



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

11 January 2018

Subject: Progress on Children's Services Improvement 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 18 October 2017. The report is based on data from September 2017, unless stated otherwise. The next Improvement Board will be held on 10 January 2018.

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
 - 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. AS a result the Department for Education issued an Improvement Notice on 30th June 2014. 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. 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.
- 3.2 The Department for Education (DfE) removed Children's Services from intervention on 13 June 2017, the service is 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. The first six month DfE review will be held on 23 January 2018, followed by a further review in June/July 2018.
- 3.3 To oversee the improvement journey and as a response to the inadequate rating a Children's Service Improvement Board was established. 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.

- 3.4 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 Children's Services Strategic Plan

- 4.1 In response to the Ofsted Inspection, a Children's Services Strategic Plan was published on 20th September 2017. The plan is attached at Appendix 1 and is available via the website link below:
http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/25349/childrens_services_strategic_plan_-_getting_to_good_2017-2018
- 4.2 It is clear there is a commitment from politicians, partners and staff to make a real difference to ensure that children are at the heart of everything we do. The plan sets out how partners in Coventry will work together to achieve this ambition and maintain the pace and energy to implement, embed and sustain the improvement that we have set ourselves.
- 4.3 The Progress against the actions in the new improvement plan demonstrates the progress made in the first three months. This is supported by highlight reports for actions that have been completed demonstrating evidence and impact and how this has been embedded.
- 4.4 The Children's Services Strategic Plan published in September 2017 is showing some slippage with the published timescales due to staff changes in service area/ teams. The revised dates will be re-published in the New Year.

5 Review of the Children's Services Improvement Board

- 5.1 The Independent Chair of the Improvement Board has recommended some further changes to the role of the Improvement Board for the new phase of improvement.
- 5.2 The changes include strengthening the Implementation Group and holding members of the group to account for delivering the improvement plan and reporting up to the Improvement board on issues that need strategic direction. The Implementation Group have met twice in November and December to review progress and Highlight reports submitted to Improvement Board.
- 5.3 The current phase of improvement is a logical time to strengthen relationships with other boards – such as LSCB, Corporate Parenting Board, and the Shadow Board. The revised changes aim to give the Improvement Board a more strategic focus. The improvement is needed to maintain a role and these changes will help shape this further.
- 5.4 The recommendations were noted and agreed by Board members.

6 Re-design of Children's Services

- 6.1 The Children's Services re-design has been implemented. Work has been undertaken with partners to remodel the early help offer for families through the development of family hubs. On the 2nd October eight family hubs opened as the first stage of their development.
- 6.2 The family hubs are located in buildings that were previously used as children's centres and bring together City Council Services such as targeted youth support, children's centre service offer, family support and the children and families first teams. The service are working closely with partners to determine how relevant services can operate out of, and be delivered from, the family hubs. This includes health visiting, police, school nursing, voluntary organisations, midwifery and a range of other

services. The next stage will be to begin the process of building the family hub workforce and designing and delivering a new way of working for families in Coventry.

- 6.3 Work is also in progress to reshape social work teams to align them with the family hub areas bringing together under one management structure both early help and social care functions to ensure a better joined up and more flexible service in the future. The Referral and Assessment service will be absorbed into the area teams so that families are not subject to a change of social worker after their initial contact and assessment. This phase commenced in November. The ICT/MASH will continue to function.
- 6.4 Recruitment to the Operational Lead posts within the new structure has been successfully completed, 12 appointments have been made. Some of the leads are in post and the remaining 5 will commence in January 2018, together the new leads bring a wealth of experience and expertise and will be significant in the next phase of our improvement journey.

7 Communication

- 7.1 The e-newsletter continues to be produced focusing on Children's Services. 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 'getting to good.' 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.

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