



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
All

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS:

Cabinet

21st July 2003

**Safeguarding Children: Summary of Roles and Responsibilities
and the Social Services Inspectorate's Evaluation of the Council's Self-Audit against the
Laming Inquiry Recommendations**

Report of the Corporate Director of Social Care and Health

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek endorsement by the Cabinet and the Council of the attached statement of accountabilities for safeguarding children within the council (Appendix 1) prepared following the publication of the Victoria Climbié Inquiry by Lord Laming.
- 1.2 To receive the findings of the Social Services Inspectorate's (SSI) evaluation of the City Council's self-audit conducted following the Inquiry Report into compliance with its recommendations (Appendix 2). The Council was found to be serving most children well, with promising prospects for improvement. This represents a more than satisfactory rating and an endorsement that all the necessary work will be achieved for full compliance against the revised standards for child protection practice.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The Chief Executive, following publication of the Laming Inquiry, commissioned a full review of the Council's arrangements for child protection – this included a 'gap' analysis to determine the robustness of the current arrangements. He also called for an annual safeguards report, and commissioned the attached statement of responsibilities within the Council that was written by the Corporate Director of Social Care and Health. The findings from the 'gap' analysis informed the summary of responsibilities and the attached self-audit.
- 2.2 The Corporate Directors' Board and Social Services and Personal Health Scrutiny Committee have previously considered the statement of responsibilities document and the findings of the Laming Inquiry.
- 2.3 It was agreed that I would consult on the draft statement of responsibilities and prepare a version for formal endorsement by the Cabinet and the Council when the required

audit by the Social Services Inspectorate against the recommendations of the Inquiry was completed.

- 2.4 The early work on the statement of accountabilities and the Area Child Protection Committee's prompt response to the Laming Report added momentum to this work within the Council and with partner agencies. Both have provided a very positive backdrop to the SSI's evaluation.

3. The Findings of the SSI Evaluation

- 3.1 The evaluation of the Council's self audit against the Climbié Inquiry recommendations is now a key performance measure for all Councils. It will be taken into account in the star rating process in Autumn 2003. Any Council judged in the Climbié Audit evaluation not to be servicing children well or only serving some children well can not be judged as serving most or all children well in the overall assessment of children's services.

- 3.2 On 20th June 2003 the Council received its evaluation on the self audit which had been submitted on 30th April 2003. This written feedback has been provided in advance of the report of the scheduled full inspection of Children's Services which took place in May 2003. As expected, the recommendations from the Laming report were a major focus of the Children's Inspection.

- 3.3 **The Self-Audit:** In devising the audit tool the SSI translated the specific recommendations of the Laming report into a series of statements about current performance, separated into 7 standards. Each Council was asked to rate itself against the standards, using a 4 point rating system with no descriptive narrative, except for comment on intended improvements. Four is the highest rating option.

- 3.4 For many of the performance standards, a top rating required that the system, procedures and/or practice in question is not only in place and considered to be consistently practised, but also evidenced by systematic monitoring.

- 3.4 Although confident that our systems, procedures and processes do meet the standards, caution was exercised in claiming that this could be rigorously proven, in the light of three factors, namely:

- (1). Our reliance on manual collation of management information, pending the full development of the IT systems for recording and tracking management information;
- (2). That, as in most Councils, the Directorate is having to respond to the staffing pressures resulting from national shortages of social workers, and such pressures affect the capacity of any organisation to predict consistency of performance;
- (3). Our ambitious aims for improving our systematic monitoring and auditing are linked to available staff time and the ease of retrieving management information.

- 3.5 These issues were reflected in a self- assessment of sound current performance with Improvement Plans which were inevitably dependent on longer term developments.

3.6 **The evaluation:** Feedback from the Social Services Inspectorate has taken the form of comment on performance in each of the 7 standards and an overall evaluation of current performance and of the Council's capacity for improvement. The evaluation against all 7 standards is consistent achievement of "serving most children well" or showing "promising capacity for improvement". This represents very positive feedback on the performance of the Council in having systems and practice which safeguard children.

3.7 **Comment on the evaluation:** In reviewing the written evaluation, comments back to the Social Services Inspectorate have noted the following:

- Although the full implementation of our "Carefirst" computer system will provide ease of retrieving management information, manual systems for tracking are already in place.
- Recruitment issues are common to most Councils should not therefore be overstated for Leicester City. The Authority is taking proactive steps to manage staffing pressures and our contention is therefore that our awareness of the crucial impact of these issue should be seen as a strength and stated as such.
- In retrospect it is felt that self-audit was too self critical in its judgement that increased monitoring was required before considering that the Council could fully evidence its sound performance. Revisions have been submitted which, if accepted, would increase the numbers of top rating scores within the audit.
- Areas for improvement to meet the Climbié criteria are relatively minor improvements to an existing sound system and therefore it is reasonable for these to be planned over a longer period than the Laming timescales. The Action plan has already been agreed, and some areas noted by the SSI evaluation have progressed ahead of time. This includes the relatively minor revisions required to the ACPC procedures manual, which have already been completed and agreed at the June ACPC.

