



Leicester
City Council

**WARDS AFFECTED
(City-Wide)**

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:

**Social Services and Personal Health Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet**

**17th September 2003
22nd September 2003**

SOCIAL SERVICES INSPECTION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Report of the Corporate Director of Social Care and Health

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 This report provides a brief introduction to the presentation by lead SSI Inspector, Ben Irons, of his report on the findings of the SSI Inspection of Children's Social Services in Leicester which took place between 13th May and 27th May 2003.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The Leicester City inspection of Children's Social Services is part of a national programme of inspections by the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) which took place in approximately 30 social services departments between August 2002 and July 2003.
- 2.2 The objective of the inspection was to contribute to the SSI's overall evaluation of the extent to which Leicester Children's Social Services' policy, strategy, management and practice are addressing the national objectives for social services, the National Priorities Guidance, and the commitments made in our bi-annual 'Delivery and Improvement Statement'.
- 2.3 It has evaluated the collaborative, commissioning, and service delivery arrangements between the SSD, other council departments and other agencies, addressing issues of cost and efficiency and includes an evaluation of how services are currently being developed and delivered in relation to our Quality Protects Management Action Plan and local Best Value Reviews.
- 2.4 This inspection report evaluates the referral, assessment, planning and delivery of services for children in need, children in need of protection and children looked after
- 2.5 The methodology involved the submission of:
- a self evaluation and
 - pre-inspection information including policy and procedural documents

the completion of questionnaires by:

- service using parents and young people
- operational staff and
- colleagues from other agencies

followed by intensive fieldwork including:

- the reading of randomly selected case files
- interviews with service using children and families
- operational staff and managers,
- colleagues from other departments and agencies and
- councilors.

- 2.6 A draft report was provided to the Department to check for factual accuracy. The final report will be presented to Scrutiny Committee on 17th September (copy of SSI report attached for Cabinet Members).
- 2.7 The final report, which states that “Overall we (the SSI) judged that the Council was serving most people well and that the capacity for improvement was promising” will be a public document. It will be sent to local Members of Parliament and will be available on the Internet. The local findings will contribute to a national overview report.

3. Recommendations

3.1 Social Services and Personal Health Scrutiny and Cabinet

Scrutiny and Cabinet are asked to receive the SSI Inspection Report in relation to Leicester City Children’s Social Services provision and to comment on the attached Action Plan.

3.2 Cabinet

Cabinet, subject to any changes it may wish to make in response to the views of the Scrutiny Committee, endorse the attached Action Plan.

4. Headline Financial and Legal Implications

- 4.1 The direct costs of the inspection were borne by the Social Services Inspectorate.
- 4.2 The resource implications of implementing the resulting action plan will be addressed in a separate report to Scrutiny on 29th October when a review of the 5 year Quality Protects Programme will be presented with proposals concerning the ongoing financial implications of sustaining the services which have been funded from the ring fenced Quality Protects grant, all of which are relevant to the Inspection recommendations. (Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance, Social Care and Health. Tel. 252 8800)
- 4.3 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report (Christine Hume, Legal Services).

5. Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph References Within Supporting information
Equal Opportunities	Yes	Throughout
Policy	Yes	Throughout
Sustainable and Environmental	No	
Crime and Disorder	Yes	In relation to targeting the reduction of offending by looked after children
Human Rights Act	No	
Elderly/People on Low Income	No	

6. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

The Children Act 1989 and related guidance.

7. Consultations

None.

8. Report Author/Officer to contact

Andrew Bunyan, Service Director Assessment and Strategy (Tel: 252 8306)
 Angela Jennings, Acting Service Manager, Children's Services Planning Unit
 (Tel: 225 4722)

DECISION STATUS

Key Decision	No
Reason	N/A
Appeared in Forward Plan	No
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)

Social Services Inspectorate

Children's Services Inspection May 2003

Action Plan

Key to abbreviations

LAC	Looked After Children
SMT	Senior Management Team
DAS	Duty and Assessment Service
RALAC	Raising the Achievement of Looked After Children
DIS	Delivery and Improvement Statement
ACPC	Area Child Protection Committee
DMT	Divisional Management Team
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time Limited

ACTION PLAN IN RESPONSE TO SSI INSPECTION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

		Action proposed	Timescale	Person Responsible
STANDARD 1: NATIONAL PRIORITIES & STATEGIC OBJECTIVES				
	Headline recommendations			
1.1	Ensure that all strategic reports are clear about how intentions are to be delivered and include national and local targets.	SMT facilitated workshop, on integrating targets into strategy and planning	Jan / Feb '04	ZM

STANDARD 2: EFFECTIVENESS OF SERVICE DELIVERY & OUTCOMES				
	Headline recommendations			
2.1	Consider facilitating the opportunity for care leavers to meet on a regular basis for mutual support	Leaving Care Team Manager with assistance from Looked After Children (LAC) youth worker to review feasibility of care leavers group	Report to joint DMT 08.12.03	M-AR
2.2	Ensure that referrers are informed of progress and outcomes of all referrals made by other agencies and professionals.	Duty & Assessment Service (DAS) devise protocol/ proforma to be implemented at case closure/case transfer	Oct '03	KS/J.Randall

