

### 1 Purpose of the Note

1.1 To inform the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) of the progress with the Children's Services Improvement Plan reported to the Children's Services Improvement Board on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2016. The report is based on data from March 2016, unless stated otherwise. The next Improvement Board will be held on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2016.

### 2 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that Scrutiny Board 2:

- 1) Note the progress made to date.
- 2) Receive regular updates from the Children's Services Improvement Board that will include further progress relating to the children's services improvement plan

### 3 Information/Background

- 3.1 The Ofsted Inspection of Coventry's Children's Services and the review of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), published in March 2014, judged services and the LSCB to be inadequate. The Ofsted report identified a number of priority actions and areas for improvement. In response to the Ofsted report, a Children's Services Improvement Board was established and an Improvement Plan published on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2014. A revised and updated Improvement Plan was published on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2015. The plan has been further updated, and will be reviewed again at the end of June 2016.
- 3.2 The Children's Services Improvement Board Chair Mark Rogers, Chief Executive at Birmingham City Council, stepped down from the role as Independent Chair on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2016. The new incoming Chair Steve Hart has been appointed to this role and will chair the first Board on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2016. The Board includes elected Members, Council representatives and representatives from partner agencies in the City as well as a representative from the Department for Education. Progress is reported to the Improvement Board every six weeks.
- 3.3 The Department for Education issued an Improvement Notice on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014. The Improvement notice is reviewed every six months by the Department for Education. A six month review took place on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015 and the twelve month review took place on 30<sup>th</sup> June and 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015. An eighteen month review was held on 2<sup>nd</sup>

February 2016. The Minister has confirmed the outcome of the review in a letter dated 24 February.

- 3.4 The Independent Chairs of both the Improvement Board and the Local Safeguarding Children Board also submit a written report to the Minister on a regular basis.
- 3.5 An Executive Board was established in January 2015 in order to focus on maintaining momentum and evaluating progress against the Improvement Plan. This Board meets every six weeks prior to the Improvement Board.
- 3.6 The Council, alongside partner organisations will retain a relentless focus on securing improvements in services for children, young people and families to ensure they are safeguarded and achieve positive outcomes.

#### **4 Improvement Plan Themes**

The Children's Services Improvement Plan, includes six key themes, which have been aligned to the DfE improvement notice. The plan provides a stronger focus on quality of practice and workforce development, and the continuation of improvements to the LSCB. A summary of the plan is shown in **Appendix 1**. The six themes are as follows:

- Early Help & Partnership Working
- Local Safeguarding Children Board
- Quality and Effectiveness of Practice
- Quality of Assurance and Audit
- Leadership and Governance
- Services for LAC, Care Leavers and Permanency

#### **5 Children's Services Improvement Plan Progress to date**

The following progress was reported at the Children's Services Improvement Board on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

The new leadership is continuing to provide the renewed focus and direction. Middle management teams are stable and committed. The new improvement partners are working at pace to help deliver the improvements and changes required.

The key priorities for 2016/17 are listed below and will be subject to a review with the new incoming Independent Chair, a revised Improvement Plan will be produced to reflect the new priorities going forward:

- Maintaining a focus on sustainable improvement
- Maintaining a relentless focus on consistency and quality of practice
- Getting the Early Help Strategy working so we can step cases down safely
- Delivering a Workforce Strategy and reduce reliance on agency staff to ensure sufficiently qualified staff
- Accommodate the impact of the Ofsted re-inspection so not to distract long term improvement
- Recognise the potential changes following the Ofsted inspection
- Children's Services re-design to support improved impact and outcomes for children
- Develop a Children's Services Strategy for the future
- Refreshing our approach to Corporate Parenting and Placement Sufficiency Strategy
- Strengthening our commitment to our children

## **Theme 1 – Early Help and Partnership**

Coventry City Council Early Help and Prevention Services hold 68.10% of all CAFs, with external agencies making up the other 31.9%. The number of CAF's held by external agencies is improving as further work is completed to redress the balance, the target is 40%.

