

## **Children's Services Improvement Plan : Current developments and next steps 14 February 2011**

### **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Improvement Board with an update on the current strategic context for progress against the recommendations within the Improvement Plan, to sit alongside the more detailed reports on safeguarding which provide the main focus for the meeting.

### **2. Context**

- 2.1 At the January meeting the Board received a stock-take of progress against the Improvement Plan to inform areas of focus and priorities for the coming months. A small number of amendments were made to recommendations within the monitoring report, with the Board expressing a view that it would wish to continue to monitor these until further evidence or progress had been secured. These amendments have been incorporated, a summary of which is attached at Annex A, for completeness, and which the Board is invited to note.
- 2.2 A forward work programme for the period February to May 2011 was also broadly agreed at the last Board meeting. This programme takes the Board to the next six month review of performance and key targets, which will form the basis of the update report on the Improvement Notice which is submitted to the Department for Education.

### **3. Unannounced inspection and other inspection updates**

- 3.1 At the last Board meeting reports from the recent inspections of the adoption and youth offending services, both of which were very positive, were considered. In January of this year Ofsted undertook an unannounced inspection of contact, referral, and assessment, which is of particular significance for the work of the Board. The feedback we have received to date and the contents of the draft letter are both very positive. The final release of the report is scheduled for 16 February 2011. There will be an opportunity to update the Board on the outcome of the unannounced inspection elsewhere on the agenda.
- 3.2 Since Ofsted commenced inspecting children's centres in September 2010, eight centres have been inspected, of which one was assessed as being outstanding, five good and two satisfactory. Of the schools inspected in the current academic year, 45% were judged to be good or better in their overall effectiveness (82% good or better for the effectiveness of their safeguarding procedures). The cycle of inspections of our residential homes identifies that of the thirteen inspected 62% are good, with the remainder satisfactory.

### **4. The current financial context**

- 4.1 The creation of the new integrated Children's Services Directorate is providing an opportunity to fundamentally review the Children's Services budget to enable us to support our new priorities in the light of changing national policy,

increasing service demands and the significant reduction in national grants and funding.

4.2 The overall strategy for the Children's Services budget 2011/12 seeks to protect the services that support the most vulnerable children, young people and families in the city (a full copy of the budget strategy is available if required). The budget strategy recognises the continuing demand pressures around the number of requests for service, the increasing number of referrals to social care, increasing numbers of children with a child protection plan and the increasing number of children and young people looked after in the care system. It assumes that the integration of services will provide radical opportunities to deliver many services in new ways, bringing together the best of voluntary, private and other statutory sector partners in localities and shaping more services around our schools and children's centres. It also assumes significant changes in commissioned services and management reductions, and an increasing emphasis on joint investment e.g. health/schools/ council.

**5. The Children and Young People's Plan and use of an outcomes based accountability approach to 'turn the curve' on key priorities**

5.1 In last month's report to the Board we explained how an 'outcomes based accountability' (OBA) approach, providing a method for engaging partners in discussion on how to move from priorities to action, would be used to provide a framework to help us address our key priorities more effectively together. The OBA methodology adopts an approach to developing action plans by asking: how well are we performing in this area; what are the causes of the trends and the issues lying behind them; and how can partners work together to improve outcomes.

5.2 Workshops were held in January where this approach was applied to the three key areas (known as 'our obsessions') of reducing the number of Looked After Children (LAC), reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and improving school attendance. Over 120 representatives from across all partners attended these workshops, which were the first steps towards using OBA across children's services and potentially beyond that across council services. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and there is agreement that the approach is simple, effective and should be consistently adopted across Children Leeds. Colleagues are anxious that theory is translated into practice as quickly as possible. The outcomes from these first workshops have been shared with the Children's Trust Board which has agreed to pool resources to help turn the theory into practice and roll out OBA in Leeds.

5.3 The workshop outputs are being used to develop action plans for these three key areas which will be picked up in the new Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) due for publication in July 2010. There will be a further round of consultation on the draft CYPP with partners and children and young people in late February/March. The final plan will be considered by the Children's Trust Board and Scrutiny in the March cycle for final approval by Council in July 2011. Notwithstanding that timetable the implementation of the action

plans will start as soon as possible. The event report and presentation material is available if required.

