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

26 April 2018

Subject: Progress on Children's Services Improvement Plan

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 April 2018. The report is based on data from February 2018, unless stated otherwise. The next Improvement Board will be held on 4 July 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 was 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 twelve 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 Department for Education Review

4.1 The Department for Education conduct 6 month reviews for all 'support and supervision' LA's that have exited intervention. The first 6 month review was held on 23 January 2018. The focus for the visit included:

- Front Door and Assessment
- Recruitment and Retention
- Balancing Restructuring and Improvement Work
- Continuing the momentum for a consistent "Requires Improvement Service"
- A visit to a Family Hub

4.2 Feedback from the visit to the Family Hub was positive. Performance at the front door has risen to a good level; the workforce was described as having a positive story to tell; the structure is based on the journey of the child and is starting to embed. The review went well and the DfE have confirmed that they have received the level of assurance required. A summary report has been received to confirm this.

4.3 The DfE updated Coventry on the DfE's new improvement offer: linking in with Regional Alliances. West Midlands are a pilot area and, following Coventry's judgement of RI, the DfE's improvement team would like to understand more from Coventry about their previous and future improvement journey. It has been agreed that whilst the DfE intervention team will still be the link between DfE and Coventry, the DfE improvement Lead, attended Improvement Board on 11 April and will attend in future.

5 Achieving for Children Improvement Offer

5.1 The Department for Education Partners in Practice programme, Achieving for Children (AfC) is offering support to Coventry as an authority who was judged to be 'requires improvement'. Four areas of support have been scoped for Coventry from March 2018 onwards:

- Troubled Families programme
- ASYE Programme
- Coaching and/or mentoring first line managers
- Quality Assurance

6 Ofsted Focused Visit

6.1 Ofsted's revised new framework includes focused visits to local authorities who are judged to be 'requires improvement' the first visit was held on 30-31 January 2018. Two Inspectors spent two days reviewing the MASH, the front door service and speaking to social workers and partners. Visits were also made to two area social teams to review children in need cases.

6.2 The letter confirming the outcome of the two day focused visit published on 22 February 2018 confirmed that:

- Steady progress is being made
- Leaders understand the service well
- MASH quality of work is showing an improvement since the last inspection
- Inspectors did not see any children at risk of harm
- Following restructuring greater continuity of social workers for children in need, social workers know the children they work with well
- Strong quality assurance framework in place
- Staff are well informed and able to access training and development opportunities

- 6.3 The areas of further development included:
- More needs to be done to strengthen management oversight to benefit from greater consistency in the timeliness and quality of their assessments and plans
 - Some staff experience high numbers of cases
 - Assessments need further development
 - Some evidence of direct work, more extensive use of direct work tools is required

6.4 The areas that have been identified that require improvement are being addressed with Managers.

7 Children's Services re-design

7.1 A programme refresh event was held on 5 February 2018 to review and re-baseline the projects in the programme. The event was also to ensure that everyone had a shared understanding of what is being delivered to transform children's services and improve outcomes for children and delivery of the financial savings targets.

7.2 The event provided some contextual links with the Ofsted Focused visit, and the wider transformation agenda including the financial challenges and how children's services are doing things better to improve services. Updates were provided on progress regarding each of the projects, the approach taken and confirmation of the project team resources to deliver the projects.

7.3 The outcome of the event is the development of revised programme definition document, this is required due to the number of new operational Leads appointed in January 2018. The Children's Services Strategic Plan published on the website will also be updated and aligned with the transformation work. It is anticipated that this will be completed during May 2018.

8 Improvement Progress

8.1 Thirty Highlight reports have been completed in the last quarter demonstrating progress and completion of actions included in the Improvement Plan. Seven of the highlight reports were presented to Improvement Board on 11 April 2018 for further discussion and sign off. These included:

- Action 9.1 Multi agency enquiry panel for forced marriages
- Action 11.2 Review the guidance about responses to domestic abuse referrals
- Action 21.1,21.2,21.3 The Family Group Conference service
- Action 30.1 Health service to review reasons for timescales for health histories
- Action 31.2 Commission an offer and develop a pathway of emotional and mental health support to care leavers
- Action 33.1 Review systems and approaches to improve school attendance
- Action 37.4 Implement a model for effective case/permanence tracking

8.2 The Implementation group and Shadow Board continue to provide scrutiny and challenge to highlight reports prior to Improvement Board.

9 Performance

9.1 Two workshops were held in February and March led by the Director of Children's Services and the Improvement Board Chair. The purpose of the workshop was to review performance indicators and targets for 2018-19 and agree which indicators are the most critical indicators to Children's Services and agree format for reporting to Improvement Board. New targets and indicators will be reported on from April 2018.

9.2 Eighteen Critical performance indicators have been agreed as a result of the performance workshop. The following critical performance indicators will be reported to the next Improvement Board on 4 July 2018:

ID	Description	Target
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CPI1	Contact completion timeliness (1 working day)	75.0%
CPI2	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Assessment completion timeliness	70.0%
CPI3	% Re-Referrals (Referrals started within 12 months of a previous Referral start date)	<19%
CPI4	Children seen within 7 working days of being Referred to Children's Services	90.0%
CPI5	Children & Family Assessment Timeliness (45 working days)	90.0%
CPI6	Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) held within timescale (0 to 15 working days)	88.0%
CPI7	% repeat Child Protection Plans	<17%
CPI8	% subject to statutory visit during the 4 weeks prior to month-end	95.0%
CPI9	% new episodes of care where the child was previously looked after in the previous 12 months	<8%
CPI10	% LAC statutory visits to children in placement for less than 12 months	95.0%
CPI11	% LAC Initial Care Plans recorded within 10 working days	80.0%
CPI12	% LAC with 3 or more placements in the previous 12 months	<9%
CPI13	% LAC long-term stability	75.0%
CPI14	A1 - Average number of days between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children that have been adopted	426 days
CPI15	% first LAC Review held within timescale	98.0%
CPI16	% care leavers EET	95.0%
CPI17	% care leavers in suitable accommodation	95.0%
CPI18	% up-to-date management oversight	95.0%

10 Overview Summary

10.1 The last three months highlights how important this phase of the improvement journey is, the Improvement plan progress and highlight reports demonstrates the progress and changes moving forward. Positive feedback from both the Department for Education and Ofsted demonstrates the service are on the right track and making steady progress. There is still have a lot to do, but Children's Services continues to make good progress with the completion of a number of actions in the Improvement plan.

11 Communications

11.1 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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