The issue to address step up/step down between children's social care and early help is being progressed. Meetings have been held with Service Managers from Neighbourhoods and Early Help and Prevention, good progress is being made the new arrangements commenced on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016. Review meetings are set up fortnightly for the first three months to ensure consistency and to resolve any issues.

The percentage of re-referrals, though high has begun to reduce and is a similar percentage to May 2015, following the implementation of new methods of reviewing contacts within the MASH. This is a direct result of the auditing of re-referrals and the action plan that has been put in place

The timeliness of contacts YTD (69.6%) has shown a slight decrease on the previous two years, this is due to the volume of contacts coming through the front door. In March 2016 only 34.7% of the contacts completed were progressed as a referral to social care. This issue is on the MASH Board agenda for further discussion

Children and Family assessments remain on track with 93.7% of assessments completed in timescale for March 2016. There is still an issue with quality, which remains variable and is being addressed via auditing and performance monitoring

There has been an increase in the number of Missing Episodes recorded since September 2015. This is in part due to improved recording, but also in awareness being raised around missing children and improved coordination between agencies. In March, 79 Missing Episodes were started, pertaining to 35 children, showing a high-level of repeat episodes. Of the Missing Episodes finalised, 57% of mispers received an RHI, of which 48% were completed within timescale.

Further work is on-going to analyse the information contained in the RHI to understand patterns and trends in respect of missing. This is due to some particular high risk young people whose missing episodes are escalating and due to their vulnerabilities they are increasingly more at risk, we review this daily with the police and are actively supporting working with commissioned services to support some of the external providers to respond more appropriately to young people's vulnerabilities.

## **Theme 2 - Local Safeguarding Children Board**

The Local Safeguarding Children's Board provides a regular progress update to the Improvement Board to highlight progress against the three requirements set out in the improvement Notice. These are:

- the LSCB to be strengthened so it can ensure that partners work together effectively
- multi-agency practice and individual partner audits are robust
- all partners are committed to a shared set of priorities for safeguarding, child protection and early intervention.

The following progress was reported to the Improvement Board on 11 May 2016:

Attention has been focused on improving the dissemination of learning from serious case reviews (SCRs), peer review panels, surveys and audits and the voice of the child.

Responses to the quality assurance questions from the last peer review panel on practice with hard to engage families have now been returned by most Board members and a summary overview of practice, with examples of good practice and recommendations on better ways of doing things, is being produced. As part of the annual review of training programmes, training on working with hard to engage families will be revised in response to what we now know about current practice in Coventry. More focus will be given to training content related to neglect in response to the latest published serious case review.

A discussion at Board about radicalisation and safeguarding at the end of last year made it clear that members wanted more information about both how to respond to radicalisation and sources of support and expertise in dealing with it. Accordingly, the Board together with Prevent organised an event. Lyng Hall School hosted the event. There was a very good uptake, with over 100 attendees from social care, schools, the voluntary sector, and CWPT.

### **Theme 3 - Quality and Effectiveness of Practice**

Children’s Services recognises that the workforce is its most valuable resource. A key element in delivering high quality services is improving the effectiveness of the recruitment of permanent social work staff across all teams and strengthening the service’s ability to retain a high quality experienced workforce. Support, training and development of the workforce are fundamental to service innovation and improvement to help make Coventry a great place to work and live. Existing work and good practice is being consolidated by continuing to cultivate a culture of on-going learning and development.

The Strategy embraces the priority of Children’s Services to put children and young people at the centre of all its work. Human Resources and Children’s Services has developed a range of recruitment and retention strategies to increase the number of good quality staff within the organization. The table below summaries activity over the last three months, 106 interviews have been held as at 3 May 2016 a total of 44 appointments have been made for experienced Social Workers/Newly Qualified Social Workers and Team Manager.

