

## Questions from Cllr Sue Waddington

Question	Category	Response
1. Would this situation have come to light, that is would we have known about it, without the Ofsted inspection?	Context Political	<p>When the new Director of Education and Children’s Services (DCS) and the interim Divisional Director came into post in October 2014, they began to asked questions about the day to day running of the service which began to bring the situation to light.</p> <p>The length of time it took the service to identify the number of unallocated cases and to present accurate information (circa. 48 hours in the first instance) suggested to them that the day to day management information was either not available or was not reliable.</p> <p>A combination of different factors had been 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. We now believe that the factors Ofsted reported had a much bigger impact than had been reported throughout 2014.</p>
1a. When did the Assistant Mayor know about it?	Political	The Assistant Mayor was informed about emerging problems in the third week of October 2014.
1b. When did the City Mayor know about it?	Political	It was formally reported by the new Director at the December Safeguarding Assurance meeting, although they had informed the City Mayor of emerging problems at the same time as the Assistant Mayor.
2. What was the purpose of this review? What were the intended savings in posts and money?	Review	<p>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:</p> <p>“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</p>

		<p>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.</p> <p>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."</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Across all teams in scope there were a total of 448.38 fte posts and the review reduced this to 382.08 fte posts.</p>
<p>3. Was this review subject to Scrutiny by the Commission and if so what information was provided?</p>	<p>Review</p>	<p>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."</p>
<p>4. Why did 30 social workers leave and when did they leave?</p>	<p>HR</p>	<p>The staff turnover between May and December 2014 resulted in a significant number of vacancies at any one time in the service. Combined with 'normal' turnover, staff on sick leave and staff on maternity leave, teams were depleted over a period of about 7 months.</p>

		<p>The council offers an exit interview but this is not mandatory. The reasons social workers left were not formally collated.</p> <p>Reasons given by the then Divisional Director at the time for vacancies in the service were “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”.</p>
5. What was the time line of the review and the staff leaving and the children not being allocated social workers?	Review Practice	<p>The organisational review was implemented in April/May 2014.</p> <p>The staff turnover in the year 2014-15 resulted in a significant number of vacancies at any one time in the service. Combined with ‘normal’ turnover, staff on sick leave and staff on maternity leave, teams were depleted over a period of about 7 months.</p> <p>The recruitment of agency and new permanent workers were insufficient to fill these vacancies, and the social workers in post (permanent and temporary) had an average of 25 cases and were unable to take on significant quantities of new work. Work could not be allocated to existing social workers because it would have created additional risk for children and young people by overloading them with cases they could not manage. As new workers came into post, they took on the caseloads of departing workers. Where possible, single assessments were allocated to workers in post.</p> <p>Context: In November 2014, there were 2071 initial contacts to the DAS service. Of those 367 met the criteria for a referral to social care to be assessed. Of those referrals, 60% required further single assessments.</p> <p>From Oct 21<sup>st</sup> 2014 to 17<sup>th</sup> Jan 2015, 1,355 new single assessments were passed through for allocation to the CiN teams. Of those, 1,006 were allocated and over that period a maximum of 291 at the highest point in December were allocated to Team Managers.</p>
6. What monitoring requirements were in place	Current/Past practice	<p>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</p>

<p>with regard to the allocation of social workers to cases? How often was monitoring information produced (weekly, monthly etc)? Who saw and sees this monitoring information?</p>		<p>care work happens.</p> <p>The weekly monitoring information includes:  Supervision  Chronologies  Unallocated cases  Case recording</p> <p>Team Managers, Service Managers, Heads of Service, the Divisional Director and DCS see this information.</p> <p>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 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.</p> <p>Assurance Safeguarding reports were reported 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.</p>
<p>7. What are the governance requirements within the dept? Was the Director given regular monitoring information? Was the Assistant Mayor given regular</p>	<p>Practice</p>	<p>The Carefirst system produced limited performance information that was used to monitor service performance. When that system ended and the new electronic recording system (Liquid Logic) started, information was migrated and by October 2014 the gradual accumulation of information about children that was recorded on Liquid Logic enabled the service to start drawing off performance information. The performance information, however due to the changeover to Liquid Logic was either</p>

