

Executive Decision Report

**Further update on action taken following Ofsted
Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After
Children Services and Munro recommendations**

Decision to be taken by: City Mayor & Executive
Lead director: Rachel Dickinson

Departmental Management Team 6th September 2012
Lead Member Briefing 18th September 2012
Scrutiny Commission 21st November 2012



City Mayor

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
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- Report version number: 1

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report is a further update on the actions taken after the Ofsted inspection of Leicester City Council's Safeguarding and Looked After Children's Services in December 2011 and follows on from an earlier report submitted in May 2012.
- 1.2. The Ofsted report in January 2012 published the outcome of the inspection and recommended areas to improve in Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services in Leicester City; immediately, within 3 months and within 6 months.
- 1.3. The report in May 2012 informed on the progress of actions taken in relation to Ofsted's recommendations to improve fourteen areas within a 3 months' timescale – there were eight areas in Safeguarding and six areas in LAC Services. The report detailed the action taken immediately following the inspection outcome, confirmed that the majority of action was achieved and identified further work initiated to ensure improvement is sustained by embedding it into practice over the longer term.
- 1.4. Overall progress has been made in relation to all the recommendations made in the SLAC Inspection and those contained in the Munro review in Child Protection. Appendix 1 details all the recommendations made in the SLAC inspection.

2. Recommendations

2.1 For the Executive to accept this updated report and note:

- Progress of those areas from the first report update which were initiated and required further development;
- The final 3 areas requiring action within 6 months;
- The work of the "Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People in

3. Supporting information including options considered:

3.1. Progress update from first report – Further developmental work

3.2. One area in Safeguarding:

- NHS Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Cluster to ensure that children with behavioural difficulties are enabled to access emotional well-being services and are supported through transitions to adult services.

3.2.1. The CAMHS Strategic Priority Group Chair has confirmed there are good planned transitional protocols and arrangements in place for developmental conditions such as mental health combined with learning disabilities, specific diagnoses such as psychosis, eating disorders, Autism Spectrum Disorders and ADHD.

3.2.2. Improvements have been made in supporting transition to adult services, which forms part of the Children and Young People’s IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Services) model. Young people from the age of 16 years upwards are able to access the Adult IAPT Service (offering short-term therapeutic interventions to tackle anxiety, phobias and low mood) with a referral from their CAMHS practitioner. This is intended to provide a good transitions option for many young people with lower level mental health needs.

3.2.3. Commissioners have spoken with young people about their experience of transition and as a result options to have transitional support available are being explored.

3.3. Two areas in LAC (Looked After Children) Services:

- All care leavers are in accommodation which meets expected standards set out by the council.

3.4. Having audited 3 hostels, The CiCC (Children in Care Council), together with the Corporate Forum Executive have agreed a set of standards with providers of accommodation for care leavers. This has been launched with providers and a quality assurance process agreed, which will involve young people and officers.

- Looked After Children’s reviews are recorded to consistently high standards to enhance children’s plans

3.5. As part of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service Quality Assurance

Programme for 2012/13 the Service Manager (IRO Manager) undertakes four audits of minutes by IROs for LAC reviews each month. Any findings are recorded and fed back to the professional staff through various paths, for example actions are monitored in supervision sessions and Quality Assurance workshops within the IRO Service and improvements to Social Work Reports will be discussed and agreed in regular liaison meetings between the services. LAC Review minutes are also evaluated during the full audits completed by senior managers and improvements have been noted.

3.6. **Final three areas requiring action within 6 months:**

- Ensure that all the learning from complaints is identified and aggregated and is used to continually improve practice

3.7. Since January 2012 a system was introduced across all teams in Social Care and Safeguarding to improve the collation and monitoring of statutory complaints. A systematic recording of the lessons from complaints has been developed. Weekly reports from the Complaints Manager with a focus on the learning are submitted to the Divisional Director and Heads of Service and an annual report is submitted to the Executive.

- Ensure that there is a clear strategy to embed “think family” work in all relevant adults’ and children’s services and monitor its effectiveness in improving practice and safeguarding children

3.8. This work is being developed and monitored through the Stay Safe Development Group action plan and the Quality Assurance programme developed by the LSCB Safeguarding Effectiveness Group

- Ensure that there are clear lines of accountability and reporting arrangements between the Children’s Trust (now called The Trust) and the LSCB

3.9. A protocol agreement is due to be ratified at the Trust and LSCB meetings being held in September 2012 which sets out the accountability and reporting arrangements between the Leicester Safeguarding Children Board (‘LSCB’) and the Leicester Children’s Trust (‘the Trust’) in respect of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. It lays out their respective roles and functions and covers arrangements for challenge, scrutiny and performance management. Where relevant it includes aspects of their working relationship and touches on the roles of their constituent bodies.

3.10. **The work of the “Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People in Leicester City Group”**

3.11. The group was established to integrate, implement and monitor the learning and recommendations arising from the Munro Review into Child Protection and those areas for improvement identified in the inspection of Safeguarding and

Looked After Children (SLAC) Services.