**Table 1: Recruitment Activity for the period 11 February – 3 May 2016**

Source of recruitment	No. of CV's received	No. of interviews held	No. of offers during this period
TMP Recruitment campaign	27	14	2 experienced Social Workers 1 Team Manager
Sanctuary	23	16	1 experienced Social Worker
Other agencies	4	4	3 Experienced Social Workers
Internal candidates	6	2	1 Team Manager 1 Newly Qualified Social Workers
Compass Jobs Fair – March 2016	140	61	23 Newly Qualified Social Workers
NQSW's applying for posts	23	2	5 Newly Qualified Social Worker
Converting agency staff to permanent	12	7	7 agency staff converted to Experienced Social Worker
<b>Total</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>A total of 44 offers:</b> 13 experienced Social Workers 2 Team Managers 29 Newly Qualified Social Workers

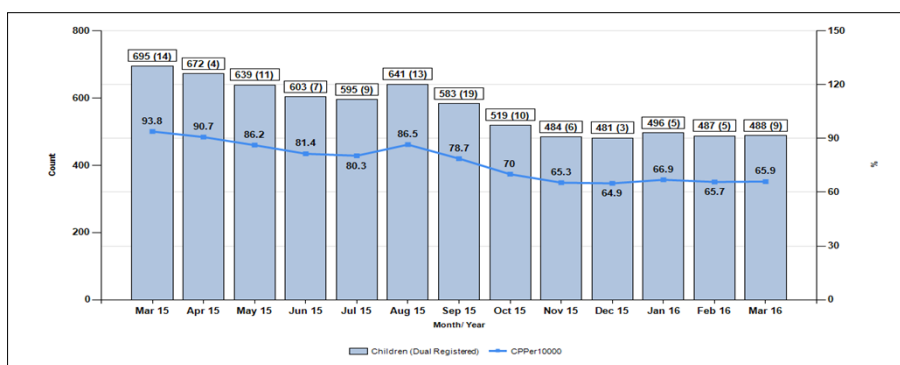
Children’s Service and Human Resources have agreed additional capacity for a social media lead to work with Children’s Services on the new recruitment initiatives. A new social media campaign was launched on 22 April 2016 via Facebook/Twitter/Google and banner advertising through Ireland. Regular monthly progress updates are provided to the Workforce Development Board on a monthly basis.

The number of children subject to a Child Protection plan has reduced and at the end of March 2016 was 488. The number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan per 10,000 population has also reduced to 65.9 in 2015/16 compared with 93.3 in 2014/15. Although this is still above our benchmark a comparators.

Repeat plans have shown an increase. Initial analysis of this suggests a high level of ‘start-again’ syndrome in relation to neglect and a reluctance to take a more robust approach to families presenting with the same problems following multiple plans. This requires further audit and will be discussed with Heads of Services to review to agree whether a new process is required.

Table 2 below highlights numbers over the last 12 months:

**Table 2: Child Protection Plans**



**Theme 4 - Quality Assurance and Audit**

Coventry City Council Children’s Services have since November 2015 developed a stronger more robust programme of audits to inform continuous practice improvement. Audits have been undertaken by a number of different sources, including, Practice Improvement Partners and the LSCB. The outcomes of each audit have led to the construction of action plans, focused on using the findings of audits to drive up the quality of practice.

The results of audits have reinforced findings across a range of different services along the child’s journey. This has allowed for some triangulation and definitive conclusions in relation to both the strengths and weaknesses in practice across the whole of the Children’s Service.

The inconsistent quality of the actual audits, as opposed to the practice has meant work has also had to be undertaken to help managers develop skills in auditing to be able to conduct an audit with the impact on the child firmly at the centre as opposed to a task centred management audit. Mentoring and support from an experienced improvement partner has begun to develop “audit champions” who are confident and able to audit with the impact on the child being the primary focus.

Once audits have been completed, and this includes the regular monthly audits, a report is produced, detailing the findings, both in terms of areas for improvement and existing strengths. There is also a set of recommendations attached to the report. Reports are then sent to relevant Heads of Service and the Principle Social Worker. Heads of Service produce action plans which

address the areas for improvement, within their service area. Action plans are sent to the Head of Safeguarding to monitor their progress, through quarterly quality assurance meetings.

