

Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Report to Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Date: 13th February 2014

Subject: Recommendation Tracking – External Placements

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. This report sets out the progress made in responding to the recommendations arising from the previous Scrutiny review of External Placements published on the 28th of February 2012.
2. The Scrutiny recommendation tracking system allows the Scrutiny Board to monitor progress and identify completed recommendations; those progressing to plan; and those where there is either an obstacle or progress is not adequate. The Board will then be able to take further action as appropriate.

Recommendations

3. Members are asked to:
 - Agree those recommendations which no longer require monitoring;
 - Identify any recommendations where progress is unsatisfactory and determine the action the Board wishes to take as a result.
 - Note the recommendations where satisfactory progress is being made.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report sets out the progress made in responding to the recommendations arising from the previous Scrutiny review of External Placements.

2 Background information

- 2.1 It was agreed in June 2011 that the Childrens and Families Scrutiny Board that the first major piece of work for 2011/12 would be an inquiry on which would look into reducing the need for children to be looked after by the local authority.
- 2.2 At its meeting in February 2012, the Scrutiny Board agreed a report summarising its observations, conclusions and recommendations.
- 2.3 The Scrutiny recommendation tracking system allows the Board to monitor progress and identify completed recommendations; those progressing to plan; and those where there is either an obstacle or progress is not adequate. The Board will then be able to take further action as appropriate.
- 2.4 The Board considered progress against recommendations at the meeting in July and December 2012. The Board concluded that recommendations 1- 6, 8 and 10-12 were complete and therefore no further tracking is required.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 A standard set of criteria has been produced to enable the Board to assess progress. These are presented in the form of a flow chart at Appendix 1. The questions in the flow chart should help to decide whether a recommendation has been completed, and if not whether further action is required.
- 3.2 To assist Members with this task the Principal Scrutiny Adviser, in liaison with the Chair, has given a draft status for each recommendation. The Board is asked to confirm whether these assessments are appropriate and to change them where they are not. Details of progress against each recommendation are set out within the table at Appendix 2.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 Where internal or external consultation processes have been undertaken with regard to responding to the Scrutiny Board's recommendations, details of any such consultation will be referenced against the relevant recommendation within the table at Appendix 2.
- 4.1.2 The Executive Board Member for Children's Services has been consulted on the response to the recommendations.

4.2 Equality and Diversity/Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 Where consideration has been given to the impact on equality areas, as defined in the Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme, this will be referenced against the relevant recommendation within the table at Appendix 2.

4.3 Council Policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 This section is not relevant to this report.

4.4 Resources and Value for Money

4.4.1 Details of any significant resource and financial implications linked to the Scrutiny recommendations will be referenced against the relevant recommendation within the table at Appendix 2.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 This report does not contain any exempt or confidential information.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 This section is not relevant to this report.

5 Conclusions

5.1 The Scrutiny recommendation tracking system allows the Board to monitor progress and identify completed recommendations. Progress in responding to those recommendations arising from the Scrutiny review of External Placements is detailed within the table at Appendix 2 for Members' consideration.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Members are asked to:

- Agree those recommendations which no longer require monitoring;
- Identify any recommendations where progress is unsatisfactory and determine the action the Board wishes to take as a result.
- Note the recommendations where satisfactory progress is being made.

