

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel

DATE: 24th January 2012

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PART I

FOR INFORMATION, SCRUTINY AND CHALLENGE

PROGRESS REPORT: OFSTED INSPECTION OF SAFEGUARDING AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

1. Purpose of Report

To inform Members of the progress 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) Read the Safeguarding Improvement Plan distributed to the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel at the Panel on 24th November 2011, and to all members on 25th November 2011, and notify the Chair and Scrutiny Officer in writing of any questions about the Improvement Plan by 19th January 2012.
- b) Note actions and progress since the last meeting on November 24th 2011.
- c) Agree specific areas for further scrutiny, taking into account the agreed role of the Improvement Board.

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 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 are included in the report to Cabinet of 23rd January 2012 on the Safeguarding Improvement Plan.

b) Risk Management

Recommendation	Risk/Threat/Opportunity	Mitigation
Summary of Improvement Plan Risk Register attached as Appendix 1		

c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

Under Section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998, it is unlawful for the Council to act in a way which is incompatible with human rights or it could result in the Council being subject to judicial review. The actions proposed in this report are designed to comply with the Human Rights considerations of young people specifically Article 8 Human Rights Act 1998 (the right to respect for private and family life). There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report.

d) Equalities Impact Assessment

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

e) Workforce

The final Improvement Plan contains sections on Capacity and Capability, and Social Work Practice. The main workforce priorities for the Council in delivering the next stage of the Improvement Plan are the development of a workforce strategy as part of the Council's overall Workforce Strategy with particular focus on:

- i. Recruitment and retention of staff to key posts
An interim structure is in place until end March 2012 to assess the number of staff who need to be employed in each part of the service, and the skills and experience required and enable appropriate recruitment into key positions.
- ii. Competencies
Job descriptions will be drawn up based on the competencies issued by the Social Work Reform Board and used in recruitment of all permanent staff to all positions in the service.
- iii. Training
An immediate training programme for leaders, managers and practitioners based on the Improvement Plan is currently being delivered, with a longer term plan based on the competences outlined in ii).

Supporting Information

5.1. Background

The report to Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel on 9th June 2011 gave background information about the Ofsted inspection report published on 1st June 2011, and preliminary information about actions following the inspection.

The report of September 5th updated members on the role of the Improvement Board and the development of the Improvement Plan.

The report of October 12th gave members information about the Improvement Notice issued by the Minister on 29th September 2011, and updates on the themes of the Improvement Plan.

The report of November 24th gave members information about progress on the implementation of the Plan, and all members were issued with a copy of the Improvement Plan as at 14th November 2011.

Cabinet papers on November 12th and December 12th contained details of the progress against the Improvement Plan in the GOLD project highlight reports; which were also discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 15th November 2011.

5.2. A summary of progress against Plan Themes

The November report to Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel contained a summary of progress against Plan Themes.

Details of progress against each of the Plan themes is included in GOLD project reports included monthly in Overview and Cabinet reports. The November highlight report is attached as Appendix 2. In particular members may wish to note:

- The interim change in social care team responsibilities from December 5th to reflect service demand and requirements for management and practice improvement; leading to a long term structure from April 2012.
- This will lead to a recruitment and retention plan which will take place to staff the long term structure, with new job descriptions based on the competences developed by the Social Work Reform Board
- The continuing programme of internal audits; and the development of the multi-agency audit programme through the LSCB
- A training programme for children's social care staff is under development and will focus initially on team managers and assistant team managers
- Work has been carried out with parents and children involved in child protection cases to gather their views and use in improving practice.
- Sector support workshops on Performance Management which will run during January for all social care managers and practitioners.

- The sector support work on the IRO service has been delayed until January 2012 because the lead has been engaged in an Ofsted inspection.
- Partners have been encouraged to participate in the audit of the Common Assessment Framework, and contribute to the implementation of the Early Intervention Strategy, but this continues to be patchy. There is still little partner engagement in the delivery of the Early Response Hub. The Children's Partnership Board discussed this on 22.11.11, followed by a meeting in December and a workshop planned for January to increase partner contributions to early intervention work.
- The First Response Hub and Children's Social Care have developed a protocol for their working practice so that staff, partners and customers are clear about the pathway into the system and it meets with safeguarding requirements.

The Plan is also updated before each Improvement Board meeting to show progress against agreed actions.

5.3. