

# WIRRAL COUNCIL

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

21<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2012

<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>ACTING DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES</b>
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	NO

### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines the progress made up to the 29<sup>th</sup> February 2012 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 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 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 grades 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.

- 2.3 The action to deliver the first area for development “ensure the records of assessments include the risk and protective factors”, action 13, was reported as completed to the 20<sup>th</sup> September Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.4 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 actions were reported as completed to the 20<sup>th</sup> September Overview and Scrutiny Committee, actions 14, 15 and 17. The fourth action was to establish the post of ICS/ESCR Training / Project Manager, action 16, this has now been completed.
- 2.5 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” had six actions associated with it, actions 18 to 23. Action 19 was reported as completed to the 20<sup>th</sup> September Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Of the remainder actions 20,21 and 22 concerned with devising, delivering and then reviewing the outcomes workshop sessions to explore practice in depth with Social Workers have been completed. In addition, action 23 to ‘review Audit tools/process in order to evidence changing practice’ has also been completed. One action, action 18, remains outstanding this was to ‘Update and revise all procedures’ and had been due for completion by 1<sup>st</sup> September 2011 and had a revised timescale put forward as the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2011. This action is proving lengthier to complete as those tasked with completing this work are also called upon to develop and revise new procedures as new regulations are brought into force. In particular the new standards for Fostering and Adoption have created additional work. In order to ensure that our procedures are maintained the department has contracted a provider, Tri-X, who will undertake this work in future. Tri-X is a leading national provider of Children and Adults policies and procedures, providing updated to these as new legislation and regulations come into force. Tri-X currently hosts Wirral LSCB policies and procedures and provides services to other authorities such as Liverpool, Knowsley, St Helens, Sefton, Blackburn with Darwen and regional groups including West Mercia, West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire. The transfer of our procedures to Tri-X is expected to be completed by the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012.
- 2.6 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
- 2.7 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, action 24, this was reported as completed to the 20<sup>th</sup> September Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.8 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, action 26 was reported as completed to the 20<sup>th</sup> September Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Since then action 27 ‘Pen Pictures to be checked and verified by the updated audit procedure’, action 28 ‘Provide two workshops on the recording of significant events and decision making / case chronologies’ and action 25 to ‘Review the Case Recording Policy’ have also been completed.
- 2.9 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”, had six actions associated with it (actions 29 to 34). Actions 29 and 30 were reported as completed to the 20<sup>th</sup> September Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The remaining four actions have now also been completed. These were, action 31 to ‘implement robust tracking and monitoring arrangements for post 16 learners, action 32 to ‘ensure that pathway plans incorporate EET actions, action 33 to ‘increase the range of employability opportunities offered by the local authority and action 34 to ‘seek to provide support to LAC through the role of a participation mentor’.
- 2.10 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 action 37 was reported as completed to the 20<sup>th</sup> September Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The three remaining actions have now also been completed. These were, action 35 to ‘re-launch the guide to PEP writing and development of young children, including the involvement of the Early Tears Team’, action 36 ‘PEP workshops to be delivered to Social Care Staff and partners’ and action 38 to ‘develop understanding amongst Social Care staff of the framework for attainment of children in education’.
- 2.11 From the review of the text of the OFSTED letter a further 18 actions were identified (action 39 to 56). Of these, 17 actions have been completed. The one action that remains outstanding is action 41 to ‘Fully implement the safer Recruitment Action Plan’. Revised dates have been sought from the action leader in order to complete this action for the Children and Young Peoples Department.

2.12 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. It is acknowledged that in a small number of areas timescales have been revised in some instances.

### **3.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

3.1 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.

### **4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

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

### **5.0 CONSULTATION**

5.1 The inspectors consulted with a wide range of children and young people, their families and carers, staff and partner agencies.

5.2 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.

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

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

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

7.1 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.

### **8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no legal implications.

## **9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(c) No because of another reason which is that this report is a final update on progress towards addressing areas for development identified in the Ofsted Inspection in January 2011. While the inspection report highlighted equality as an area for development the action plan addressed how this will be improved.

## **10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no carbon reduction implications.

## **11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no planning implications.

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

## **12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S**

12.1 Members are requested to note the progress made up to the 29<sup>th</sup> February 2012 in addressing the area for development identified in the Safeguarding and Looked after Children inspection.

## **13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

13.1 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.

13.2 Members received reports 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. An update report was provided to members on the 20<sup>th</sup> September 2011 indicating the progress made up to the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2011. Members asked for a final update report to be presented to the March committee.

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## **APPENDICES**

**SAFEGUARDING AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN INSPECTION ACTION PLAN**

## REFERENCE MATERIAL

### SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY	1 <sup>st</sup> JUNE 2011
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY	20 <sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2011