

Leeds Children's Services Priority Improvement Plan

DRAFT – WORK IN PROGRESS

Strategic Aim: 1. Effective leadership and governance of integrated children's services in Leeds				
Ref.	Priority	Lead	Timescale	Progress to date
1.1	Appoint a new DCS	CX	Jan 2010 – Interim Summer 2010 - Permanent	Current DCS will retire on 31 st Dec 2009. Discussions are taking place with recruitment consultants to find an interim DCS to start in the new year.
1.2	Implement new Leadership and Governance arrangements for Children's Services	CX/ACE with interim DCS	Commence implementation early 2010	A diagnostic review of children's services is nearing completion and will report findings to Members before Christmas. The review will propose fundamental changes to the current management and leadership arrangements for children's services in Leeds.
1.3	Establish a clear accountability framework for the delivery of outcomes for C&YP at a local level	Interim DCS	Aug 2010	Locality working arrangements already exist however greater clarity over accountability and responsibility needs to be established.
1.4	Create a new Children's Trust Board with appropriate governance arrangements at both citywide and local level	Interim DCS	April 2010	The review of children's services nearing completion will make proposals regarding the structure, membership and governance of the Children's Trust Board.

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1.5	Revise the CYPP	Interim DCS/ Children's Trust Board	TBC	CYPP will be revised in light of the new statutory guidance and the outcomes from our Announced Inspection.
1.6	Establish robust commissioning arrangements	Interim DCS	TBC	The council has an agreed Children's Services commissioning framework in place but this will be re-visited as part of the Children's Services review.
1.7	Develop a strong performance management culture and framework, and develop robust quality assurance systems	Interim DCS	TBC	Capacity within the Children's Services Performance Team has been increased and performance reporting arrangements strengthened. Improved quality assurance arrangements have been introduced, particularly in the areas of; referral; care assessment; and review.
1.8	Consider requirements for budget realignment to support delivery of children's services priorities	CX/ACE	February 2010	Additional budget provision has already been made for 2009/10 to ensure urgent improvements in safeguarding practice.

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Strategic Aim: 2. A highly skilled, well supported, motivated and continually developing workforce				
Ref.	Priority	Lead	Completion Date	Progress to date
2.1	Produce workforce development plan for C&YP services to include recruitment, retention, training and skills development	Ken Morton/ Catherine Marchant	June 2010	Work is underway to develop a Children's Workforce Strategy. Within Social Care a programme of fortnightly managers seminars have been held since July 2009. These have focused on ensuring quality and consistency of social worker practice. A business case is being worked up for investment in a structured programme of training and development for social care staff.
2.2	Ensure staff are enabled to carry out their responsibilities efficiently by provision of effective IT systems and adequate administrative support	TBC	TBC	An independent review of our electronic social care records system was completed in the summer and concluded our system was not fit for purpose. Consideration is currently being given to how we best manage the transition to a new system.
2.3	Ensure C&YP Social Care staff have appropriate and manageable workloads, and are kept under regular supervision	Jackie Wilson	TBC	Improved levels of supervision have been introduced and this will be supplemented by the recruitment of 12 Advanced Practitioners early in the new year who will provide direct support to social workers in managing their caseloads.

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2.4	Ensure all staff understand their respective roles and responsibilities as part of an integrated C&YP's workforce.	Jackie Wilson	TBC	See 2.1 above.
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Strategic Aim: 3. Excellent safeguarding standards and practice				
Ref.	Priority	Lead	Completion Date	Progress to date
3.1	Establishment of high quality operational procedures with strict compliance, good record keeping and clear risk assessed decision making backed up by excellent quality assurance processes	Jackie Wilson	On-going	Procedure handbook for social care completely revised and relaunched on 25 Nov. A new quality framework has been developed in social care, setting out service standards, roles and responsibilities of staff and managers in QA activity, and a set of audit tools has been put in place.
3.2	Revise the operation of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board to ensure it is able to carry out all its functions effectively	CX/Interim DCS/ Chair LSCB	April 2010	LSCB review commissioned and about to report.
3.3	Improve early intervention and prevention by: good information sharing; adherence to clear thresholds; use of CAF; and effective inter-agency working	DCS	On-going	Suite of clear and succinct threshold guidance documents produced and distributed across the partnership. Monitoring of implementation is in place. System established in the contact centre to identify and redirect appropriately referrals made into the contact centre that are not for direct action by social care. Where social care thresholds are not met callers are directed to support from another service. Re-routed cases are being followed up to ensure effective services are delivered.

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Strategic Aim: 4. All young people participating fully, socially and economically				
Ref.	Priority	Lead	Completion Date	Progress to date
4.1	Implement an action plan to reduce the numbers of NEET (including the number of unknowns)	Sally Threlfall	TBC	Connexions service have been re-commissioned with a new main provider in place since April 2009. Providers have been challenged during Nov 09 about tracking processes to address continuing unacceptable levels of Not Knowns.
4.2	Improve attainment with particular focus on under-achieving groups (e.g. LAC, relevant BME pupils, SEN, Free School meals)	Chris Edwards	On-going	The focus on priority groups has increased and is evident in core school improvement work including use of data and target setting. Study support, mentoring programmes and personalised packages are provided for priority groups. Increased focus has been given to ensuring LAC and SEN pupils are entered for appropriate qualifications.
4.3	Improve school attendance with a particular focus on secondary schools and persistent absentees	Chris Edwards	On-going	The Attendance Strategy Team is focusing on a locality based delivery model, allocated according to need. Service responsiveness has been improved by deploying attendance officers to clusters rather than individual schools. Targeted activity has resulted in the greatest impact on persistent absence in priority schools.

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4.4	Improve achievement at early years foundation stage	Chris Edwards	TBC	Communication with head teachers, children's centres and other relevant staff about the Foundation Stage Profile and Early Years outcomes duty has raised awareness. An early year's advisory post has been established. Data has been analysed and shared to support a focus on children in the bottom 20%.
4.5	Reduce teenage pregnancy rates	Sarah Sinclair	TBC	Activity is being orchestrated at a local level in the 6 identified 'hotspot' wards for teenage pregnancy. A comprehensive action plan is being implemented.
4.6	Reduce the numbers of young people involved in burglary	Simon Whitehead	TBC	Safer Leeds has incorporated best practice from better performing areas into its action plans for dealing with burglary. Partners have developed a joint intelligence function and tasking process to support the identification and management of offenders. This is reducing the reoffending of the most prolific offenders and coordinates the resources of all partners to target the offenders who are identified as causing the most harm to communities.

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Strategic Aim: 5. Improve outcomes for looked after children				
Ref.	Priority	Lead	Completion Date	Progress to date
5.1	Improve placements	Jackie Wilson	On-going	Improvements to the fostering service, focusing on reducing the number of children in large foster care households resulted in a satisfactory inspection rating in July 2009. All children's residential homes are now at least satisfactory. The Private Fostering action plan has been fully implemented.
5.2	Reduce the number in care and time spent in care	Jackie Wilson	On-going	The numbers of children in care although still relatively high have remained steady despite increased referrals both locally and nationally. This is due to focused activity to move children out of care and into permanent placements. We are also having some success through programmes working with families to prevent children coming into care.

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5.3	Ensure effective planning for children and young people in care and leaving care	Jackie Wilson	On-going	Greater emphasis on quality assurance and compliance with procedures is improving planning and reviewing. The dedicated health team for LAC has significantly improved performance in health needs assessment. The pathway planning team works in partnership to deliver advice and support to care leavers. Accommodation has improved through specific commissioning.
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