3.8 In respect of inter-agency collaboration, the period since the Climbié Audit has been very focused and productive.

- There was good liaison between the three key agencies (Health, Police and Social Services) over their respective self audits,
- By the time this report reaches Cabinet, there will have been two Chief Executives' meetings, designed to identify key inter-agency issues and strengthen the capacity of the Area Child Protection Committee to lead on the continuing improvement of collaborative working.
- An inter-agency auditing officer has already been agreed, and proposals to increase the capacity for inter-agency training have been put together.
- Liaison over the joint review of child protection arrangements is set up.

3.9 These represent significant and prompt actions to strengthen collaboration and improve practice across agencies using the impetus of the Climbié Inquiry report.

4. Comments of Scrutiny Committee on the Accountabilities Statement

4.1 The Social Services and Personal Health Scrutiny Committee has considered the accountabilities statement on two occasions, most recently on 25th June 2003. The Committee:

- (a) endorsed the attached version and recommended it be adopted by the Council;
- (b) recommended that child protection awareness training be arranged for councillors;
- (c) asked the Cabinet to clarify who the Lead Cabinet Member for Safeguarding Children would be.

5. Recommendations

5.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- (a) endorse the attached Summary of Roles and Responsibilities for Safeguarding Children;
- (b) clarify the Lead Cabinet Member for Safeguarding Children;
- (c) formally propose it be adopted by Council as part of the follow up work on the Victoria Climbié Inquiry recommendations; and
- (d) note the findings of the Social Services Inspectorate's positive evaluation of the City Council's audit against the Inquiry's recommendations.

6. Headline Financial and Legal Implications

6.1 No direct financial implications. There may be some arising from the audit and subsequent inspection of Children's Services by the Social Services Inspectorate, for which a provisional sum of £200,000 was identified.

6.2 It is based on existing legal responsibilities and guidance.

7. Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/ NO	Paragraph Within Supporting information	References
Equal Opportunities	No		
Policy	Yes	Throughout the report	
Sustainable Environmental	No		
Crime and Disorder	No		
Human Rights Act	No		
Elderly/People on Income	No		

8. Background Papers

Previous reports on the Climbie Inquiry to Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

9. Consultations

Cabinet, Scrutiny, Corporate Directors, Departments, managers and staff in the Directorate and NHS partners.

10. Report Authors/Officers to Contact

Andrew Cozens, Corporate Director of Social Care and Health Tel: 252 8300
 Andrew Bunyan, Service Director Tel: 252 8309
 Pat Nawrockyi, Service Manager Tel: 225 4706

DECISION STATUS

Key Decision	No
Reason	n/a
Appeared in Forward Plan	No
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)

LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN: SUMMARY OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN THE COUNCIL

(This summary seeks to clarify roles and responsibilities. It does NOT replace any other procedures. For these purposes:

Roles in sections 1-7 have Framework Responsibilities; those in sections 8-10 have Scrutiny Responsibilities; those in subsequent sections have Reporting or Operational Delivery Responsibilities.

1. The Leader of the Council
 - Ensure that the Council gives priority to safeguarding children coherently and consistently in service planning and resource allocation.
 - Designate one Cabinet member with responsibility for safeguarding children.
 - Ensure the Council appoints a Corporate Director to carry social services responsibilities and ensure that the Cabinet receives advice from him/her on all relevant matters.
 - Ensure all communities are equally served in this regard.

2. The Cabinet Lead for Social Services (and/or with designated responsibility for Safeguarding Children)
 - Ensure that the Council's social services responsibilities are properly considered, supported and monitored by the Cabinet, including an annual report to Cabinet on how they have been exercised.
 - Work with the Corporate Director of Social Care and Health to ensure the Department is adequately funded and staffed to deliver these priorities, in and out of office hours.
 - Act as the Cabinet champion for safeguarding children.
 - Ensure that the Council fulfils its responsibilities as "corporate parent" of Looked After Children.

3. The Chief Executive
 - Ensure the Council has developed local strategic objectives, priorities and targets for child protection that complement those set nationally.
 - Nominate a Corporate Director with Directors' Board leadership role for child protection, and when this differs from the lead for vulnerable children, make sure there is close working to ensure synergy between the two areas.
 - Make sure statutory inter-agency arrangements are in place (including Area Child Protection Committee, Multi-Agency Public Protection Panel) and ensure there is an open culture between local agencies and good direct communications between senior managers so that they accept and address concerns brought to their attention.
 - Receive regular briefings that identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Council's services and on the action required to address them.
 - Ensure all children's services are sensitive to diversity.

4. The Corporate Director of Social Care and Health
 - Ensure that the Department has management and accountability structures that deliver safe and effective services, with particular reference to the Children Act 1989, The Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families and Working Together to Safeguard Children.

