

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY HEAD OF TRANSFORMATION AND GOVERNANCE

TO:	ADULT CHILDREN AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	3 FEBRUARY 2016	AGENDA ITEM:	5
TITLE:	CHILDREN'S SERVICES UPDATE		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR JAN GAVIN	PORTFOLIO:	CHILDREN'S SERVICES
SERVICE:	CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND EARLY HELP	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report is to give an update to the Adult Children and Education Committee on the progress of Children's Services since the last meeting.
- 1.2 At the time of the last meeting, members were concerned about a few distinct issues. This included staffing due to a high volume of staff leaving the organisation since June; about morale and staff pride in the service they were providing; about performance which was dipping between June and November; and about management and leadership which lead to the dismissal of the Director of Children's Services.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the progress made within Children Education and Early Help Directorate since the last update.

3. STAFFING & LEADERSHIP

- 3.1 The interim appointment of the Director of Adult Services as the Director of Children's Services at the end of November 2015 was followed in December 2015 by the securing of a new senior management team. This included the permanent appointment of Head of Early Help. The Head of Safeguarding and

Children in Care and the Head of Education were appointed to alongside additional experienced interim capacity in the Head of Transformation and Governance role. The role of the DCS has been secured and the new DCS will take up post on the 1st February 2016. Recent permanent recruitment of the Principal Social Worker will act as a custodian of social work practice and development. A permanent Service Manager for MASH and A&A started in January 2016.

- 3.2 A short term intensive management action plan was implemented in December 2015 and delivered to ensure that work was consolidated and delivered to a high standard. This was monitored through the Children's Services Improvement Board.
- 3.3 All vacancies within the social work teams have been filled and the caseloads in the long term teams are now within 'reasonable' caseload limits. Caseloads in Access and Assessment remain high, but have been reduced by 50% since November. The new Service Manager is monitoring the workloads and a new Transfer Protocol will assist with stepping cases down or across to longer term teams.
- 3.4 The development of the 'LEAP' Vision alongside staff has focused the service on the delivery of the key aims of children's services. The priorities are shared across the directorate and are pertinent to all staff in Early Help, Education and Children's Social Care. A copy of the vision is attached at Appendix 1.

PRIDE IN PERFORMANCE

- 3.5 Since the development of the 'dashboard' for Looked After Children, performance has seen a clear improvement as managers and staff can review their performance in 'live time' and use it to secure performance for individual children. The Performance Team are concentrating efforts to deliver dashboards for Child Protection and for Children in Need.
- 3.6 Management oversight is having the benefit of focusing staff on delivering to timescales. In early January some of the teams were reporting 100% of visits within timescales, performance which we have not attained since early 2015.
- 3.7 Over 80% of assessments are completed within timescales and stability for looked after children is improving. Over 90% of LAC Health Assessments have been completed, this includes children who live out of local authority area.
- 3.8 The Adult Children and Education Committee will also receive a paper outlining the Directorate's refreshed Quality Assurance Strategy which will help to maintain focus on performance and quality of services.

- 3.9 At the 3 Staff Development Days held in December and early January staff told us what made them proud about working for Reading. This exercise was encouraging in that some key areas of good practice were reported and demonstrated that staff are focused on and committed to making a difference to the lives of children and young people.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT BOARD

- 3.10 The Children's Services Improvement Board has now consolidated its membership with regular attendance from the Heads of Service, the Director of Children's Services, the Lead Member for Children's Services, the Managing Director and partners from the Police, Health and Headteacher representation.
- 3.11 The plan has been refreshed to take into account the fact that a number of items were completed with the short term management action plan. Several actions had their deadline for completion extended (for example to take into account the restructure of services and the regionalisation of adoption project plan) and the Heads of Service are taking accountability for reporting on the actions within specific themes. Once performance is embedded and demonstrably stabilised, the Board will be disbanded and monitoring and challenge will be driven by this Committee, the LSCB and the operational Quality Assurance Board.
- 3.12 The refreshed action plan is attached at Appendix 2 for information.
- 3.13 The short term management action plan included the refresh of the Quality Assurance Framework, the delivery of the SGO Policy, the securing of the performance dashboards and the development of a staff forum and the update of a number of procedures.
- 3.14 As a result of the delivery of the short term action plan, partner perception at the Children's Services Improvement Board was that the service has delivered a huge amount in the last two months and they voiced improved confidence in the management team that they are able to secure and deliver improved performance.
- 3.15 It has been reported back that the Judiciary are also noticing a positive change in performance and the quality and timeliness of assessments and court reports.
- 3.16 The senior management team are clear about what they need to do to progress performance further and the appointment of Helen McMullen as Director will ensure continuity and stability for the staff during 2016.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

