

# WIRRAL COUNCIL

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

20 SEPTEMBER 2011

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>SAFEGUARDING AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN INSPECTION UPDATE REPORT</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR ANN MCLACHLAN</b>
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b>NO</b>

### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report outlines the progress made up to the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2011 in relation to implementing the areas for development identified in the Safeguarding and Looked After Children inspection which was undertaken by OFSTED between 24 January and 4 February 2011.

### 2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

2.1 Members are requested to note the progress made up to the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2011 in addressing the area for development identified in the Safeguarding and Looked after Children inspection

### 3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

3.1 OFSTED is the regulator for children's social care services under the Children Act 2004 and will be responsible, through subsequent inspections, for monitoring ongoing compliance with statutory duties for children who need safeguarding and who are looked after by the local authority. Members have a responsibility to assure themselves that the council is taking appropriate action in addressing the areas for development identified by OFSTED.

3.2 Members received a report on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2011 outlining the positive and successful outcome of the inspection by OFSTED and requested that an update report be produced outlining the progress made in addressing the areas for development outlined in the attached action plan.

### 4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 OFSTED inspected two areas of service delivery in the January/ February 2011 Inspection; Safeguarding Services and Services for Looked after Children. The inspection report provided grades and areas for development for both service areas, there were no priority actions identified. There were seven Areas for Development. An action plan was established in order to track progress against

these areas for development and also additional actions extracted from the body of the OFSTED report, which support the continuous improvement journey in order to make the transition to outstanding, in all areas. The updated action plan is provided for information as an appendix to this report.

- 4.2 Safeguarding Services overall effectiveness was rated as good, and capacity for improvement was rated as good. Four safeguarding outcomes were rated as outstanding; the contribution of health agencies to keeping children and young people safe, partnership working, leadership and management and ambition and prioritisation. All other areas were graded as good. In the Safeguarding part of the Inspection, there were three areas for development.

Within 3 months:-

- ensure the records of assessments include the risk and protective factors

Within 6 months:-

- keep under review the capacity of the current electronic recording arrangement to ensure it is fit for purpose
- ensure all records of assessments, plans and reviews reflect a focus on the child's views and wishes and the cultural and identity needs of children and their families.

- 4.3 The first area for development “ensure the records of assessments include the risk and protective factors” had one action identified in order to ensure this occurred. This was to revise initial and core assessment practice guidance to confirm what should be included in the analysis section (action 13 in the action plan). Staff have been instructed to comply with this and further training and support is being provided to ensure this becomes embedded in practice.
- 4.4 The second area for development “keep under review the capacity of the current electronic recording arrangement to ensure it is fit for purpose” comprised four actions (actions 14 to 17). Three of these actions have been achieved within the dates provided. One, establish the post of ICS/ESCR Training / Project Manager (action 16) has been delayed and is expected to be achieved by the 15<sup>th</sup> September.
- 4.5 The third area for development “ensure all records of assessments, plans and reviews reflect a focus on the child's views and wishes and the cultural and identity needs of children and their families” has six actions associated with it (actions 18 to 23). Of these actions one action to ensure that Teams have issues around equality and diversity (identity) as a standing item on their Team Meeting agendas is complete (action 19). The other actions have been revised from the 1<sup>st</sup> September to the 30<sup>th</sup> September for completion.
- 4.6 Services for Looked after Children the inspectors rated the overall effectiveness as good and the capacity for improvement as good. The inspectors graded the ambition and prioritisation and leadership and management for looked after children as outstanding. The inspectors graded each of the outcomes for looked after children; being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving and making a positive contribution as good. Economic well-being was graded as

adequate. Four areas for development to be completed within three months were identified, these were to:-

- promote awareness among all looked after children of the opportunities presented by the Children in Care Council
- ensure children's files give a clear picture of their life story and the reasons that decisions are made as well as reflecting their individual identity
- Improve further the effectiveness of strategies used to ensure that more young people complete their chosen course of study or training successfully post 16
- Improve the consistency of the quality of the personal education plans for the youngest children in care and pathway plans for care leavers

4.7 The first area for development "promote awareness among all looked after children of the opportunities presented by the Children in Care Council" had one action associated with it which has been achieved (action 24), this involved devising and implementing the Children in Care Councils Communication Plan.