- 3.12. An Improving Outcomes Action Plan monitors the progress of all actions for improvement.
- 3.13. To shift the Local Authority from a position of adequate to good, or outstanding in its provision of services for children and young people and families in Leicester City, a pivotal aspect is the engagement with frontline staff across children's social care. Through the work of the "Improving Outcomes Frontline Group", structured conversations have been undertaken about practice, challenges and enabling social workers to take greater ownership and accountability for their work and profession.
- 3.14. The outcome of this work is the development of core Practice Standards for children's social work in Leicester City. Forty two standards have been developed and shaped by considering five overall themes:
- Professional behaviour and good practice;
 - Supervision;
 - Recording and evidencing work;
 - Interaction: Everyone should be treated with courtesy and respect;
 - How we work with children in our care
- 3.15. These 42 practice standards have been developed by social workers for social work teams and will be launched in September 2012. Each social worker team will assess the practice standards in monthly "team evaluations". The aim is to:
- Improve consistency of, acknowledge and share good practice;
 - Increase the opportunity for reflection and review of the principles;
 - Dispel any perceived blame culture and promote a sharing and supportive culture;
 - Enable a direct pathway through the frontline group to Children Social Care & Safeguarding Division for sharing of good practice, addressing issues and strengthening communication.
- 3.16. The Frontline Group will monitor team evaluations on a six monthly basis and it is expected that further developments and activity will arise from evaluations.

3.17. In summary, progress has been made on a number of fronts to ensure that action is taken to sustain improve services and importantly to sustain and evidence.

4. Details of Scrutiny

External Scrutiny: A new **unannounced** Ofsted Child Protection inspection framework was launched in May 2012. Leicester City Council might be inspected anytime up until 2013 when a whole new multi-inspectorate, multi-agency framework will be introduced.

Internal Scrutiny: In addition to the Education and Children's Services Leadership Team Meeting, scrutiny is undertaken by the Corporate Parenting Forum (with respect to LAC Services), the Safeguarding Assurance Group (with respect to Safeguarding) Safeguarding Children Panel and by the Scrutiny Commission with respect to both Safeguarding and LAC Services. This is in addition to the range of audit activity outlined in the Division's Quality Assurance Framework which has previously been presented to Scrutiny and Executive.

5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

There are no significant financial implications arising directly from this report.
Martin Judson, Financial Services

5.2 Legal implications

There are no direct legal implications.
Pretty Patel, Team Leader/Solicitor

5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

This report does not contain any significant climate change implications and therefore should not have a detrimental effect on the Council's climate change targets.
Helen Lansdown, Senior Environmental Consultant - Sustainable Procurement

5.4 Equality Impact Assessment

Not applicable

5.5 Other Implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

6. Background information and other papers:

None

7. Summary of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Areas for improvement from the Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services Inspection

8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

9. Is this a “key decision”?

No

Appendix 1 – Areas for improvement from the Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services Inspection

Safeguarding

Areas for improvement

In order to improve the quality of provision and services for safeguarding children and young people in Leicester City, the local authority and its partners should take the following action.

Immediately:

- ensure that the respective roles and responsibilities of qualified and unqualified staff in the DAS are demarcated appropriately so that activity such as assessing potential risk factors in respect of children and young people are undertaken only by qualified staff. **COMPLETED**
- ensure that child protection plans and family support plans clearly outline required outcomes, responsibilities and timescales, that progress against these is regularly reviewed and recorded in detail, and appropriate action is taken to ensure that the plan continues to meet the child's needs. **COMPLETED**
- ensure that all investigations overseen by the LADO are initiated and progressed in a timely manner and that actions taken are sufficiently robust. **COMPLETED**

Within three months:

- ensure that the LSCB has robust performance monitoring arrangements in place to enable partners to be assured that all aspects of safeguarding performance are satisfactory and improving. **COMPLETED**
- ensure that management oversight of cases is clearly recorded on children's case records including the reasons for decisions taken. **COMPLETED**
- ensure that a central record is made of the content and decisions arising from section 47 strategy meetings and that this is shared with all relevant agencies. **COMPLETED**
- NHS Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Cluster to ensure that there is timely access to specialist children's expertise when a child or young person is in the urgent care centre. **COMPLETED**
- NHS Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Cluster to ensure that children with behavioural difficulties are enabled to access emotional well-being services and supported through transitions to adult services. **COMPLETED**

Within six months:

- ensure that all the learning from complaints is identified and aggregated and is used to continually improve practice. **COMPLETED**
- ensure that there is a clear strategy to embed 'think family' work in all relevant adults' and children's services and monitor its effectiveness in improving practice and safeguarding children. **COMPLETED**
- ensure that there are clear lines of accountability and reporting arrangements between the Children's Trust and the LSCB. **COMPLETED**

Services for Looked After Children

Areas for improvement

In order to improve the quality of provision and services for looked after children and young people and care leavers in Leicester, the local authority and its partners should take the following action.

Immediately:

- ensure that the looked after children are able to access education and are integrated into school life by significantly reducing the number of fixed term and temporary exclusions from school. **COMPLETED**

Within three months:

- ensure that all managers in the looked after children's services are able to contribute effectively to improving outcomes for children and young people. **COMPLETED**
- ensure that every looked after child who would benefit from an Independent Visitor is able to access one in a timely manner. **COMPLETED**
- ensure that all care leavers are in accommodation which meets expected standards set out by the council. **COMPLETED**
- NHS Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Cluster to ensure that those looked after children in kinship care settings are not disadvantaged, compared with other looked after children, in accessing mental health and emotional well-being treatment services. **COMPLETED**
- ensure that looked after children's reviews are recorded to consistently high standards to enhance children's plans. **COMPLETED**