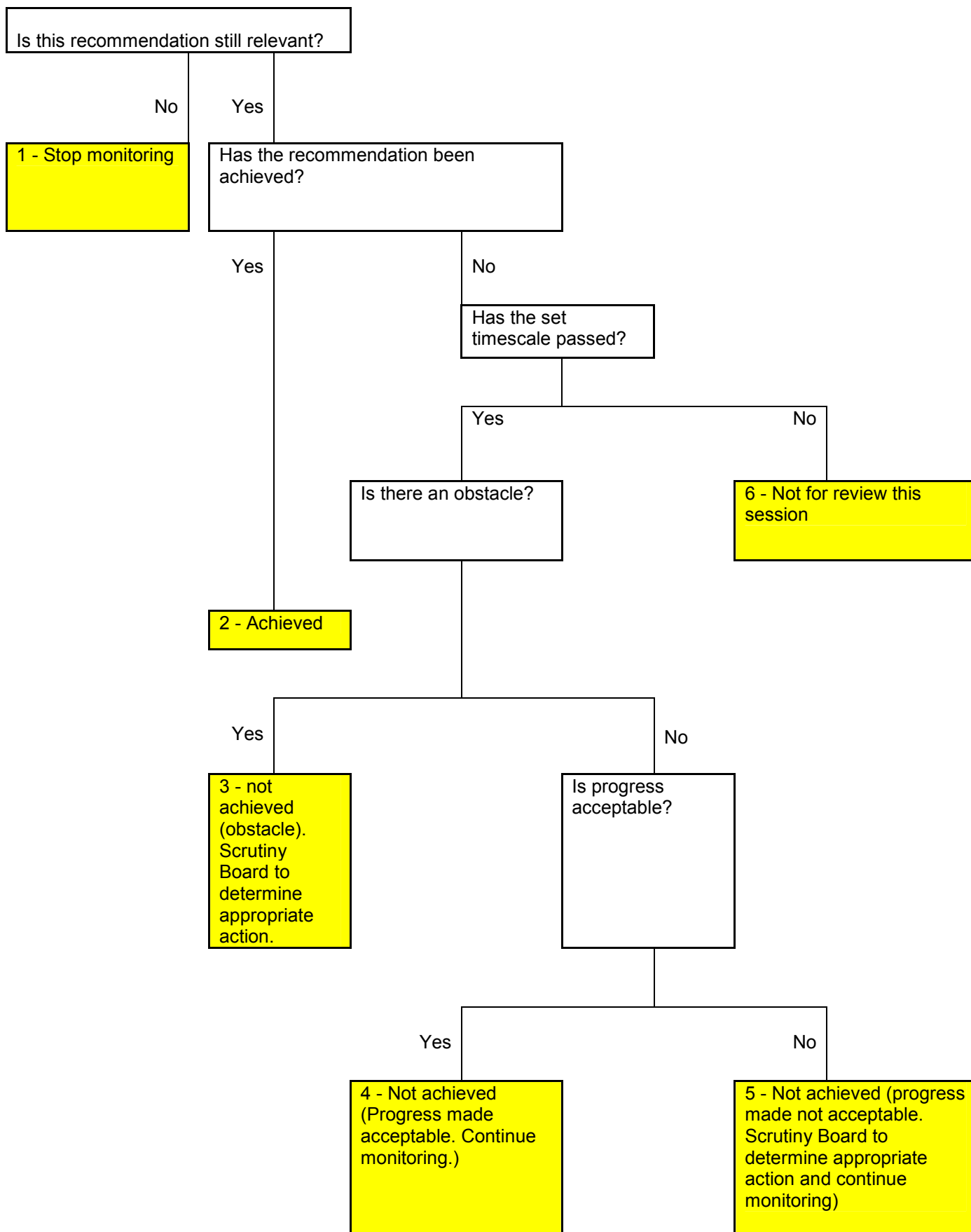
7 Background documents¹

7.2 Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development to the Children and Families Scrutiny Board – Inquiry on External Placements 9th February 2012

7.3 Report of the Director of Children's Services to the Children and Families Scrutiny Board 'Response to Scrutiny inquiry report – external placements' 26th April 2012.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

Recommendation tracking flowchart and classifications:
Questions to be Considered by Scrutiny Boards



Review of External Placements Inquiry (February 2014)

Categories

- 1 - Stop monitoring
- 2 - Achieved
- 3 - Not achieved (Obstacle)
- 4 - Not achieved (Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring)
- 5 - Not achieved (Progress made not acceptable. Continue monitoring)
- 6 - Not for review this session

Recommendation for monitoring	Evidence of progress and contextual information	Status (categories 1 – 6) (to be completed by Scrutiny)	Complete
<p>Recommendation 7 That the Director of Children’s Services reviews the payment structure for foster care with particular reference to the impact of the differential between in-house and independent fostering agency rates and reports to the Scrutiny Board with the outcome of this review in July 2012</p>	<p>26th July position:</p> <p>A review of the payment structure for Leeds foster carers has been completed and a number of options for increasing fees have been identified. It is planned that we will consult with carers on these options over the Summer and implement the new arrangements in September. The review of the arrangements has taken account of the payments made to carers by Independent Fostering Agencies, neighbouring authorities and the significant increase in the number of babies and young children becoming looked after in Leeds. It is recommended that a full report is presented to the Committee on the outcome of the consultation in September.</p>		

	<p>13th December position:</p> <p>Following consultation with carers we have agreed to undertake further work on the current payment structure. A working group with foster carers is being established and this will report on the options to carers in January 2013 and the revised structure will be in place from the 1st of April 2013.</p> <p>Current Position:</p> <p>The new payment structure for Leeds Foster Carers was agreed with carers and implemented in October 2013. The new arrangements mean that currently foster carers in Leeds are paid at 90% of the Fostering Network allowances and in April they will be paid the Fostering Network Rates. This will be the first time that Leeds has matched Fostering Network Rates.</p> <p>The revised pay structure, Corporate Offer for Leeds Foster Carers and the extensive support provided to our carers means that Leeds has an excellent offer for foster carers.</p> <p>From the 31 March 2013 to the end of January we have recruited a further 53 mainstream carers. Twenty five of these carers previously fostered for Independent Fostering Agencies.</p>	2	
<p>Recommendation 9 That the Director of Children’s Services works with the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods to secure support from the ALMOs to meet the accommodation needs of foster carers.</p>	<p>26th July position:</p> <p>The directors of children's services and environment and neighbourhoods and their senior leadership teams meet regularly. There is already a protocol in place with environment and neighbourhoods and ALMOs which ensures that foster carers and</p>		

	<p>kinship carers have priority status. Children's services have established good links with Housing ALMOs and are working with them to identify suitable properties to support the redesign of residential services.</p> <p>13th December 2012 position:</p> <p>We continue to work closely with colleagues in the Environment and Neighbourhoods Directorate. For example, since the last meeting we have increased the funding available to support vulnerable children through housing options by £50,000</p> <p>Current Position:</p> <p>Children's Services have continued to develop very positive relationships with colleagues in Leeds Housing.</p> <p>The Head of Service for Looked After Children meets regularly with representatives from Leeds Housing and also with the Head of Housing Support. This has ensured that foster carers have had an excellent response when support with Housing has been required.</p>	2	
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