

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Education and Children's Services
Scrutiny Panel

DATE: 12th October 2011

CONTACT OFFICER: Clair Pyper, Director of Education and Children's Services
For all enquiries : (01753) 875704

WARD(S): All

PART I

FOR INFORMATION, SCRUTINY AND CHALLENGE

PROGRESS REPORT: OFSTED INSPECTION OF SAFEGUARDING AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

1. Purpose of Report

To keep Members informed of progress in improving safeguarding for children and young people in Slough, following the outcome of the Ofsted announced inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children which took place between April 4th and 15th 2011, with the report published on June 1st 2011.

2. Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel is requested to:

- a) Note that we are still awaiting the Improvement Notice to be issued by the Minister. Once received it will be distributed to all Members through the Commissioner for Education and Children's Services, and included on the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny agenda.
- b) Agree specific areas for further scrutiny, taking into account the agreed role of the Improvement Board and the undertaking by the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel on 9th June 2011 to focus on reports about specific areas which affect children's safeguarding.

And are informed that a meeting of the Improvement Board was held on 20th September 2011

3. Community Strategy Priorities

Celebrating diversity, enabling inclusion

- By identifying and prioritising services for vulnerable groups in the Slough Population, by targeting support to meet the needs of children and young people's identified needs and by ensuring that we build on the good and outstanding judgements in the Ofsted report and by addressing the areas for improvement.

Adding years to Life and Life to years

- Through focussing on the needs of the most vulnerable children and young people and their parents and carers in Slough, and providing targeted services through partnership working primarily with the NHS to secure measurable health improvements

Being Safe, Feeling Safe

- By offering effective support to families to help them do their best for their children so that children and young people are safe in their families and communities
- By recognising that parents are the main carers for their children, and by offering services that enable them to continue to care for their children successfully so that children can grow up within their own families and communities wherever possible
- By carrying out respective roles across the local authority and partner agencies to ensure that the most vulnerable children in our community are protected from harm and they are enabled to live with their families
- By carrying out our statutory role as a local authority to provide services for children in need, to safeguard them and look after children whose parents are unable to do so
- By working effectively with partner agencies so that they also contribute to safeguarding children and young people and demonstrate improved outcomes for those children and young people and their families
- By ensuring that children and young people who are looked after have the standards of care and life opportunities that we would want for our own children with contributions from all partner agencies

Prosperity for All

- By offering early education and family support to parents of young children so that they can focus on meeting their children's needs and overcoming personal and family difficulties that affect their ability to care for their children
- By promoting educational achievement which gives children and young people in care and leaving care enjoyment in learning and increased opportunities for success in adult life
- By maintaining high levels of Education, Employment and Training (EET) for young people who are looked after beyond 16 years of age.
- By promoting vulnerable young people's social and emotional development alongside advances in educational achievement
- By supporting local nursery providers to secure optimum standards so that parents and carers are able to secure economic prosperity/independence for themselves and their family.

4. Other Implications

a) Financial

Financial details were included in the report to the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel on 5th September 2011.

Members are asked to note that the additional activity identified in the Improvement Plan will be resourced without impact on front line services, in line with Ofsted requirements. The estimated cost of activities (see para 5.4 for details of Improvement Plan themes) requiring additional funding are

identified on the attached appendix. Additional costs will be incurred over the 18 month timeframe of the Improvement Plan. The total estimated cost is £385.5k (2011-12 £306k; 2012-13 £79.5k) of which £53k is an ongoing annual requirement. An additional contingency budget has been made available to fund the Improvement Plan.

b) Risk Management

Recommendation	Risk/Threat/Opportunity	Mitigation
Continuing work to manage rise in referrals, child protection plans and children looked after to ensure that children are kept safe	Rising demand puts pressure on budget, staff and performance	<p>First Response system set up to manage demand for lower level cases. Clear thresholds are in place for all partner agencies. Work with partner organisations to develop clear plans for work with children, young people and their families and to agree lead practitioner responsibilities.</p> <p>Sector support work includes review of early intervention strategy and implementation to look at effective use of resources and service to customers.</p>
Improvement Plan is being put in place to ensure that all DfE and Ofsted recommendations are followed up, monitored and having an impact on outcomes for children and young people.	<p>Focus on Improvement Plan in SBC does not engage all key partners.</p> <p>Focus on Improvement Plan distracts from broader range of outcomes.</p> <p>Progress against key areas of work does not drive change sufficiently fast.</p>	<p>All partner organisations across the Borough working to deliver the Improvement Plan, monitored through the Improvement Board. Senior representation from key partners on the Improvement Board.</p> <p>All partner organisations across the Borough working to deliver the CYPP agreed priorities and outcomes.</p>
Ensure focus on improving outcomes for children and young people through Improvement Plan	Concentration on process in Improvement Plan distracts from need to improve outcomes for children and young people.	Measures detailed in Improvement Plan need to focus on children and young people, with regular monitoring and challenge by the Improvement Board.
Ensure recruitment of new social workers and managers, and retention of existing staff. Increase skills at all levels through training, mentoring and line management supervision.	<p>Potential staff are deterred from joining Slough because of the outcome of the Ofsted report.</p> <p>Existing staff leave Slough because of the outcome of the Ofsted report.</p>	Include Capacity and Capability in the Improvement Plan, focussing on workforce strategy and improving the retention, stability and capability of the workforce. Training programme in place based on assessed needs of