**Theme 5 - Leadership and Governance**

Average caseloads in RAS in March increased to 26.6, in April this reduced to an average of 21 in line with the target range of 20-25, which is due to the volume of work. Average caseloads in Neighbourhoods are being maintained at 19-21, against a target of 20-22.

IRO average caseloads continue to reduce, with average caseloads at 65 in March/April 2016.

The total number of open cases is reducing year-by-year, though it remains higher than that of our benchmark comparators. The system is monitored daily to ensure no cases become unallocated. Caseloads remain relatively stable and are within the specified target ranges. Active work within the system, such as assessments and visits are also monitored daily using the Performance Management dashboard and shows the data-timeliness is improving across the system.

**Theme 6 - Services for LAC, Care Leavers and Permanency**

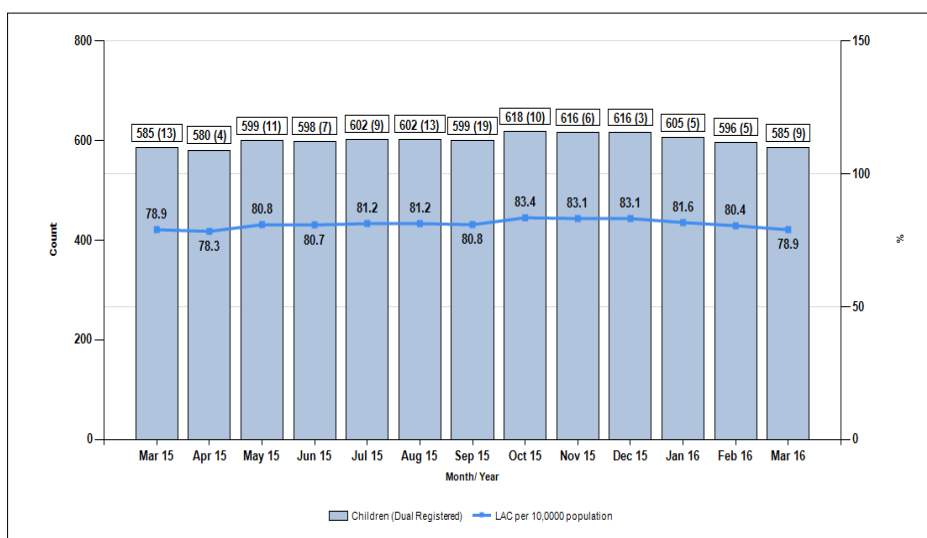
The number of children who entered care in 2015/16 has reduced since 2014/15, from 314 to 276. In 2015/16 there was a net reduction of 6 children placed in the care of the authority. This is as a result of ‘edge of care’ services being strengthened over the period.

However, the number and proportion of children re-entering care has increased in 2015/16. There has also been an increase in the proportion of children re-entering care within 1 year of having left.

The total number of children looked after by the local authority has remained relatively stable across the year, though has declined as the year progressed, 585 at the end of March 2016.

The table below highlights the direction of travel over the last twelve months for the numbers of Looked After Children.

**Table 3: Number of Looked After Children**



The number of children placed in Children’s Homes and secure accommodation is 13.3%. This is 4.3% above the most recent benchmarking for the All England Average and 3.3% above the



West Midlands and our Statistical Neighbours. This is currently being monitored and action plans around the sufficiency of accommodation are being put in place.

There has been a slight decline with placement moves this month. An action plan has been put in place to prevent and reduce the number of placements moves for children who are at risk of placement instability.

As at 31 March 2016, 54 children were adopted. The table below highlights the direction of travel over the last few years. The reduction in the number of children adopted in 2015/16 is a consequence of recent case law.

