

## **ORGANISATION OF QUESTIONING FOR OSC Ofsted Inspection MEETING 23<sup>RD</sup> MARCH 2015**

In order to focus discussion for our meeting on Monday there will be 9 Significant Events in the Review of Children's Social Work. We require some factually responses which should be fairly straightforward and some answer that require opinions; we would like to get as many answers as possible in writing in order to make best use of the meeting time for supplementary questions or clarification of the written answers. I intend taking questions on each event in the order presented here and would appreciate all witnesses to making themselves available throughout the examination of these events.

### **EVENT 1 – Inception and design of the Review**

When was the review incepted and designed?

***The Business Case for the review was developed in the Autumn of 2013, consultation with staff and Trade Unions happened from October 2013 through to the end of January 2014, a period of staff slotting into the new structure and appeals happened throughout February and March. The review was implemented in April and May of 2014.***

What was the purpose of the review? Specifically was it a budget driven review (i.e. was there a savings target attached)? Or was it primarily a service driven review? How many posts were there pre & post review?

The purpose of the review is set out in the forward of the business case, the full business case is available on the Council's intranet:

***“The focus of the review is on redesigning statutory services for children in Leicester based on the child's journey, whilst securing better integration with locality early help services. The service is also required to make budgetary savings due to new budgetary constraints imposed by central government; however this is an opportunity to transform services and create a structure that is fit for purpose for the next 5-10 years. Transforming statutory services around the journey children, young people and their families take will ensure that the child's voice is central to the social work task and lead to improvements in the quality of practice and ultimately outcomes for children, young people and families.***

***The review is evidence based and informed by the work commissioned by the Leicester Safeguarding Children Board and carried out by Professor David Thorpe and his team. The focus of this work was on referral taking and assessment practices in Leicester in the context of the increasing numbers of referrals, re-referrals and subsequent social care activity taking place in children's social care. The redesign of services is also informed by the outcome of quality assurance activity undertaken by senior managers in the division, with the overall aim of improving the quality and consistency of the service social workers give to children, young people and their parents/carers in Leicester.”***

***The business case stated that £16,653,800 would be required to run the new services, a reduction of £1,853,495 than was required previously.***

***Across all teams in scope there were a total of 448.38 fte posts and the review reduced this to 382.08 fte posts. This was the result of modelling and allowing for social worker case-loads of 18 – 20.***

What was the composition of the programme board?

***There was no programme board, the review team as detailed in the business case was:***

***“The Review Lead Manager will be Andy Smith, Director, Children's Social Care and Safeguarding. He will be supported by Jane Pierce, Project Manager, and Parvathi JaganMohan from Human Resources; Jasmine Nembhard, Interim Head of Service Children's Fieldwork and Cheriell O'Neill, Head of Service Looked After Children Services, Caroline Tote, Head of Service Children's Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit; Alison Moss, Head of Admin and Business Support; Louise Remzi-Browne, Corporate Business Support Manager and Bhavna Patel and Nick Rimes, from Finance.”***

Was the review referred to CYPs Scrutiny?

***Committee Services have confirmed that, “No item in relation to the review was placed on the agenda for either Committee (Children’s and Overview) and a request had not been lodged by either Committee.”***

Was there anything the review design that could have been done differently to avoid the outcome?

***Ofsted described the review as well intentioned and showed support for its objectives, what they have been critical of is the implementation of the move from the old model to the new model.***

#### **EVENT 2 – Implementation of the new structure**

What was the date of the implementation of the new reviewed structure?

***The new structure and service model was implemented in April and May 2014, the Ofsted report describes the implementation date as May 2015.***

#### **EVENT 3 – Problems emerge with the new structure**

When did social workers start complaining about the new structure?

***Concerns were raised through the consultation stage and changes were made to the business case to address those concerns.***

When did social workers start handing in their notice?

***In Safeguarding Assurance Meetings at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 it was reported there were 5 social worker vacancies and in the meeting at June 12<sup>th</sup> 2014 the Director reported 8 social worker vacancies, at the meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2014 15-17 vacancies were reported. At all meetings positive recruitment activity was described as taking place and the use of agency cover was also described. All meetings reported that there were no unallocated cases. Social Worker case-loads peaked at 22-25 cases, above the desired 18-20 cases but were described as “still in line with the average caseloads identified in the Social Work Task Force Report (published by the government in 2009)”. The September meeting reported that “all social work vacancies have been filled with social workers joining the service from this month caseloads will reduce to the figure identified in the review (18 – 20).”***

Why did social workers start handing in their notices?

***A combination of different factors were reported to the Safeguarding Assurance meetings such as career development, relocation, workers not buying into the new structure following the organisational review, and workers choosing to leave the council in favour of working for an agency for financial reasons.***

Were the following aware of the social worker discontent and if so when did they become aware, if not why didn't they know?