<p>monitoring information?</p> <p>How often did the managers/ assistant mayor meet for regular updating? Do they have standard issues on their agendas?</p> <p>What reports go to the City Mayor?</p>		<p>unreliable or unavailable.</p> <p>A fortnightly Lead Member Briefing was in place which included the Assistant Mayor, DCS and Divisional Directors.</p> <p>Quarterly Performance Reports to DMT showed a positive picture of the service.</p> <p>In addition to informal briefings from the Assistant Mayor, the City Mayor instituted a system of formal Safeguarding Assurance meetings that received reports featuring the key performance information on Safeguarding, at which it was continually reported there were no unallocated cases in Leicester.</p> <p>A report presented on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2014 at the Safeguarding Assurance meeting with the City Mayor, Chief Operating Officer, and the Assistant Mayor identified some of the issues which the Director and Divisional Director had picked up.</p>
<p>8. What role did HR have in raising awareness of problems caused when 30 key front line staff left?</p> <p>Did they alert managers or the assistant mayor/city mayor? If not why not?</p>	HR	<p>No specific alert was given on the issue of 30 frontline social workers leaving the two CiN teams in Children's Social Care.</p> <p>HR and the Business Service Centre did provide regular Divisional and Departmental reports to CYP management on staffing issues including starters and leavers. The HR and Payroll system doesn't provide very detailed information, without a specific request or interrogation. It is currently being retendered and quality management information and reports will be an important aspect of the new specification.</p> <p>The working relationship with HR and the current DCS and Divisional Director started in October and has been very strong due to this issue. Prior to that HR were supporting the previous management regime with recruitment and agency activity.</p>
<p>9. Who appointed the interim post holder responsible for this service? How was she appointed? Were references</p>	HR Corporate	<p>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. Positive references were supplied by the agency, including from the former employer.</p>

<p>sought? Were they received and what did they say?</p> <p>Why was this post holder then transferred to ASC? Who appointed her to that post?</p> <p>What is the usual process for appointing interim directors? Should these be revised?</p>		<p>At the time of Deb Watson announcing her leaving, Frances was already appointed. Elaine was a former Strategic Director of Family Services covering both the Children's and Adults functions and responsibilities. At the time the Assistant Mayor for Children's was supporting the Assistant Mayor for Adults, both spoke to the Chief Operating Officer about the idea of appointing Elaine to Adults, on an interim basis. At the time Vi was supportive of the work Elaine had done in Children's. The COO similarly thought Elaine had done some good work for us. The changes she introduced to the DAS services on the back of the Thorpe report have been viewed very positively by Ofsted. The review in Children Social Care and changing Social Worker roles, so the journey of the child is at the heart of the service we provide, have been described (by Ofsted) as the right direction of travel and well intentioned. She inherited a budget deficit of nearly £10 million that was virtually all dealt with and she led a good management development programme with her senior managers that used action learning tools. Very problematic issues with the review that has now been criticised, unallocated cases and Liquid Logic implementation were not known about at that time. In fact quite the opposite the September Safeguarding Assurance meeting had a very upbeat report.</p> <p>The COOs reservations at the time were more about Frances not being undermined by the continuing presence of Elaine on an interim basis in Adults. It was agreed to transfer Elaine over to adults but Elaine was asked to take a month off to help her empty her head of children's work and to give Frances some space to begin to establish herself and to help her begin a positive relationship with Vi. Elaine's contract in Adults commenced on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2015.</p> <p>There is no set process or approval process for interims and yes we should put in place better processes based on seniority and cost. We should also review the other interims that we currently employ that meet the thresholds we set.</p>
<p>10. The 291 cases are said to be low risk. What does that mean? Who decided they</p>	<p>Practice</p>	<p>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 (refer to context</p>