- 5.4 Finally, in terms of progressing the use of OBA, additional awareness sessions are being organised to increase the number of staff in teams across the partnership who have an understanding of how to use OBA and more intensive training will be undertaken to enable staff to themselves deliver OBA sessions and introduce OBA to others. It is intended, also, that we will carry out facilitated sessions with front line practitioners in a few areas of the city, using local data and information, identifying local curves to turn and tell the local stories behind the baselines. The aim is to get the approach into localities where need is greatest and to start making a real difference to children and families.

## **6. Children's Services Transformation Programme update**

- 6.1 At the last Board meeting members received an update on the progress being made on the transformation programme. The proposals being progressed were informed by local and national policy developments and reflected the emerging financial situation for local partners. At the heart of the proposals is an increased emphasis on locality working with locally led and managed targeted services. These will sit alongside universal services which will be expected to have increasing responsibility for building the capacity to deliver preventative and extended services to meet additional need.

- 6.2 Since the last Board report progress on the transformation programme has included :

- The formation of a multi agency implementation team and holding of a number of development sessions in January to focus on scoping the next steps. The outcomes are now being developed into a work programme to bring clarity, highlight priorities and support new ways of working. The work will be supported by an extensive communication strategy to engage and inform partners and stakeholders.
- Work to implement the tier two and tier three leadership structure for the new integrated children services directorate. Recruitment to the four tier two posts will hopefully commence in March. The draft proposals for the senior management structure are due to be released for consultation with staff and trade unions very soon. There has been communications with background information for senior managers, a note for all staff, and a leadership event is planned for 4 March 2011.
- The Making Integration Work for Children Board is progressing work on integrated processes including: the development of the Common Assessment Framework; review of learning from integrated service leader posts; area panels and the Early Intervention Fund; improving information sharing; and ensuring there are robust arrangements in place for managing contact and referrals through the city council's contact centre.

- The CYPSC remodelling is progressing with a detailed analysis of sustained workload increases to challenge and refresh previous redesign proposals. A verbal update can be provided at the meeting.
- A review of all existing workforce development programmes is being undertaken with a view to having a new interim workforce programme in place by September 2011. A leadership development programme for newly appointed leaders and managers is being supported by NCSL funding.
- Progress towards locality working is being made which includes: reviewing cluster and area geographies; governance and accountability arrangements; using outcomes based accountability approaches at locality level to make progress on agreed priorities; and the development of an operational handbook to support more effective locality working.
- A secondary school headteacher has been seconded to the post of Strategic Leader for Education Integration to take forward developments around the new relationship with schools, which will reflect the changing role of the local authority, focused upon: commissioning excellent provision for local children and young people; owning school improvement across the local area; leading on admissions and promoting fair access to all services; and being local champions for social justice. The school improvement service offer (prospectus) is due to be published in mid February. It will make plain the proposals by which the city council will undertake its statutory and moral role as a local authority and identify how enhanced support will be provided to ensure that the city's priorities are reflected in the allocation of resources across all schools and other providers. Seconded headteachers have commenced work on remodelling commissioned services to schools and reviewing the implications of having schools at the heart of locality arrangements.

6.3 The design and development stage for the model for integrated children's services has been overseen by the Children's Services Transformation Board. Following agreement of the proposed direction by both the Children's Trust Board and Executive Board the implementation phase is now commencing, presenting an appropriate time to split actions for the 'mainly council' directorate and those from the 'council and partner' practice, locality and workforce issues. It has therefore been agreed that the former, primarily the new leadership and staffing structure, are progressed through the Children's Services Leadership Team. The 'council and partner' issues are to be considered by a newly constituted a Workforce Reform and Practice Development Sub Group, responsible for developing and implementing the workforce strategy and driving delivery of locality and multi agency integrated working.

6.4 Activity to deliver the Education Leeds contract closure and lead out plan, which has been approved by the Education Leeds Board and Executive Board, is progressing well and to timescale. The main challenges revolve around workforce planning and specifically determining the numbers and kinds of skills required in the new integrated directorate. Education Leeds staff

will transfer to the city council on 1 April 2011 on their current terms and conditions of service (TUPE) and with their current management reporting arrangements in those circumstances where the new structure is not yet fully implemented. Induction and governance training will be provided for all Education Leeds staff transferring to the Council.

