

**Children and Young People
Overview & Scrutiny Committee
14 December 2011**

Improving Safeguarding Outcomes

Recommendation

To approve the actions for improving safeguarding outcomes for children and young people.

1.0 Key issues

1.1 This report provides an update on two key areas of work being undertaken in relation to improving safeguarding outcomes for children and young people. These areas of work also feed into the work of Warwickshire Safeguarding Children's Board and Warwickshire Children's Trust.

1.2 The two key areas of work are:

- The action plan put in place to address the inconsistent practices identified by Ofsted last year (as referenced in the Safeguarding business unit plan)
- The action plan in relation to the recommendations from the Committee's previous review of Safeguarding in 2010 (see appendices).

2.0 Update on the progress of the action plans

2.1 Addressing the inconsistent practices identified by Ofsted

2.1.1 The unannounced inspection of contact referral and assessment in 2010 identified the following as an area for development:

"Significant variation in practice and consistency between teams makes it more difficult for agencies working across districts to collaborate in the most effective way and some opportunities for disseminating good practice are missed".

Following the inspection, an action plan was formulated within the Senior Leadership Team of the safeguarding division which identified the following two strands of work to improve consistency and outcomes:

(i) "Work to be undertaken to enhance consistency of practice which, in turn, will inform proposals for remodelling of the service under the umbrella of the Directorate Transformation Programme" with the aim of providing greater consistency of practice across the authority which supports effective partner agency working and facilitates dissemination of good practice.

(ii) “Consistency of practice to be improved by the implementation of a county-wide supervision model that promotes reflective practice and critical thinking” with the aim of promoting consistency and significant improvements in the quality of assessments, evidence of reflective practice with the resultant impact on the quality of intervention and improved safeguarding of children and young people. This is targeted at all social care team leaders within a 12-month period.

- 2.1.2 Progress has been made in both areas. The social care teams have been re-configured in accordance with the re-organisation of the Children, Young People and Families Directorate (up until October 2011). The re-structuring has led to the amalgamation of two social care teams, leading to a reduction in the number of managers and therefore interfaces between services. Further work is underway to amalgamate initial assessment services in the Nuneaton & Bedworth area to further increase the capacity of the assessment practices, reduce the number of managers involved in decision making and promote greater consistency of practice across the geographical localities.
- 2.1.3 Social Care teams have been re-configured into Social Work Practices, in which Practice Leaders are responsible for the allocation, management and oversight of cases.
- 2.1.4 Training in a defined model of supervision, promoted by the Children’s Workforce Development Council (CWDC), has been commissioned for all Practice Leaders. It should be noted that although this training has taken some time to secure through the commissioning process, a significant number of Practice Leaders were already accessing this training through existing arrangements with the CWDC.
- 2.1.5 The Safeguarding ICT Transformation Board has also been overseeing the transformation to electronic social care recording and mobile working, which also aims to promote consistency of practice across the service.
- 2.1.6 A thresholds document has also been introduced and endorsed by Warwickshire Safeguarding Children’s Board. This provides practitioners from a range of agencies with a useful tool for describing the thresholds for intervention with children and their families. It is anticipated that this will support consistency of practice through an enhanced understanding by agencies of the appropriate thresholds for intervening with families.
- 2.2 **Recommendations from the Committee’s previous review of Safeguarding**
- 2.2.1 Attached at **Appendix A** is the action plan that was formulated in order to address the recommendations. The action plan indicates that a number of areas have been successfully completed.

3.0 Timescales associated with the next steps

- 3.1 The action plan in relation to the unannounced inspection of contact referral and assessment has been reviewed at regular intervals by the Safeguarding Senior Leadership Team. This has ensured that actions have been progressed appropriately. This will be superseded following the recent inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services by Ofsted.

Background Papers

Scrutiny Review Action Plan – attached as Appendix A

Scrutiny Review into Safeguarding, Children, Young People and Families OSC, Final Report September 2010 – attached as Appendix B

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