

UPDATE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PLAN

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REASON FOR ITEM

The purpose of this paper is to provide a briefing report on the development of improvement activities that have been incorporated into the Children and Young People's Services Improvement Plan (SIP). The SIP has been developed to provide a framework for ongoing improvement activity within the service with the intention of providing an 'outstanding' service to the children and young people of Hillingdon. The SIP also includes the 11 residual actions from the Ofsted improvement plan. .

SUGGESTED COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. **Notes** the contents of this paper.
2. **Endorses** the Service Improvement plan.
3. **Endorses** the proposal within this paper to report back to the Children, Young People & Learning Policy Overview Committee in July 2015.

INFORMATION

Background

- 1 To achieve the service vision, this plan has been developed using seven work streams (see below). It outlines the priority areas of activity required to improve the overall level of provision for children receiving services from social care. The plan also acknowledges the urgency required to deliver better outcomes for the children within Hillingdon. This plan enhances the work already completed as part of the Ofsted Improvement Plan 2014 and ensures that recent improvements are sustained and built upon.
- 2 In order to deliver the required improvements the first work stream relates to the development of a stable workforce which is capable of undertaking good quality assessments, offer defined interventions, engage effectively with families and partners, and deliver timely decision-making for children at critical points across the Children's Pathway.
- 3 The plan has the political, corporate and senior leadership needed to deliver the improvements required. Implementation of the plan will be monitored through the Senior Management Team within Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) and overseen by the Performance Monitoring Board chaired by the Chief Executive. Accountability for delivery of the plan has primarily been devolved to the Assistant

Directors who have responsibility for improving outcomes for their respective service areas.

- 4 The improvement plan is designed to deliver a sustainable improvement programme through good social work practice. The high level work streams are:
 1. Workforce development
 2. Performance improvement work in Triage, MASH and Children Social Work Teams
 3. Defining new ways of working within the CSWTs
 4. Improving outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC) and Young People
 5. Improving the quality of Fostering & Adoption provision
 6. Embedding new ways of working and improved practice management arrangements
 7. Effective Quality Assurance

Contextual Information

- 5 In August 2014 the level of risk in the Children's Social Work Teams was deemed to be unacceptably high. This followed a high degree of disruption and changes in all levels of management and staffing within the service. A significant additional amount of resource was committed to the service which was used to implement a range of recovery actions and ensure that the service was stabilised. The recovery actions have successfully stabilised the service and the SIP will now drive forward further work to embed and sustain service improvements.

Service Priorities

- 6 The overarching priorities within the plan are:
 - That the whole service maintains a relentless focus on good outcomes for children.
 - Deliver a successful recruitment plan coupled with the implementation of a flatter management structure as part of a wider effective workforce plan to ensure good practice management, training and supervision (see work stream 1 and 6).
 - Maintain good Triage, MASH, Social Work Teams to work with children and families at an early stage to prevent the need for further intervention where possible (see work streams 2 and 3).
 - Deliver a range of good outcomes for LAC to be achieved through timely court intervention, focused care planning, and good participation from children and young people in their care planning (see work streams 4 and 5).
 - Embed the Quality Assurance Framework to deliver good practice management, oversight, and good casework practice throughout the service (see work stream 7).
 - Ensure good value for money by getting the spend over 2015-16 for CYPS in line with base budget, primarily by transitioning out of the Skylakes contract and reducing the number of agency / interim staff across the social care workforce (see work stream 1 and 6).

- 7 The SIP includes a set a quality assurance programme as detailed in work stream 7 and will include the effective implementation of the Quality Assurance Framework to ensure good management oversight and an evidence based approach to the improvement activity.
- 8 The specific actions related to the seven work streams are encapsulated within the Social Care Improvement Action plan which is the main appendix of the SIP.

Benchmarking against statistical neighbours

- 9 The SIP and action plan are based on an assessed level of demand and need which has been benchmarked against statistical neighbours and national averages:
 - Referral and assessment have a maximum of 45 days to conclude their assessment. The current staffing levels have improved performance in this area with the Assessment Teams currently achieving 30 day average.
 - The volume assumptions have been tested against benchmarking with other local authorities to ensure that the whole service is comfortably within the range expected for good outcomes.
 - The service has achieved the need to maintain caseloads at an average of no more than 18 cases per qualified social worker. There will be a differential within this average figure across the different service teams to take into account the variances in work patterns. For example social workers in assessment teams will have an average of 15 whilst those in Children in Need teams will have 18.

Workforce strategy

- 10 As reported to the Committee previously, a critical element of the SIP will be the successful recruitment of permanent staff coupled with the implementation of a flatter management structure. The SIP will deliver a social work structure built around a model of one team manager with a maximum of 6 social workers to supervise. This will strengthen accountability for good practice within the teams and will maintain the pod business support system. This SIP will also implement the advanced practitioner role to work with the QA service to improve practice quality and offer practice leadership. Work stream 1 includes details of the workforce strategy to deliver effective recruitment into the social work teams.

Further Review and Report Back to Children, Young People & Learning (CYPL) Policy Overview Committee (POC)

- 11 It is proposed that the SIP be subject to quarterly reports to the CYPL POC and that the next detailed progress report will be submitted in July 2015.

Tony Zaman
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Children's Social Care Services Improvement Plan 2015 - 16
2. Children's Social Care Service Improvement Action Plan 2015 - 16