4.1 This report is in line with the overall direction of the Council by meeting two of the following Corporate Plan priorities:

1. Safeguarding and protecting those that are most vulnerable;
2. Providing the best start in life through education, early help and healthy living.

4.3 The directorate's delivery of the Strategic Aim "To promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all" will be monitored through the Quality Assurance Framework and through the oversight of the Children's Services Improvement Board.

4.4 **Community Safety Implications** - Under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1988, the Council must consider the following in the exercise of its duties and decision-making:

- crime and disorder
- anti-social behaviour
- behaviour adversely affecting the environment
- substance misuse reduction

4.5 The Quality Assurance Framework and Children's Services Improvement Board will be an additional mechanism for improvements and dissemination of best practice in relation to all service delivery areas within Children, Education and Early Help, including monitoring how the Directorate responds to youth offending, domestic violence and anti-social behaviour issues including substance misuse.

4.6 A regular quality assurance and performance monitoring framework will assist in addressing health inequalities for our service users and will help us to identify and address with partners how they can assist in addressing this issue.

5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

5.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not relevant to the decision as a good overview of the quality of service delivery will address any inequalities and seek to remove them.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Whilst there are no legal implications in relation to this report, it is important to note that under Children's Services legislation, we are required under a general duty of the Children Act 2004 to address the quality of services and to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This framework establishes a clear mechanism for doing so.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

(CSIB Item 4 Appendix 1 Draft Plan) Framework for Improvement

1. Leadership & Governance
1.1 Accountability and oversight structures
Outcomes we will achieve: Strong clear effective strategic leadership and decision making to ensure immediate and sustained progress is made to improve the lives of children and young people in Reading.
1.2 Improving timeliness
Outcomes we will achieve: Improved assurance of children's safety through timely assessments and interventions.
1.3 Increasing social worker capacity
Outcomes we will achieve: Ensure that social workers have a manageable workload which is delivered to a high standard.
1.4 Improving management and professional practice
Outcomes we will achieve: Managers oversight is improved to ensure that case management is of a high standard.
2. Partnership Working
2.1 Better information gathering/sharing (Referral, assessments, Strategy Discussion, S47 enquiries including DV and MASH)
Outcomes we will achieve: Through multi-agency panels, working arrangements and strategy meetings partners effectively gather and share information to help and protect children and young people. The impact of domestic violence is minimised for children, young people and their families.
2.2 Effective child protection processes
Outcomes we will achieve: Child protection conferences take place within statutory timescales and children and young people are effectively protected.
2.3 Coherent early help offer
Outcomes we will achieve: Early Help is co-ordinated and targeted at children and families who are most at risk.
2.4 Responding effectively to children missing from home and care/who are at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation
Outcomes we will achieve: There is an environment where children are aware of risks and are able to report concerns in relation to CSE/missing. Agencies respond proactively to incidents/issues raised.
3. Quality of Practice
3.1 Voice of the child is heard
Outcomes we will achieve: The views of children and young people are taken into account at every stage.
3.2 Audit programme
Outcomes we will achieve: Audit is used to improve practice.
3.3 Consistency of practice and recording)
Outcomes we will achieve: Plans for children and young people are focused on their assessed needs with clear outcomes and timescales.