4.8 The second area for development "ensure children's files give a clear picture of their life story and the reasons that decisions are made as well as reflecting their individual identity" had four actions associated with it (actions 25 to 28). Of these one has been completed and provides an up to date 'Pen Picture' of the child that is to be regularly updated. The other three actions are not yet fully completed and involved the embedding of processes to ensure that case recording and decision making in relation to cases is clear. These will be completed by the 30<sup>th</sup> September.

4.9 The third area for development "Improve further the effectiveness of strategies used to ensure that more young people complete their chosen course of study or training successfully post 16", six actions were associated with this area (actions 29 to 34). Of these two (actions 29 & 30) have been completed within timescales and involved developing the skills of our foster carers in order to support the children placed with them in their studies more effectively. The other four actions (actions 31 to 34) which are due for completion by the 1<sup>st</sup> November are on track for completion by that date.

4.10 The fourth area for development "Improve the consistency of the quality of the personal education plans for the youngest children in care and pathway plans for care leavers" has four associated actions (actions 35 to 38). Of these one has been completed (action 37) which established a development plan within the Pathway Team to improve the way in which pathways plans develop the economic well being of care leavers. Action 35, re-launching the guidance for Personal Education Plans (PEP), and action 38, develop an understanding amongst Social Care staff of the framework for attainment, have had their dates revised to the 22<sup>nd</sup> September so that this coincides with a PEP workshop (action 36) that will be delivered to Social Care Staff and partners.

4.11 From the review of the text of the OFSTED letter a further 18 actions were identified (action 39 to 56). Of these, 12 actions have been complete with 5 remaining on course for completion within the initial timescales provided. One

action (action 53) which seeks to appoint an Employability Officer using ESF funding has been delayed.

- 4.12 Overall all the areas identified by OFSTED as a result of the inspection of Safeguarding Service and Services to Looked after Children have been addressed. While it is acknowledge that in some areas timescales have been revised from those provided in the 1<sup>st</sup> June report all areas will be completed.

## **5.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 5.1 Safeguarding children at risk of harm, and parenting children in the care of the local authority are statutory responsibilities. Failing to fulfil these statutory duties exposes children to risk of harm and the potential for the local authority to be the subject of legal action by the children and their parents for failing to protect them. Failing to meet the standards set by OFSTED as the regulator can lead to intervention by the Department for Education to monitor improvements or in extreme cases to direct the takeover of services by another local authority or contractor.

## **6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 6.1 No other options were considered as this was an external inspection undertaken by the regulator of social care, OFSTED.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 The inspectors consulted with a wide range of children and young people, their families and carers, staff and partner agencies.
- 7.2 The action plan developed included team and Branch plans and has been monitored on a monthly basis by the department. Progress on the action plan will also be reported to the Council's Safeguarding Reference Group.

## **8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

- 8.1 The voluntary, community and faith sector were part of the meetings that the inspectors had with a wide range of service providers.

## **9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

- 9.1 The action plan recommends training for staff in particular areas which will be met within current resources. The review of the capacity of the electronic recording system will involve WITS as part of making the adjustments to the system as planned. There may be a need to purchase services from the current provider Northgate (or an alternative provider) given there are likely to be further changes made following the Munro review into child protection. This review is critically examining if the current it systems are fit for purpose. The government is currently making funding available through the Social Work Improvement Fund in anticipation of changes in social work practice and recording systems.

## **10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no legal implications.

## 11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The inspection report highlights this as an area that is currently adequate. The action plan addresses how this will be improved.

11.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Is an EIA required? No

## 12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no carbon reduction implications.

## 13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no planning implications

13.2 The community expects that the authority provides appropriate and timely services to safeguard children and care for children in the councils care.

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## APPENDICES

SAFEGUARDING AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN INSPECTION ACTION PLAN

## REFERENCE MATERIAL

### SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY	1ST JUNE 2011