- 6.5 The contract agreement between the city council and Education Leeds has been reviewed so that there is clarity and agreement about the scope of education statutory functions which will be transferred back to the local authority. All IT equipment, software, licences and data securely will transfer to the city council and discussions are ongoing regarding the information management services which will continue to be provided to schools. The transfer of assets and liabilities, various tax reconciliations and the preparation of the final years company accounts will be progressed after 31 March 2011. Arrangements are in hand to reassign all Education Leeds contracts and agreements to the city council.

## **7 Other developments**

- 7.1 There are a range of other developments within the directorate and across the partnership. There is an increasing confidence that the new ambitions will be delivered, although the changing financial and policy context and the level of change will present a challenge as well as an opportunity. There is optimism and willingness to make progress.

## Annex A

### Summary of proposed categorisation of Improvement Plan recommendations

<b>CSIB</b>	Continued monitoring by the Improvement Board, but with recommendations being regrouped
<b>Other</b>	Monitoring by other accountable body, but may be referenced in thematic reports to the Improvement Board
<b>Closed</b>	Actions against recommendation complete and therefore can be closed with no further reporting to the Improvement Board

<b>THEME 1 : EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE OF INTEGRATED CHILDREN'S SERVICES</b>	
1.1.1 Design, develop and implement an Integrated Children's Services delivery model	<b>CSIB</b>
1.2.1 Develop and agree an implementation plan for a new and effective performance management arrangements for children's services. Subset of 1.1.1	<b>Other</b>
1.2.2 Create a single commissioning function made up of all relevant commissioning resources from across council provided children's services. Subset of 1.1.1	<b>Other</b>
1.2.3 Within six months develop and begin implementation of a service review programme for commissioned services (as part of the performance management framework) (Commissioning and Finance)	<b>Closed</b>
1.2.4 Immediately undertake a full evaluation of the allocation of children's service resources, to ensure that the capacity of the workforce is sufficient to meet the demand for service at the published threshold and redesign current children's services base budget to reflect new practices and model of integrated processes	<b>CSIB</b>
1.2.5 Create a new Children's Trust Board to strengthen partnership and co-operation arrangements and strategic oversight.	<b>Closed</b>
1.2.6 Design, Develop and implement an integrated business support and commissioning delivery model. Subset of 1.1.1	<b>Other</b>
1.3.1 Ensure the effective closure of the Education Leeds Contract	<b>CSIB</b>
1.4.1 Ensure the Transformation Programme is supported by effective integrated processes	<b>CSIB</b>
<b>THEME 2 : EXCELLENT SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS AND PRACTICE</b>	
2.1.1 Immediately improve the timeliness and quality of social work responses for assessments, case planning and recording, including the analysis of risk, to meet minimum standards.	<b>CSIB</b>
2.1.2 The council will ensure, through the establishment of a rigorous performance management and quality assurance system, that the quality of referrals and assessments are monitored (including quality assuring recording)	<b>Closed</b>
2.1.3 Within three months ensure children and young people and their parents receive information on how to make complaints and gain access to the advocacy service	<b>Closed</b>
2.1.4 Improve the satisfaction of children and families	<b>CSIB</b>
2.1.5 Immediately ensure that the capacity for the delivery of child protection conferences matches the demand for service and ensure that child protection core group meetings are effective and actions and outcomes for individual children are monitored against their child protection plan.	<b>CSIB</b>
2.1.6 Within three months ensure the involvement of children, young people and their families in the child protection process is consolidated and records demonstrate that practice is being implemented effectively and their views taken into account.	<b>CSIB</b>
2.1.7 Within six months complete an analysis of why there is such a high proportion of children who are the subject of a child protection plan for two or more years.	<b>Closed</b>
2.1.8 Improve the response to child protection referrals to meet statutory guidelines, and ensure discussions with the police and other agencies take place in a timely manner in all relevant circumstances, as set out in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'	<b>CSIB</b>
2.1.9 The Council needs to ensure that it has effective information management arrangements in place, ensuring that records for all children and young people are up-to-date	<b>Closed</b>
2.1.10 Ensure that assessment reports are routinely shared with parents as appropriate	<b>Closed</b>
2.2.1 Within three months improve access to multi-agency child protection training delivered	<b>Other</b>

