



To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)

13th July 2017

Subject: Progress on Children's Services Improvement Board 14th June 2017

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 14 June 2017. The report is based on data from April 2017, unless stated otherwise. The next Improvement Board will be held on 18 October 2017.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Scrutiny Board (2) are recommended to:
- 1) Consider 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, including feedback from Ofsted and the DfE
 - 3) Identify any further recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member

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.
- 3.2 An experienced improvement consultant and retired Her Majesty Inspector (HMI), chairs the Children's Services Improvement Board. 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 An Ofsted Monitoring Visit was undertaken on 8th and 9th November 2016, the focus of the visit was on practice within the 'help and protection' judgement with Ofsted doing a deep dive analysis (case tracking) in to six cases selected by Ofsted and one good example case selected by the service. The Monitoring visit also included a visit to

MASH/RAS. The letter on the outcome of the monitoring visit was published on 8th December 2016.

- 3.4 The Department for Education issued an Improvement Notice on 30th June 2014. The Improvement notice is reviewed every six months. The two year review was held on 30th November 2016 and focused on quality of practice; the effectiveness of the children's services system and partnership working. The formal feedback letter from the Minister on the outcomes of the review has been received.
- 3.5 Ofsted re-inspected Children's Services on 6th -30th March 2017, the outcome of the inspection was published on 13th June 2017, Children's Services were judged as "requires improvement to be good". Services for Children are no longer inadequate.
- 3.6 The Department for Education (DfE) removed Children's Services from intervention on 13 June 2017, the service are no longer subject to an improvement notice. Supervision and support will be provided by the DfE for the next 12 months, which will include two reviews.
- 3.7 The Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive have both given public commitment that Children's Services remains a key priority for the Council. This includes prioritising funding for Children's Services to maintain its capacity to improve. The Council, alongside partner organisations continue a relentless focus on securing improvements in services for children, young people and families to ensure they are safeguarded and achieve positive outcomes.

4 Ofsted re-inspection of Children's Services and the Improvement Plan

- 4.1 The Ofsted re-inspection of Children's Services judged overall services in Coventry "requires improvement to be good". Services for Children are no longer inadequate, this marks a key point in the improvement journey and demonstrates the improvements made over the last few years.
- 4.2 The report highlights nine recommendations and areas for further development. In response to this a Children's Services Improvement Plan has been developed, the plan includes the actions to deliver the recommendations and areas for development for Children who need help and protection; Children looked after and achieving permanence; Leadership, management and governance. New performance measures have been developed to demonstrate improvement and impact and will be included in the monthly performance report.
- 4.3 The report identifies a number of issues for partners including the application of thresholds and the appetite for risk across the strategic safeguarding partnership. The Improvement Board will work to strengthen and provide assurance and governance role of partners and the LSCB. The LSCB will report on progress made in respect of the required areas of improvement that relate to partners.
- 4.4 The final Improvement Plan will be submitted to Ofsted and the DfE by 20 September 2017. The report and revised Improvement Plan will be shared with staff and partners and progress against the plan reported to Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board at quarterly intervals.
- 4.5 With the new leadership team in place, the team are driving forward practice improvements and service changes. There is an explicit intention to ensure that Children's Services reaches a position where it is continuously achieving good outcomes for the Children of Coventry. The new Improvement Plan will support the journey in "Getting to Good".

5 Review of the Children's Services Improvement Board

- 5.1 The Department for Education have confirmed that the statutory requirement to operate an improvement board every six weeks as prescribed in the improvement notice has been removed following the publication of the Ofsted Inspection report.
- 5.2 At the meeting on 14th June 2017, the Improvement Board was reviewed and proposals put forward. Board members agreed to continue to operate a Children's Services Improvement Board. The frequency of meetings will change from 6 weeks to 12 weeks reporting on progress made against the improvement plan. The Shadow Board and Implementation Group will continue and will also be held every 12 weeks.

6 Re-design of Children's Services

- 6.1 Plans to redesign Children's Services and transform the way we work is progressing. Engagement Sessions were held in April 2017, the engagement sessions have helped to continue the improvement journey and ensure provide the right services for the children and young people of our city. The formal consultation commenced on 8th May 2017. Staff have received the proposed structures and the impact of the changes. FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions are being communicated to staff on a regular basis. The Children's Services Leadership team are responding and discussing questions raised throughout the consultation period.
- 6.2 Work continues with partners. A meet and greet with partners engagement session was held on 2 May 2017 to meet with partner agencies and Schools to share the Children's Service vision; meet the Children's Services Leadership team and share the Ofsted Inspection headlines and actions to work more closely with partners on.

7 Quality Assurance and practice

- 7.1 The Improvement Board received a progress update on quality assurance and the outcomes of the external audit.
- 7.2 This training has continued ensuring the development of Service Managers, IROs and first line managers to undertake audits using the new audit model. This will increase the pool of current auditors and offer additional capacity to carry out monthly audits. As well as training auditors, four quality assurance workshops were also held in May 2017 and attended by service managers and team managers focusing on the impacts & outcomes on children's case recordings. This will enable the actual quality of the audit to become more child centred, and therefore learning will also become more child focused. This should lead to practice becoming more about outcomes and impact which will begin as a natural consequence to improve practice. Further audit training will be offered to all managers in Children's Services who have not yet completed this, including managers in Early Help.

8 Requests for further information

- 8.1 The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) have requested responses to additional information requested at previous Scrutiny Board meetings. The information is provided below.
- 8.2 **The number of Return Home Interviews that have been refused**
- 8.3 In May 2017, a total of 39 young people went missing. This equates to a total of 74 missing episodes during the month. Five young people declined a return home

interview. Three were not interviewed, but are known to the service and have additional support around them. Staff working with these young people are alerted when they have not engaged in the process and encouraged to seek the opportunity to discuss the missing episode(s).