<p>were low risk and how?</p>		<p>regarding new social workers). We are now doing some further analysis of the current situation with the 291 cases which will more fully answer the questions posed. It is not yet complete but can be reported at a later stage.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Thresholds are agreed by the joint LLR Boards and those determine which children might be eligible for a social care service. Decisions about the unallocated single assessments were made by experienced managers.</p> <p>Thresholds are agreed by joint LLR (Leicester, Leicestershire, Rutland) boards and those determine which children might be eligible for a social care service.</p>
<p>11. 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?</p>	<p>Budget</p>	<p>The typical LCC social worker cost is £24/hour compared to agency cost of £39/hour</p> <p>We are forecasting to overspend on CiN teams staffing costs by £375k in 14/15 against a budget of £3.7m.</p>
<p>12. Who referred these children to the Dept? What were they told when the children were not allocated social workers? How long did the children have to wait for social workers to be appointed?</p>	<p>Practice</p>	<p>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. The 218 were referred by either health, schools, the police and families or self-referrals. All of the children have been seen and assessments carried out.</p>
<p>13. Has there been an enquiry</p>	<p>Practice</p>	<p>Analysis is being conducted. Although answering the questions about consequences</p>

<p>into the consequences for the children who were not allocated social workers? What has it found?</p>		<p>of the delay can be very difficult to answer.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>14. Do the Director, Assistant Mayor and City Mayor believe that the only person responsible for this situation was the interim director?</p>	<p>Corporate</p>	<p>No but the interim Director of Children Services when taking the role agreed to specific responsibilities that go with that post and also agreed to be accountable for those responsibilities. Elaine's position was untenable after such a poor Ofsted judgement that ultimately found children were at risk of being harmed because of failures within the service whilst she was the strategic leader. There was also a team in place to manage the review in question led by the then Divisional Director for this area, this is detailed in the business case. There were also programme board arrangements in place for managing the implementation of Liquid Logic, for children's again led by the Divisional Director. The Ofsted report has also found some weaknesses in practice and supervision that we will need to address. In future we need to work harder to ensure the implementation of reviews are given as much if not more focus than the development of business cases and the consultation process. The COO needs to make sure that better performance and management information and analysis happens in our critical areas and not just leave it to the division and the department. The whole senior team need to make sure there are open channels of communication into the organisation, different techniques and initiatives have been tried to promote this over the past few years but clearly more needs to be done. Over the last 6 months Directors and HR have led a piece of work developing our organisation culture and values and this will be an important aspect of this, finally the whole organisation needs to ensure a culture of listening and escalation but without disempowering staff and Managers.</p>
<p>15. How can such a situation in this area of the Council's</p>	<p>Practice</p>	<p>High quality well trained social workers and managers are key to the delivery of an effective service for children, young people and families. The recruitment and</p>



<p>work and others be prevented from happening again?</p>		<p>retention plans in place are to ensure that the council is able to have a full complement of staff to deliver the service.</p> <p>Development work was already underway which will incorporate Ofsted's priority actions to put in place an effective performance management framework. This has been strengthened by engaging external expertise to complete the performance and quality assurance framework which will form the basis of information to managers, elected members and the LSCB.</p> <p>Between October 2014 and March 2015 we were using a developing suite of performance indicators to track and monitor progress. KPIs have been developed that can be seen daily or weekly for critical information about children.</p> <p>These and other improvements will be overseen by a Performance Group led by the Chief Operating Officer. There will be regular reporting arrangements in place to the Improvement Board and to the Scrutiny Commission.</p> <p>See the responses given above.</p>
<p>16. What if any action was taken following the Ofsted inspection in 2011 to improve the service? Why was there no improvement forthcoming?</p>		<p>An action plan was developed against the recommendations from the 2011 inspection. The plan was owned by the Divisional Director at the time. The plan had 4 themes and progress was regularly reported to the CYP management team throughout 2012.</p> <p>It is difficult to offer an opinion on the second question.</p>