3.4 Supervision and reflective practice

Outcomes we will achieve: Good quality supervision supports staff to reflect and learn, enabling them to improve outcomes for children and young people.

4. Workforce Development

4.1 Establishing a stable workforce

Outcomes we will achieve: Create a stable workforce of directly employed staff to deliver a high quality of service to children and young people.

4.2 Effective learning and development

Outcomes we will achieve: Continually develop the workforce to deliver effectively for children and young people.

5. Performance Management

5.1 Regular, accurate performance information

Outcomes we will achieve: Information is used to drive improvement.

5.2 User feedback mechanisms

Outcomes we will achieve: Feedback on services is used to improve services.

5.3 Audit supervision activity

Outcomes we will achieve: Effective independent reviewing improves outcomes for children and young people who are on Child Protection Plan or are Looked After Children(LAC).

6. Services for LAC & Permanency

6.1 High quality services for LAC and Care Leavers

Outcomes we will achieve: Looked After Children and care leavers feel well supported and are able to access opportunities.

6.2 Improving fostering and adoption services

Outcomes we will achieve: Where it is appropriate, children are fostered and adopted in an appropriate timescale to meet needs.

6.3 Health of LAC

Outcomes we will achieve: Looked After Children experience similar health outcomes to the wider community.

6.4 Improving life story work

Outcomes we will achieve: Children and young people understand, in an age appropriate way the decisions about them and their lives.

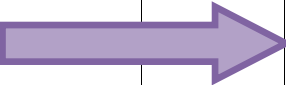



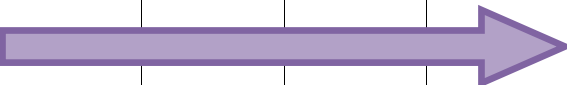

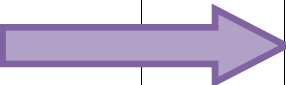
Children's Services Improvement Plan

Leadership and Governance








Ref	Action	Lead	Timeframe					
			2015-16 Q3	2015-16 Q4	2016-17 Q1	2016-17 Q2	2016-17 Q3	2016 – 17 Q4
L1 1.1	Ensure that Elected Members are aware of and sighted on their responsibilities for the children the Council is responsible for. Members will know and understand what is happening in the service so that they are able to effectively discharge their duties as corporate parents. Updated Corporate Parenting Strategy to be developed and agreed including training for members.	Head of Transformation and Governance						
L2 1.4	Deliver training session to all staff via Teamtalk on their roles and responsibilities in Corporate Parenting.	Head of Safeguarding and Long Term Teams / Head of Transformation and Governance						
L3 1.1	Reinforce the significance of the Statutory Roles and Responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and the Role of the Lead Member through regular scheduled reviews with the Managing Director and Leader of the Council	Head of Transformation and Governance						
L4 1.1	Re-launch of key governance arrangements including Quality Assurance Board, Performance Board and Commissioning Board	Head of Transformation and Governance / Head of Commissioning						
L5 1.3	Design, consult on and implement service restructure of Children's Social Care and Business Support based on Workflow, Workforce & Workload.	Head of Safeguarding and Long Term Teams						


Ref	Action	Lead	Timeframe					
		/ Head of Transformation and Governance						

Partnership Working



Ref	Action	Lead	Timeframe					
			2015-16 Q3	2015-16 Q4	2016-17 Q1	2016-17 Q2	2016-17 Q3	2016 – 17 Q4
P1 2.1	To complete the review of MASH and A&A taking into account any previous audit recommendations.	Head of Safeguarding and Long Term Teams						
P2 2.1	Re-alignment of process and practice at all stages to take place. Further development of MASH/A&A policies and procedures aligned with Tri-X.	Quality Assurance Service Manager						
P3 2.1	Workshop on effective supervision/management oversight alongside current reflective supervision sessions.	Head of Workforce Development						
P4 2.1	Review of support services available for DV including 1:2:1 provision	Head of Safeguarding and Long Term Teams						
P5 2.2	Develop and implement a Neglect Action plan	LSCB Business Manager						
P6 2.2	Work with Designated Safeguarding Leads in Reading schools to ensure Safeguarding responsibilities outlined in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' July 2015 are implemented	Head of Education / Head of Virtual School						
P7 2.3	Creation of a single pathway to Early Help Services.	Head of Early Help						