8.4 The service closely monitor young people who decline RHIs and ensure additional resource is provided when a person goes missing the next time.

8.3 The current number of children placed with foster carers and the current number in residential care

8.5 Currently there are 70 young people placed within residential provision. The YTD figures for residential placements show a small decline from 16/17. The new Placements approval process has given appropriate scrutiny to fostering and residential placement requests, confirmation of there being no appropriate internal fostering placement and robust approval for the use of external foster placement and residential placement.

Placement Type	YTD	% YTD	% 16/17	% 15/16	% 14/15
Fostering (External)	231	37.8%	38.5%	44.3%	46.8%
Fostering (Internal) – Family & Friends	45	7.4%	7.1%	3.8%	3.7%
Fostering (Internal) – Mainstream	191	31.3%	30.2%	25.5%	22.8%
Independent Living	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.2%
Placed for Adoption	15	2.5%	2.8%	5.3%	6.5%
Placed with Parents	16	2.6%	2.3%	1.9%	2.4%
Residential (External) – Children’s Homes	65	10.6%	10.9%	12.2%	11.6%
Residential (External) – Children’s Homes (Secure Accommodation)	2	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%
Residential (External) - Other	4	0.7%	1.1%	2.1%	1.7%
Residential (External) – Residential School	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Residential (External) – Supported Accommodation	33	5.4%	5.8%	2.6%	2.9%
Residential (Internal) – Children’s Homes	9	1.5%	1.3%	1.6%	1.2%
Total	611	100%	100%	100%	100%

Of those children placed in external Children’s Homes, approximately 4 are placed in Residential Schools which are dual-registered as Children’s Homes. Of those placed in other residential settings, 1 are placed in a hospital, 3 in a YOI.

8.6 Further information about whether the 61 appointed Social Workers have been retained

8.7 In line with other West Midlands authorities, Coventry has been challenged to recruit and retain experienced social workers. Significant progress has been made in recruiting experienced staff to vacancies in Children’s Services social work teams. Ongoing recruitment activity has resulted in 65 social workers being appointed in the last 16 months. 60 social workers have been retained during this period. As at May 2017 there are 12.5 vacancies, this is 16% vacancy rate. A further 10 newly qualified social workers have been appointed and will start in September and 8 experienced social workers have been appointed awaiting recruitment and clearance checks.

8.8 From 21 June 2017 the service launched an Assessment Centre model process to recruit experienced social workers, the process is a more robust streamlined process to appoint a high calibre of social workers.

8.9 How many of the newly recruited social workers had met the accreditation

8.10 The Children and Social Work Bill 2016 which received royal assent on the 28th April 2017 provides the legislative framework that supports accreditation.

- 8.11 The National Accreditation Assessment Social Work (NAAS) has been set up as the DFE delivery vehicle for taking forward Social Work Accreditation across Children and Families Statutory Social Work.
- 8.12 A national consultation on the proposals for Social Work Accreditation and the Practice Supervisor pathway closed in March 2017. The government response to this was delayed due to the General Election. The roll out of the new system of assessment and accreditation for all child and family social workers, practice supervisors and practice leaders will be completed by 2020. An implementation plan has been developed to work out a programme for accrediting newly recruited social workers. This is being led by the Principal Social Worker.

9 Performance Overview

- 9.1 A performance overview of April performance is highlighted in **Appendix 1**.

10 Communication

- 10.1 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 holds open sessions for all staff and gets out and about visiting teams and talking to staff. This has included briefings with frontline staff recently.

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Appendix 1

Performance Overview – April 2017

CAFs	Mar 2017	Apr 2017
Open CAFs	1784	1787
CAFs open to other agencies	458 (24.8%)	454 (25.5%)
% Action Plans completed NFA	109 (58.0%)	65 (48.1%)
% Referral to Social Care	46 (24.5%)	43(31.9%)

Contacts	Mar 2017	Apr 2017
Number of Contacts	1128	930
Completed within timescales	60.7%	54.7%

MASH Assessments	Mar 2017	Apr 2017
Referral to Social Care	385 (86.9%)	265 (81.5%)
Diverted to eCAF	35 (7.9%)	39 (12.0%)

Domestic Violence (Contacts)	Mar 2017	Apr 2017
Number of Contacts	426	304
Completed within timescales	72.3%	62.2%

Referrals & Re-Referrals	Mar 2017	Apr 2017
Referrals	551	385
Re-Referrals	19.2%	14.8%

Children Seen	2016/17	Apr 2017
% seen within 5 working days of Contacts resulting in a Referral	47.6%	26.7%
% seen as part of Children & Families Assessment	98.5%	99.2%

Section 47s	Mar 2017	Apr 2017
S47s	175	190
Section 47 timeliness	84.6%	91.1%

ICPCs	Mar 2017	Apr 2017
Children subject to ICPC	37	43
ICPC timeliness	86.5%	88.4%

Child Protection	Mar 2017	Apr 2017
Child Protection Plans	517	530
% repeat plans	14.3%	19.6%

Looked After Children	2016/17	2017/18 (YTD)
% new LAC previously in care	14.3%	13.3%
% children seen within 1 week of entering care	90.7%	73.3%
% children 3 or more placements	11.5%	10.8%

Care Leavers	2016/17	2017/2018(YTD)
% care leavers in suitable accommodation	95.6%	93.7%
% in Employment, Education or Training	67.5%	66.0%

Missing Children	Mar 2017	2017/2018(YTD)
% RHIs completed	46.2%	68.1%
% of completed RHIs within timescale	86.7%	78.1%