**Table 4: Number of Children Adopted**

<b>Number of children Adopted</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>
Number of children adopted	28	40	52	70	54

In Coventry a significant campaign to attract more in-house foster carers has been launched with an ambitious target to create 100 additional placements by the end of March 2018. The process for dealing with applicant enquiries has been changed and the carer journey has been re-engineered so as to be more customer friendly and dynamic. The results to date have been very promising with 36, 39 and 27 enquiries having been received within the past three months. This has enabled a series of initial visits and a total of 24 households to be allocated for assessment with scheduled Panel dates between June and August 2016.

A Corporate Parenting Strategy has been developed to set out the rationale and associated activity which will enable better local understanding of the looked after children system and lead to improved life chances for children in and leaving the care of Coventry City Council.

**6 Communication**

6.1 The e-newsletter continues to be produced focusing on Children’s Services ahead of Ofsted re-inspection. This is issued to all staff in Children’s Services, all partners, senior managers and Members to ensure everyone is aware of the progress made so far, what has still to be achieved and the role all employees can play in supporting the service in achieving a better Ofsted result. In addition to this, the Director of Children’s Services completes a regular blog.

**6.2 Authors:**

Sonia Watson, Children’s Improvement Plan Project Manager,  
John Gregg, Director of Children’s Services

**Contact details:** [john.gregg@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:john.gregg@coventry.gov.uk) Tel: (024) 7683 3402  
[sonia.watson@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:sonia.watson@coventry.gov.uk) Tel: (024) 7683 1890



## Appendix 1

### A One Page Summary of the Children's Services Improvement Plan March 2015

*Note: Themes 1-5 theme are aligned to the DfE notice, the additional theme highlights services for LAC, Care Leavers and Permanency*



### Key Challenges

**Sustainability** - managing future work volumes, resourcing and sustainability of improvements

**Evidencing Impact** - evidencing improvements and the impact on achieving good outcomes for children, young people and families







Coventry City Council

## Briefing note

**To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board**  
**Date: 16<sup>th</sup> June 2016**

**Subject: Establishment of a task and finish group to consider the recruitment and retention of social work staff**

### 1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To establish a task and finish group of the Education and Children's Scrutiny Board to consider the recruitment and retention of social work staff

### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board is recommended to:
- 1) Establish a task and finish group to consider the recruitment and retention of social work staff;
  - 2) To identify membership of the group;
  - 3) To receive recommendations from the group for the appropriate Cabinet Member at a subsequent meeting.

### 3 Information/Background

- 3.1 At their meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016, members of the Board considered the Children's Services Improvement Plan.
- 3.2 One of the areas of key challenge was reported as being increasing the number of social workers.
- 3.3 Members of the Board heard about the "We're With You" campaign, which commenced on 11<sup>th</sup> February and ended on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2016. The 4 week campaign generated over 15,000 clicks via social media links/channels.
- 3.4 Table 1: Recruitment Activity for the period 11 February – 16 March 2016

Source of recruitment	No. of CV's received	No. of interviews held up to 16/3/16	No of interviews arranged /in process	No. of offers during this period
TMP Recruitment campaign	17	7	1	2 experienced social workers and 1 Team Manager
Sanctuary	19	11	1	1 experienced social worker
Other agencies	4	1	3	
Internal candidates	5	2	0	1 Team Manager 1 Newly Qualified Social Workers
Compass Jobs Fair	140 people registered on the day	68 informal interview	61 in the process	
NQSW's applying for posts	26 (3 adult area)	1	22 in process	1 Newly Qualified Social Worker
<b>Total</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>A total of 8 offers:</b> 3 experienced Social Workers 2 Team Managers 2 Newly Qualified Social Workers

- 3.5 Members were concerned that although there had been several recruitment campaigns there had been little effect on the recruitment of permanent staff and therefore reduction in the use of agency staff.
- 3.6 Members requested that a task and finish group be established during the municipal year 2016-17 to look at the effectiveness of recruitment campaigns, but also what the Council can do to retain existing staff.