Recommendation	Risk/Threat/Opportunity	Mitigation
	<p>Continued dependence on agency staff</p> <p>Improvements in staff capability are less rapid than anticipated because of competence, staff turnover.</p> <p>Impact of training not immediately obvious in improved outcomes for children and young people.</p>	managers and practitioners.
Ofsted unannounced inspection 2011 (last annual inspection October 2010).	<p>Inspectors judge that contact, referral and assessment services have areas for Priority Action.</p> <p>Assessment of progress against Ofsted recommendations from the announced inspection not satisfactory.</p>	<p>Work carried out to date to review and audit cases and practice.</p> <p>Three month contract for work on performance improvement and quality control includes preparation for unannounced inspection.</p> <p>Report showing progress against Ofsted recommendations.</p>

c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

The actions proposed in this report must be designed to comply with the human rights of the clients. There are no immediate legal implications arising from the report.

d) Equalities Impact Assessment

An equalities impact assessment is not required in relation to this information report.

e) Workforce

A stable, well trained and motivated workforce able to carry out high quality work with children, young people and their families will lead to improved outcomes. Well timed and comprehensive management information will be critical to driving recruitment activity. Teams from HR and Finance have worked alongside operational managers to ensure greater visibility of the Children’s Social establishment and vacancy levels.

The attached chart in appendix 1 shows the current levels of permanent and agency staff within the Children Social Care division.

5. Supporting Information

5.1 Background

The reports to Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny Panel on 9th June and 5th September 2011 gave background information about the Ofsted inspection report published on 1st June 2011 and progress since the inspection.

5.2 Improvement Notice

The final version of the Improvement Notice has not yet been received. On receipt, it will be sent to all Members and discussed at the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel.

5.4 Improvement Plan

The Improvement Plan, which was discussed by the Improvement Board on 20th September is currently being refined to reflect the comments of the Board on the themes, actions and measures designed to improve outcomes for children and young people who need safeguarding. The final version of the Improvement Plan will be available to members, SBC staff, and staff in partner agencies as the basis for all improvement work; it includes the Ofsted recommendations which were the basis for the update to members at the September 5th Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel.

Members will already be aware of the five themes of the Improvement Plan:

- Social Care Practice
- Capacity and Capability
- Quality Assurance and Performance Management.
- Early Intervention and Prevention
- Leadership, Governance and Finance

5.6 Sector Led Support

The sector led support is based on the Improvement Plan, and will consist of the following:

- a. Support for the Director and Lead Member
- b. A review of early intervention and prevention work
- c. A review of the LSCB and partnership working arrangements
- d. A review of quality assurance and performance management arrangements

Work has started on all four areas. The reviews (b, c, d) will lead to recommendations to be put in place as part of the agreed improvements. Reports to the Improvement Board will summarise the work carried out through the three reviews.

5.7 Local Safeguarding Children Board

A review of the partnership working arrangements for the LSCB is being undertaken by an experienced LSCB Chair through the Sector Led Support programme, and she reported initial findings to the Improvement Board on September 20th. The role of LSCB Chair has been advertised, with interviews taking place in early October, and members will be updated on progress when the appointment has been confirmed.

6 Conclusion

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel are requested to note the contents of the report and identify any specific areas to be followed up at future meetings of the Panel.

7. Appendix

Appendix 1 Current Vacancies in Children's Social Care

8 Background Papers

Extraordinary Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel on 13th January 2010. Agenda item 2: 'Safeguarding in Slough: the Work of the Local Safeguarding Children Board'

Extraordinary Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel on 22nd April 2010. Agenda Item 2: 'Safeguarding in the Health Service'
Item 3 'Child Protection and the Independent Reviewing Service'

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel on 23rd June 2010. Agenda Item 8 'Implications of the Rise in the Numbers of Vulnerable Children 2008-10'

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel on 25th November 2010:
Agenda Item 3

'Ofsted inspection, Contact Referral and Assessment Arrangements October 2010'. Agenda Item 4 'Safeguarding in Slough – Update on the work of the Local Safeguarding Children Board'.

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny on 25th January 2011: Agenda item 3: 'Ofsted Annual Children's Services Assessment 2010'.

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel on 9th June 2011: Agenda item 10: Ofsted report on the Announced Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel on 5th September 2011:
Agenda item 4: Progress Report: Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding and LAC

Ofsted report on the announced inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services June 2011