CYPs MANAGEMENT

CYPs UNIONS

CENTRAL HR

CENTRAL FINANCE

SENIOR CORPORATE MANAGERS

EXECUTIVE POLITICIANS

SCRUTINY POLITICIANS

#### **EVENT 4 – Unallocated social worker cases go up to a worrying level.**

What is a worrying level of unallocated cases?

***Difficult to put a number on this as it depends on the circumstances within the service, urgent referrals get picked up through DAS. By example if on a day there are 16 new referrals, an agency worker leaves and at a stroke the number is close to 40. If these cases can all be allocated the same or the following day, then this number wouldn't necessarily be a concern.***

The 291 cases are said to be low risk. What does that mean? Who decided they were low risk and how?

***Of the 291 cases on December 17<sup>th</sup> 2014, 73 were existing cases awaiting re-allocation to new social workers arriving (these had been seen and assessed). 218 were children who had been referred for single assessment. We ensured that these cases were quickly allocated.***

***The majority of the 291 cases were children who had been referred through for a single assessment. Urgent safeguarding concerns were dealt with through DAS in a timely way (as evidenced in the Ofsted report – page 14, point 53) carrying out a section 47 assessment, and are not included in the 291 cases.***

***Thresholds are agreed by joint LLR (Leicester, Leicestershire, Rutland) boards and those determine which children might be eligible for a social care service.***

When was this level reached, for what period did it last?

***December 17<sup>th</sup>, for one day, cases were already being allocated, this was not a static situation.***

Why was this level reached?

***Not enough Social Workers, we would have put more children at risk if they had been allocated to Social Workers with already full case- loads.***

Who referred these children to the Dept? What were they told when the children were not allocated social workers?

***A combination of schools, health, police and families or self-referrals. Every referrer should be written to but this didn't happen all the time and is one of the areas of inconsistency that Ofsted discussed with CYP management.***

How long did the children have to wait for social workers to be appointed?

***From October 1st 2014 to January 17th 2015, 1355 new single assessments were due for allocation to the CiN teams. Of those, 1006 were allocated, and over that period, a maximum of 291 (at the highest point in December) were allocated to team managers, waiting for new workers to arrive. In November 2014, 2,606 cases were open to the CIN service. In November 2014, there were 138 Section 47 (S47) enquiries.***

#### **291 cases**

***Of the 291 cases on December 17<sup>th</sup> 2014, 73 were existing cases awaiting re-allocation to new social workers arriving. 218 were children who had been referred for single assessment.***

***We ensured that these cases were allocated as soon as we had social workers in place to take them. They are now allocated, all children have been seen and assessed. On a daily basis there are approximately 20 cases being passed through from DAS to the teams for allocation.***

***We are now doing some further analysis of the current situation with the 291 cases which will more fully answer the questions posed and check progress with the children. It is not yet complete but can be reported at a later stage. Where there are concerns about practice or management oversight of these cases, this is being dealt with immediately.***

***Urgent safeguarding concerns were dealt with through DAS in a timely way (as evidenced in the Ofsted report – page 14, point 53) carrying out a section 47 assessment, and are not included in the 291 cases.***

Were the following aware of the level of unallocated cases and if so when did they become aware, if not why didn't they know?

CYPS MANAGEMENT  
CYPS CABINET MEMBER  
CYPS UNIONS  
SENIOR CORPORATE MANAGERS  
CITY MAYOR & OTHER EXECUTIVE POLITICIANS  
SCRUTINY POLITICIANS

What are the reporting and monitoring arrangements for allocation of children to social workers and did these go to, Corporate Board, CYPS Cabinet Member and City Mayor?

***A log of case allocation is now overseen daily by managers and a weekly performance meeting to look at a range of performance indicators of frontline social care work happens.***

***The weekly monitoring information includes:***

***Supervision***

***Chronologies***

***Unallocated cases***

***Case recording***

***Team Managers, Service Managers, Heads of Service, the Divisional Director and the DCS see this information.***

***Previously CYP Management Team discussed performance reports monthly but it now seems used unreliable data manually collected from teams that gave an overly optimistic view of the service. The department also relied on sample case audits that were carried out by other managers, Ofsted found that the findings of these were overly optimistic. Some audits were done externally but now all audits will be supported by professionals independent of the service while the staff are developing their skills so that they recognise what good looks like.***

***Assurance Safeguarding Meetings instigated by the City Mayor, reported key safeguarding information to the City Mayor, Assistant City Mayor and Chief Operating Officer quarterly at April, June, September and December in 2014. It was only in the December report that numbers of unallocated cases were reported and significant recruitment and retention issues were reported. All previous meetings reported no unallocated cases and no recruitment concerns regarding frontline social workers.***

#### **EVENT 5 – Frances Craven takes up post, Elaine McHale leaves as Interim Director of CYPS**

When did Frances Craven take up her post?

***Frances started in the authority on 18 September 2014. There was an induction period and she formally took up the role on 10 October when Elaine McHale left the role.***

When did Frances Craven suspect a problem with unallocated cases?