Gennie Holmes  
Scrutiny Co-ordinator  
gennie.holmes@coventry.gov.uk  
024 7683 1172

## Education and Children's Services (2)

Scrutiny Work Programme 2016/17

<b>16<sup>th</sup> June 16</b>
Improvement Board updates (standing item)
<b>21<sup>st</sup> July 16</b>
Early Help Strategy progress report SCR Recruitment and Retention of Social Work Staff (task and finish group) Improvement Board updates (standing item)
<b>15<sup>th</sup> September 16</b>
'Stepping Up' and 'Stepping Down' Process for Social Care cases. Quality Assurance Auditing Improvement Board updates (standing item)
<b>13<sup>th</sup> October 16</b>
Supervision of Social Care Staff recommendations – progress report (October) Improvement Board updates (standing item)
<b>10<sup>th</sup> November 16</b>
Improvement Board updates (standing item)
<b>8<sup>th</sup> December 16</b>
Improvement Board updates (standing item)
<b>12<sup>th</sup> January 17</b>
MASH update - progress report Improvement Board updates (standing item)
<b>9<sup>th</sup> February 17</b>
Children's Social Care Workforce Strategy – Feb 2017 – progress report Improvement Board updates (standing item)
<b>9<sup>th</sup> March 17</b>
Monitoring of SCR recommendations from 15/16 Improvement Board updates (standing item)
<b>6<sup>th</sup> April 16</b>
Improvement Board updates (standing item)
<b>Proposed Agenda Items</b>
Teen pregnancy and PSHE in schools Consultation on proposed changes to the school transport service. Health Visiting Contract Staying Put Policy and Preparation for Leaving Care Youth Offending Service Family Drugs and Alcohol Court Voices of Care – progress report Young Carers Serious Case reviews Changes to adoption agency Commissioned Services Residential Care

DRAFT



<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer</b>
<b>16<sup>th</sup> June 16</b>			
	Improvement Board updates (standing item)	A standing item as agreed by Council reporting progress against the areas identified in the improvement notice.	John Gregg Cllr Ruane
<b>21<sup>st</sup> July 16</b>	Early Help Strategy progress report	To receive a progress report on the Early Help Strategy including the Strengthening Families. Also to include hard to engage families (see SCR recommendations)	John Gregg Fran Doyle Cllr Ruane
	SCR	The Board will consider recommendations from a serious case review.	
	Recruitment and Retention of Social Work Staff (task and finish group)	Members wanted to look in depth at the recruitment of social workers including consideration of reasons for lack of interest in previous recruitment campaigns and remuneration and responsibility levels of social workers. To include reputational factors as well.	John Gregg Cllr Ruane
	Improvement Board updates (standing item)	A standing item as agreed by Council reporting progress against the areas identified in the improvement notice.	John Gregg Cllr Ruane
<b>15<sup>th</sup> September 16</b>	'Stepping Up' and 'Stepping Down' Process for Social Care cases.	Following the Boards consideration of the SCR on Baby C Members requested more information on the new processes implemented as a result of the recommendations	John Gregg
	Quality Assurance Auditing	Following the Boards consideration of the SCR on Baby C Members requested more information on the auditing of case work to ensure consistency and quality of practice	John Gregg
	Improvement Board updates (standing item)	A standing item as agreed by Council reporting progress against the areas identified in the improvement notice.	John Gregg Cllr Ruane
<b>13<sup>th</sup> October 16</b>	Supervision of Social Care Staff recommendations – progress report (October)	A progress report on the recommendations accepted by the Cabinet Member on 14/4/16	John Gregg Cllr Ruane
	Improvement Board updates (standing item)	A standing item as agreed by Council reporting progress against the areas identified in the improvement notice.	John Gregg Cllr Ruane
<b>10<sup>th</sup> November 16</b>			