Quality of Practice




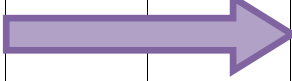
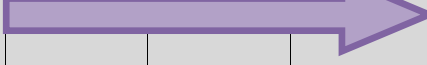
Ref	Action	Lead	Timeframe					
			2015-16 Q3	2015-16 Q4	2016-17 Q1	2016-17 Q2	2016-17 Q3	2016 – 17 Q4
Q1 3.1	Work to improve analysis within assessments and in the recording of children's views to ensure concerns are explicitly addressed.	Head of Safeguarding and Long Term Teams						
Q3 3.2	Review and implementation of the revised Quality Assurance Framework. This includes the continuous monitoring and scrutiny of the integrity of the quality assurance work by Senior leaders and evidencing the improvement taking place as a result of quality assurance activity.	Quality Assurance Service Manager / Head of Transformation and Governance						
Q3 3.3	To achieve effective multi agency work with regard to Private Fostering Arrangements Re-issue guidance to multi-agency partners in relation to Private Fostering to remind them of their responsibilities. (This is complete) Undertake Multi Agency Audit of Private Fostering	LSCB Business Manager						
Q4 3.4	Ensure that managers are well supported and have the capacity and competence to deliver effective supervision and management oversight on all cases.	Head of Safeguarding and Long Term Teams						
Q5 3.4	Further training in reflective supervision to be delivered.	Head of Workforce Development / Principal Social Worker						
Q6 3.4	Develop audit tool and undertake supervision audits. (Supervision audit currently in progress)	Quality Assurance Service Manager / Head of Transformation and Governance						
Q7	Improve the quality of chronologies	Head of Safeguarding						

Ref	Action	Lead	Timeframe					
3.3		and Long Term Teams / Principal Social Worker						
Q8 3.3	Improve the quality of core groups	Quality Assurance Service Manager						

Workforce Development




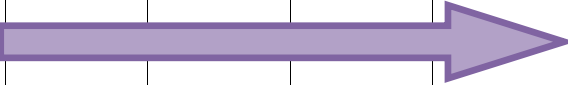


Ref	Action	Lead	Timeframe					
			2015-16 Q3	2015-16 Q4	2016-17 Q1	2016-17 Q2	2016-17 Q3	2016 – 17 Q4
WD 1 4.1	Develop and implement Social Worker recruitment and retention programme.	Head of Workforce Development						
WD 2 4.2	Review models of sector-led improvement and roll-out management/leadership development programme at all levels to embed an open culture that learns from itself and embraces transformational change as a mechanism to improve.	Head of Workforce Development						



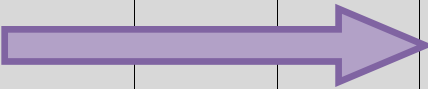
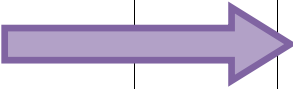

Performance Management

Ref	Action	Lead	Timeframe					
			2015-16 Q3	2015-16 Q4	2016-17 Q1	2016-17 Q2	2016-17 Q3	2016 – 17 Q4
PM1 5.1	Review and development of Performance Management arrangements including Purple Book indicators (This is complete)	Head of Transformation and Governance						
PM2 5.1	Undertake a strategic review of the 'Quality and Information for Children's Services' - monthly report (Purple Book) in relation to the content and application of the included data. (This is complete)	Head of Transformation and Governance						
PM3 5.1	Restatement of the correct processes in relation to where information needs to be recorded and training and support to ensure this is embedded into practice and management oversight. (This is complete)	Head of Performance						
PM4 5.1	Increased use and application of the Workload Report which will be checked by all workers and managers on a daily basis and embedding of data within front screen on Mosaic in Framework I. (This has been developed and will be reported through CSMT and DMT meetings as a standing item)	Head of Performance						
PM5 5.1	Implement Tranche 3 of the Mosaic plan for the ESCR system including group working and embedding CAT teams into the system	Head of Safeguarding and Long Term Teams / Head of Commissioning						