2.3	Continue to implement the Joint Family Support Strategy in the context of the local Preventative Strategy particularly the re-organisation of internal children & family services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children & Family Resources review core group workshop to update progress & identify outstanding option decisions • Joint Divisional Management Team half day to review progress / implementation of Children and Family Resources Review and confirm implementation timetable • Acting Project Manager, Vulnerable Children's Trust, complete Preventative Strategy initial consultation draft 	<p style="text-align: center;">30.09.03</p> <p style="text-align: center;">13.10.03</p> <p style="text-align: center;">31.10.03</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">KBD JJ / BB / MMcG AJ / CS / KS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">HB</p>
2.4	Ensure that the Corporate Parenting Group establishes and monitors a plan, which pulls together targets for improving the life chances of LAC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Parenting Action Plan with SMART targets for each Directorate to be co-ordinated by Chief Executive's Policy Officer and Social Inclusion Officer • Print Revised Corporate Parenting Information Pack • Raise awareness through briefings to other Directorates • Develop Intranet / web sites to include action plan 	<p style="text-align: center;">Review current plan 17.09.03</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Redrafted plan for meeting on 12.11.03</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Oct '03</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Oct-Dec '03</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Nov '03</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">M Frith M FitzG</p> <p style="text-align: center;">M.FitzG</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MF/MfitsG</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MF/MfitsG</p>

2.5	The council to continue to prioritise and monitor the education needs of LAC.	Social Inclusion Officer to progress through Joint Education Liaison Group, Education Public Service Agreement Action Plan and Raising the Achievement of Looked After Children (RALAC) Steering Group	6 monthly report to Director's Board and Cabinet	M FitzG DS
2.6	Children's Social Workers to provide required levels of support to children in foster care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include in inspection feedback to Managers' away day for discussion / re-emphasis. • Include in Induction & Core Training Modules. • Cross refer to National Care Standards Action Plan • Consult foster carers as to whether improvement is evident 	<p>19.09.03</p> <p>October 03</p> <p>September 03</p> <p>March '03</p>	<p>AJ</p> <p>JP</p> <p>MT / AS</p> <p>MT</p>

STANDARD 3: QUALITY OF SERVICE FOR USERS AND CARERS

	Headline recommendations			
3.1	Ensure all leaflets are produced in a concise and user-friendly format.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current leaflets • Report changes needed to joint Divisional Management Teams and agree responsibility for amendment • Amendments commissioned from Committee and Public Info. Section. 	<p>September 03</p> <p>13.10.03</p> <p>December 03</p>	<p>I Dooher / T Billings</p> <p>ID / TB</p> <p>Designated Managers / ID</p>

3.2	Ensure that timescales for initial and core assessments are met.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection feedback to Managers' away day for discussion & action plan for practice improvement • Review recording processes for documenting assessment completion • Review forecasts for DIS targets for initial assessments and core assessments 	<p>19.09.03</p> <p>Oct'03</p> <p>Sept '03</p>	<p>AJ</p> <p>KS/AS/CS/DS</p> <p>KS/AS/CS/DS</p>
3.3	Improve practice in the preparation of children and families to contribute effectively to meetings, including sharing of reports.	<p>Task and finish group to review practices and procedures in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of children and families in pre-meeting preparation, meetings and decision making • Content of service plans including timescales and measurable outcomes • Recording of review meetings (including core groups) to evidence whether timescales and outcomes achieved • Practice and procedure in recording parental involvement in, and agreement or disagreement with, plans. <p>Report to Joint Divisional Management Teams with recommendations re procedure/ communication / training</p>	<p>January 04</p>	<p>Independent Chairperson, C. Care SM, C. Care TM, C. Care SW, J Paterson</p>
3.4	Improve recording of core group meetings to include evidence of work being undertaken on the child protection plan.			
3.5	<p>Improve care planning processes to include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • timescales for action • measurable outcomes to be achieved • compliance in recording child and parental agreement / disagreement with plans. 			

STANDARD 4: FAIR ACCESS				
	Headline recommendations			
4.1	Ensure protocols in relation to asylum seeking children placed with a relative include processes for verification of relationship between the child and the adult(s).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and modify protocols. • Cross refer to ACPC action plan • Brief all relevant staff of practice/procedural changes 	<p>October 03</p> <p>September '03</p> <p>November 03</p>	<p>KS / M McC</p> <p>PN</p> <p>KS / CS / PN</p>
4.2	Review processes for accessing transport and ensure its reliability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport review to take account of recommendation to improve access and increase reliability and efficiency • Children and Family Resources Review to address the transport needs /arrangements for family contact 	<p>Oct '03 Action plan & report to Cabinet</p> <p>October 03</p>	<p>KB-D / DS / DO</p> <p>JJ / BB KBD / DS</p>

STANDARD 5: COST & EFFICIENCY				
	Headline recommendations			
5.1	Complete a commissioning strategy for Children's Services ensuring close links with the Preventative Strategy	Task and finish group to work on draft Strategy for joint DMT.	October '03	MMcG / T.Ford SP
5.2	Ensure compliance with the monitoring and review arrangements for contracts and Service Level Agreements with other agencies	Following on from commissioning strategy confirm responsibility and procedure for link arrangements with commissioned service providers	January '04	MMcG / T Ford SP

STANDARD 6: MANAGEMENT & RESOURCES				
	Headline recommendations			
6.1	The council to review scrutiny arrangements to improve the effectiveness of their role in relation to the Executive.	Review in process	ongoing	A Cozens / Scrutiny Chairperson
6.2	Confirm & implement the draft communication strategy to ensure effective communication throughout the structure.	Complete, disseminate & begin implementation of Communication Strategy	September 03	ZM
6.3	Develop the quality assurance role of Team Managers to include the scrutiny of files within their teams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit to independent chair vacancies to free up team managers • Clarify roles and responsibilities of TMs & Independent Chairs in Quality Control & Assurance • Pilot new procedure in Duty & Assessment Service 	<p>Dec '03</p> <p>Dec '03</p> <p>Jan '04</p>	<p>PN</p> <p>KS / PN / AS</p> <p>KS</p>
6.4	Ensure that Senior Practitioners and experienced staff have access to courses that will meet their needs.	To be addressed by Human Resources Planning Group in current training planning cycle.	1st plan Nov '03 then Ongoing	CS/ME LBarker