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer</b>
	Improvement Board updates (standing item)	A standing item as agreed by Council reporting progress against the areas identified in the improvement notice.	John Gregg Cllr Ruane
<b>8<sup>th</sup> December 16</b>			
	Improvement Board updates (standing item)	A standing item as agreed by Council reporting progress against the areas identified in the improvement notice.	John Gregg Cllr Ruane
<b>12<sup>th</sup> January 17</b>	MASH update - progress report	Following the meeting in January 2016, Members requested a further progress update, particularly in relation to the recommendations made.	
	Improvement Board updates (standing item)	A standing item as agreed by Council reporting progress against the areas identified in the improvement notice.	John Gregg Cllr Ruane
<b>9<sup>th</sup> February 17</b>	Children's Social Care Workforce Strategy – Feb 2017 – progress report	Following the introduction of the Workforce Strategy at their meeting on 25 February, Members requested a further progress report	John Gregg Cllr Ruane
	Improvement Board updates (standing item)	A standing item as agreed by Council reporting progress against the areas identified in the improvement notice.	John Gregg Cllr Ruane
<b>9<sup>th</sup> March 17</b>	Monitoring of SCR recommendations from 15/16	The Board wanted to know how the outcomes of recommendations from SCR's are monitored and whether implemented recommendations have been effective in protecting children	Cat Parker
	Improvement Board updates (standing item)	A standing item as agreed by Council reporting progress against the areas identified in the improvement notice.	John Gregg Cllr Ruane
<b>6<sup>th</sup> April 16</b>			
	Improvement Board updates (standing item)	A standing item as agreed by Council reporting progress against the areas identified in the improvement notice.	John Gregg Cllr Ruane
<b>Proposed Agenda Items</b>	Teen pregnancy and PSHE in schools	To consider what schools are doing to support the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy and how the Council is supporting them	Kirston Nelson, Nadia Ingliss Judith Simmonds

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer</b>
			Cllr Maton
	Consultation on proposed changes to the school transport service.	Following the change in timescales to implementation of changes Members requested that the Board considers the new proposals as part of the new consultation process.	Jeanette Essex Cllr Maton
	Health Visiting Contract	Members wanted to know more about the current health visiting contract particularly Health Visitors involvement in CAF's.	Cllr Ruane
	Staying Put Policy and Preparation for Leaving Care	To look in more detail at the Staying Put Policy, involving representation from the Foster Carers Association. The report should cover promotion of the policy with young people, children social work support at 18, financial support to Foster Carers.  The Voice of the Child Task and Finish Group raised the issue of independence training and the Chair suggested that it be looked at separately. To include input from foster carers and care leavers as well as Route 21.	John Gregg Jivan Sembi Cllr Ruane
	Youth Offending Service	An update on progress of the Youth Offending Service	Angie Parks Cllr Ruane
	Family Drugs and Alcohol Court	Progress on the work of the FDAC	John Gregg
	Voices of Care – progress report	Members requested regular updates on the work and benefits of the Voices of Care Council, including the results of surveys with LAC	Sheila Bates
	Young Carers	Referred from the Corporate Parenting Board, to look at support offered to children and young people who are carers, especially those that are children in need, child protection or who come into care because of the health of their parents.	
	Serious Case reviews	The Board will consider recommendations from serious case reviews when they are published. To also include Wisteria Lodge investigation.	Cat Parker/Hardeep Walker Cllr Ruane/Janet Mokades

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
	Changes to adoption agency	A regional adoption agency has been established. Members wanted a progress report and information on performance	John Gregg Cllr Ruane
	Commissioned Services	Members requested further information about commissioned services and how contracts are awarded and monitored, including Barnardo's	John Gregg/Sally Giles Cllr Ruane
	Residential Care	Members requested information on residential care provided by both the local authority and commissioned services (to be considered with the above item)	John Gregg/Sally Giles Cllr Ruane
	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (briefing)	Members requested to be kept up to date on numbers of UASC in the city and services to support them	John Gregg
	CAMHS	A follow up and progress report on work done with SB5 last year, especially in terms of prescription drug use. Also a task and finish group to investigate why there significantly high number of referrals through CAMHS on the ASD pathway.	Jacqueline Barnes
	Academisation Programme	The Board wanted to consider the implications of the Government white paper and the proposals for all schools to become academies by 2020.	Kirston Nelson Cllr Maton