***Frances asked on the 21<sup>st</sup> October for the numbers of cases unallocated to be provided on a daily basis – staff could not provide this for 48 hours which suggested that management oversight was not robust.***

When did Frances Craven begin further investigation?

***The same day and has been relentless about it since – this information is received daily and is now located in the performance team, data that is received on a daily basis shows the impact of the measure taken to put in place the full teams of social workers by mid-January.***

When did Frances Craven have enough information to take concerns higher?

***Concerns were taken higher as soon as it was realised.***

When did Frances Craven take her concerns to other people?

CABINET MEMBER FOR CYPS  
THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER  
THE CITY MAYOR  
SCRUTINY and AUDIT and RISK

#### **Event 6 – A recovery plan is developed**

When was a recovery plan implemented and how was it implemented?

***Actions were taken in early November with HR and the Service which focused on recruiting a cohort of agency workers as a bridging strategy to a more permanent workforce. This began to have impact but social workers were still leaving the service alongside continued demand. A project manager with social work qualifications was employed working alongside HR, the service and new agency staff started at the beginning of December. Her role was to recruit retain and induct agency and permanent staff. In December because demand was greater than the number of workers could safely manage a team was formed of experienced family support staff supervised by qualified social work managers to see children and initiate the outstanding single assessments and the Duty and Advice Team followed up the priority assessments and made sure children were seen.***

***In four months, twenty six social workers and five team managers have been recruited. A further seven social workers are due to start. It is important to recruit quality social workers and follow safe recruitment practices. References need to be checked and DBS checks carried out. The recruitment work is continuing.***

***Alongside these short terms actions work was started on a longer improvement plan. This draft plan is now being reviewed against all the Ofsted findings and recommendations.***

We are told that agency social workers have been appointed to deal with the back log. How much has this cost compared with what would have been spent if the 30 permanent staff had been retained?

**The typical LCC social worker cost is £24/hour compared to agency cost of £39/hour**

**We are forecasting to overspend on CiN teams staffing costs by £375k in 14/15 against a budget of £3.7m.**

Were the following aware of the recovery plan and if so when did they become aware, if not why didn't they know?

CYPS MANAGEMENT  
CYPS CABINET MEMBER  
CYPS UNIONS  
CENTRAL HR  
CENTRAL FINANCE  
SENIOR CORPORATE MANAGERS  
CITY MAYOR AND OTHER EXECUTIVE POLITICIANS  
SCRUTINY POLITICIANS

#### **Event 7 – OFSTED Arrive**

When did OFSTED inform us they were coming?

**13 January 2015**

When did they actually arrive?

**14 January 2015**

Would the non-allocation of social workers have come to light had OFSTED not inspected?

**See above – this matter was already robustly being dealt and Ofsted have commented on the current management teams grasp on the issues**

**Event 8 – OFSTED Indicate there were serious problems**

When did OFSTED Indicate there were serious problems

**They identified the problems that Frances had uncovered in their first week. It was on reading the draft report that the full extent and context (history) of the problems became apparent.**

How did the following react to this indication?

CYPS MANAGEMENT

CYPS CABINET MEMBER

CYPS UNIONS

SENIOR CORPORATE MANAGERS

CITY MAYOR & OTHER EXECUTIVE POLITICIANS

SCRUTINY POLITICIANS

**Event 9 – The Removal of Executive Lead CYPS & Interim Corporate Director**

Who was responsible for the appointment of the interim CYPS Head? and why was the interim appointment so long?

**The previous DCS and Assistant Mayor for Children's Services appointed the interim post holder. She was interviewed by both of these after being put forward by a specialist recruitment agency. References were supplied by the agency, including from the most recent employer.**

**Frances was appointed on our 3<sup>rd</sup> attempt to secure a permanent DCS.**

When did the City mayor decide to remove the CYPS Lead and previous interim director?

**After reading the draft Ofsted report and it was clear that a significant problem had been developing over a 6/9 month period.**

When was that decision implemented?

**Very quickly afterwards**

Why did you do this?

**The position of both of them was untenable.**

Why did you not do this earlier?

**Frances had been reacting to the situation as it was emerging, she had not had the time to piece together the recent history in the same way Ofsted had. Ofsted had a team of 8 inspectors that worked over 3 weeks and were incredibly helpful in piecing things together.**

## **MOVING ON**

What efforts have been made to ascertain whether harm has been done to children not allocated social workers?

***All of the Children have been seen and assessments have been completed.***

Do we know what harm has been done to children & their families because of the failure to allocate social workers?

***The majority of the 291 cases were children who had been referred through for a single assessment (73 were cases needing to be reallocated). Urgent safeguarding concerns were dealt with through DAS in a timely way (as evidenced in the Ofsted report – page 14, point 53) carrying out a section 47 assessment, and are not included in the 291 cases.***

What immediate measures have been taken to prevent a repeat of this incident?

***See previous answers***