- Ensure that the Department has access to a range of effective, efficient and flexible services that protect and support vulnerable children and their families.
 - Ensure effective multi-agency planning processes are in place to plan for children in need and that there is an effective Area Child Protection Committee that co-ordinates services and ensures that children are protected in all settings including hospitals.
 - Ensure the effective management and use of the Child Protection Register by relevant agencies.
 - Ensure that those with framework, scrutiny and delivery arrangements have appropriate training to enable them to exercise the responsibilities of their role.
 - Ensure staff are well trained, supported and managed, and feel able to report any concerns.
 - Ensure children in need are listened to, both in service provision, and at a more strategic level.
5. The Corporate Director of Resources, Access & Diversity
- Ensure expert legal advice is available to the Council on its child care responsibilities.
 - Ensure that robust arrangements are in place for pre and post recruitment checks to be undertaken for all appropriate people working with children in the Council and the services it arranges and funds.
6. The Corporate Director of Education & Lifelong Learning
- Ensure the safeguarding of children in all educational provision, whether pre-school day care, primary, secondary or residential schools, or out of school activities, youth work, play, childcare and family learning.
 - Make sure all schools and educational services have policies and procedures for child protection.
 - Ensure measures are in place to promote good attendance; to manage behaviour and tackle bullying and other forms of harassment; to provide effective personal, social and health education; and support for family learning, opportunities for personal and social development, and support for the voice of young people and children.
 - Specific attention should be given to groups at risk of low achievement, including children in the public care, with special needs, and particular ethnic groups; the attendance, behaviour and provision for pupils out of school, within the context of a general approach to educational inclusion.
 - Ensure the LEA is a core member of the ACPC and that maintained schools, staff and governors and other direct educational provision are fully integrated in, and familiar with, child protection procedures.
7. All Corporate Directors and Service Directors
- Should be committed to protecting children and should communicate that commitment throughout the organisation.
 - Ensure their services are provided in a way that ensures the safety of all children.
 - Ensure all staff in services with contact with children and/or their parents have a consistent understanding of the thresholds for sharing information with and referral to Social Care & Health/ Police, and receive appropriate training to undertake their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
8. Scrutiny Committee Members
- Take all necessary steps to scrutinise the Council's arrangements for safeguarding children, with particular reference to:
 - the adequacy of funding

- staff levels and morale
- the Department's performance, including unallocated cases
- the care, education, health and achievements of Looked After Children
- that protection is accessible to all communities.

9. Children's Homes Visiting Panel

- All party group to fulfil councillors' responsibilities to visit children's homes.
- Cabinet Lead is responsible for bringing matters raised by the Panel to the Corporate Director and Cabinet's attention.

(Note: the scope of the Panel will be expanded to include visits to other frontline children's services in line with the recommendations of the Laming Report, pending the Government's formal response to the structural changes proposed).

10. Quality Protects Members Group

- Responsible for overseeing the preparation of the Quality Protects Management Action Plan and recommending its approval to Cabinet and the Council.

11. All Councillors

- Should be aware of how and when to refer child welfare concerns to Social Care and Health/Police and how, after the referral has been registered, that there are subsequent constraints on staff sharing information as set out in the Council's Political Conventions.
- Should be aware of their responsibilities as "corporate parents" of Looked After Children.

12. Area Child Protection Committee

- The inter-agency group with responsibility for agreeing how the different services and professional groups should co-operate to safeguard children in Leicester, and for making sure that arrangements work effectively to bring about good outcomes for children.

13. Service Directors for Children's Services

- Ensure that children are protected, and they and their families benefit from effective referral, assessment, planning and review processes, which result in appropriate services being provided to respond to the identified developmental needs of the child.
- Maintain positive and constructive relationships through the ACPC with partner agencies.
- Ensure that staff are provided with up-to-date procedures, protocols and guidance and that systems are in place to ensure they are followed.
- Ensure arrangements are in place for the safe transfer of responsibility between local authorities.
- Ensure clarity in the role of child protection advisers.
- Ensure induction, supervision and staff development processes are in place.
- Ensure performance measures are in place to ensure services, including those commissioned from external organisations, are safely, efficiently and cost-effectively delivered.
- Ensure workload management systems are in place and monitored.
- Ensure staff are able to offer culturally appropriate services to all the communities of the city.

14. Service Managers

- Ensure effective systems are in place to enable team managers to establish how many children have been referred to their team, what action is required to be taken for each child, who is responsible for taking action, and when that action must be completed and has been completed.
- Ensure that all cases of children assessed as needing a service have an allocated worker.

- Ensure that staff follow procedures, protocols and guidance and that casework is checked regularly.
 - Report to Service Directors on the quality and performance of their services, including workloads, on a regular basis through supervision.
15. Team Leaders
- Ensure that referrals are acknowledged.
 - Ensure that cases are allocated to appropriately qualified and trained practitioners and that the practitioner is clear about what has been allocated, what action is required, and how that action will be reviewed and supervised.
 - Ensuring and monitoring that core Directorate standards for recording and managing case files are met.
 - Ensure the quality of work and supervision.
 - Ensure practitioners are able to manage the diversity aspects of their work.
16. Child Care Practitioners
- Follow the Council's child protection procedures.
 - Maintain records of their work.
 - Keep up to date through training and other professional development opportunities.
17. Other Practitioners and Support Staff
- Pass all concerns about child protection to the appropriate duty team without delay.

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