Ref	Action	Lead	Timeframe					
			2015-16 Q3	2015-16 Q4	2016-17 Q1	2016-17 Q2	2016-17 Q3	2016 – 17 Q4
PM6 5.2	Programme of gathering information from children, young people and their families about the quality of services they have received for all stages of the child's journey. Programme to be formulated and endorsed by the Corporate Parenting Board and the Children in Care Council for looked after children and by the RSCB for other children receiving a service. For example, undertaking qualitative sampling of children on their views of the quality of visits.	Quality Assurance Service Manager / Head of Transformation and Governance						
PM7 5.2	Development and agreement of a Participation Strategy that includes service user feedback	Head of Transformation and Governance						
PM8 5.2	Production of an annual "You said, we did" report for children and families	Head of Transformation and Governance						

Services for Looked after children and permanency

Ref	Action	Lead	Timeframe					
			2015-16 Q3	2015-16 Q4	2016-17 Q1	2016-17 Q2	2016-17 Q3	2016 – 17 Q4
LAC 1 6.1	Review current contract with NYAS and re commission advocacy services	Head of Commissioning						
LAC 2 6.1	Work to increase the use of independent visiting services for LAC and CIN through the short term provision of spot purchasing arrangements.	Quality Assurance Service Manager						
LAC 3 6.1	Increase the use of independent visiting services for LAC and CIN -month service review.	Quality Assurance Service Manager						
LAC 4 6.1	Work to improve the support for the education and attainment of Looked After Children by the Virtual School - All LAC will have an up to date, good quality PEP produced in a timely way that will set aspirational targets	Head of Virtual School						
LAC 5 6.1	Introduce systems to monitor the Virtual School and hold it to account Update from CH 30/11/15 Review structure and roles within the Virtual School and all supporting the education of Reading's CLA.	Head of Education						
LAC 6.1	Updated 02/10/15 Work with SEN Team and VH - LAC to ensure children with SEN/LAC attend alternative education provision. Update 02/10/15 Work with schools to ensure that children on their roll but not attending/on a	Head of Virtual School						

Ref	Action	Lead	Timeframe					
			2015-16 Q3	2015-16 Q4	2016-17 Q1	2016-17 Q2	2016-17 Q3	2016 – 17 Q4
	reduced timetable have a plan in place to achieve 25 hours education, including commissioning Alternative Provision. For those children who are not on a school roll the Council needs to review how it can fund and commission alternative provision and to develop an action plan to address the implementation							
LAC 7 6.1	Development and implementation of new Pupil Premium policy for LAC	Head of Virtual School						
LAC 8 6.1	Revised LAC and Care Leavers and Permanency Strategy. This should be the Corporate Parenting Strategy and a separate Permanency Strategy	Head of Transformation and Governance						
LAC 9 6.1	Review and drive improvement in services for Care Leavers (driven by recommendations from the Barnardo's review).	Head of Safeguarding and Long Term Teams						
LAC 10 6.1	Set clear service standards and management oversight of practice must be improved to ensure that the standards of a 'good' service are met.	Head of Transformation and Governance						
LAC 11 6.1	Take new work plan for the Care Leavers Service to Children in Care Council for review/reappraisal to ensure there is a high level of engagement.	Head of Safeguarding and Long Term Teams						

LEAP Vision

Directorate for Children, Education & Early Help Services



“Listen to Children
and Young People
Enable families,
Act quickly & in
Partnership”

Listen to our children, young people and families.

Enable families to make better constructive choices to have a positive impact.

Act quickly to deliver the right support & outcomes for each child working in a child focused, transparent, timely and inclusive way.

Partnership working to deliver integrated help early enough to be effective, efficient and Proportionate.



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Working better with you