

Children's Services Improvement Board **Key Information from the Report to Executive Board**

A proposal regarding the establishment of the new Board was formally made to Dawn Primarolo MP, Minister of State for Children Young People and Families, in a letter from the Leaders of Council dated 4 December 2009, which also included an early draft of our improvement plan.

The Minister responded on the 7 December 2009 confirming her support for the proposal and this was then subject to a press announcement by the Minister on the same day (7 December 2009) of the action being taken.

The Board will be led by an independent chair and Bill McCarthy, Chief Executive of NHS Yorkshire and the Humber, has kindly agreed to fulfill this role. He will be supported by a small strategic board consisting of the following representatives:

- i) Cllr Golton, Lead Member for Children's Services.
- ii) Paul Rogerson, Chief Executive of Leeds City Council.
- iii) Chief Superintendent Gerry Broadbent, Leeds North East Divisional Commander, West Yorkshire Police.
- iv) Peter Roberts, Chief Executive of Leeds City College.
- v) John Lawlor, Chief Executive of NHS Leeds.
- vi) An external children's services professional (e.g. a DCS from another authority, or Chair of a Safeguarding Children Board) – to be appointed.

The Board will also be attended by key officers of the Council, including the Assistant Chief Executive (Planning, Policy and Improvement), who will be the key corporate officer supporting the Chair. Senior colleagues from children's services and Education Leeds will also report into the Board as required.

We have also extended an invite for a GOYH representative, as well as a member of the DCSF Intervention team, to also attend the Improvement Board in an observer capacity.

The work of the Improvement Board will be enshrined in an Improvement Plan, incorporating not only the key inspection findings from both the unannounced and the more recent announced inspections, but also the outcomes of the significant review of children's services leadership, governance and partnership arrangements that we have been conducting over recent weeks and which will report shortly.

We also propose to include within the Improvement Plan other key performance issues, such as our response to the National Challenge on school performance; improvements on NEETs and other related children's services priorities.

We will be finalising this Improvement Plan following publication of the inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children services which will be published on 7 January 2010. It is anticipated that this Improvement Plan will be finalised and approved by both the Council and the Improvement Board during February/ March 2010.

The Minister of State for Children, Young People and Families has also indicated that she may issue an Improvement Notice which would set out the targets and milestones the Minister expects to see delivered over the coming months.

If the Minister is minded to issue such a notice, we will receive a draft copy of this prior to formal issue and our improvement plan will need, therefore, to be amended to incorporate relevant aspects of such Improvement Notice.

The Chair of the board will report every two months to both the city council leadership and the Minister of State for Children, Young People and Families.

It is also proposed that the internally led improvement board continue, in order to provide a supporting role for the externally led board, but also to ensure that sufficient corporate focus is given to responding to the improvement issues identified. In order to avoid any confusion between the two boards, the internally led board is proposed to be re-titled as the "Children's Services Improvement Support Group".