by the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board in order to ensure all partner agency staff are well informed and they know and understand their child protection roles and responsibilities.	
2.2.2 Strengthen the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board arrangements in providing challenge and monitoring safeguarding across the partnership so that more rapid progress is made in delivering robust safeguarding services across Leeds for children and young people	Other
2.2.3 Develop an Integrated Safeguarding Unit	CSIB
2.2.4 The Council will establish clear and agreed processes with partners in the Children's Trust and LSCB to ensure effective scrutiny and training takes place so that the quality of contacts, referrals and assessments improve	CSIB
2.3.1 Improve early intervention and prevention.	CSIB
2.3.2 The Council will have clear multi-agency thresholds in place, shared with and understood by partners, in order for children and young people to access appropriate services and to ensure consistent and high quality referrals.	Other
2.4.1 Immediately tackle the unacceptably high level of social worker caseloads, ensure that newly qualified social workers are protected from carrying high and complex caseloads and increase capacity within children's social care, in particular at team manager and social worker level, by ensuring there is an effective senior management team responsible for social care.	CSIB
2.4.2 Review social workers' responsibilities and workloads to ensure that responsibilities are clearly and tightly defined, and that no staff carry too wide a range of work. This will need to involve consideration of whether a restructure of children's social care services is necessary to deliver high quality services	Other
2.4.3 Develop a comprehensive programme of training, mentoring and continuous professional development for all social care staff so that they have the skills to complete high quality and timely assessment.	Closed
2.4.4 Ensure there is a robust supervision policy in place so that there is effective supervision of social workers and case management arrangements	CSIB
<b>THEME 3 : IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN</b>	
3.1.1 Within three months strengthen the arrangements for monitoring the quality and outcomes of external placements, particularly in residential special schools and for those children and young people who are in schools out of the city.	Closed
3.1.2 Improve the range of placement choice available, particularly those from minority ethnic communities or for those children and young people with complex needs	CSIB
3.2.1 Reduce the numbers in care and time spent in care	CSIB
3.3.1 Within three months improve the quality of core assessments and case records.	CSIB
3.3.2 Within three months ensure all looked after children and young people are made aware of how to make a complaint	Closed
3.3.3 Within three months ensure that clear systems exist so lessons learned from complaints can help shape services and strengthen access to the children's rights services, particularly for those in out of city placements	Closed
3.3.4 Within three months develop a clear and understandable set of measures and targets for the achievement of the Care Promise	CSIB
3.3.5 Within three months, review the level of resource available to support the children in Care Council and increase awareness of its role and membership so that it is more representative of the looked after children population	Closed
3.3.6 Within six months improve the regularity and timeliness of information-gathering on the progress of looked after children at a strategic level, to enable regular tracking of pupils' progress and more timely evaluation of the impact of actions and interventions on progress and learning of looked after children	Closed
3.3.7 Within three months ensure the views of looked after children and young people are sought and taken into account in the reshaping of services for looked after children	Closed
3.3.8 Within six months improve the effectiveness and relevance of personal education plans	Closed
<b>THEME 4 : ALL YOUNG PEOPLE PARTICIPATING FULLY, SOCIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY</b>	
4.1.1 Reduce the number of 16-19 year olds who are not in education, employment or training	Other
4.2.1 Working with the National Challenge Board and any other government agencies as appropriate, effectively deliver the National Challenge Programme, implement the Council's agreed plan for Schools Vulnerable to the National Challenge and ensure agreed targets are	Other

met	
4.2.2 Achieve a sustained upward trend in the achievement of black and mixed heritage pupils and other priority minority ethnic group	Other
4.2.3 Increase achievement of Level 2 qualifications by the age of 19	Other
4.2.4 Narrow the achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers	Other
4.3.1 Embed Children's Services Attendance Strategy and secure engagement of key partners	Other
<b>THEME 5 : A HIGHLY SKILLED, WELL SUPPORTED, MOTIVATED AND CONTINUALLY IMPROVING WORKFORCE</b>	
5.1.1 Produce and agree an integrated workforce strategy. Further develop and agree an implementation plan. (Workforce Reform Sub Group)	CSIB
5.2.1 Immediately ensure that the combined resources and expertise of the council, partners, the Government Office and specialist contractors prioritise and tackle the difficulties associated with the electronic recording system.	CSIB

## Summary

Theme	Continued monitoring by the Improvement Board	Monitoring by other accountable body	Closed
1	4	3	2
2	10	4	6
3	4	-	7
4	-	6	-
5	2	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>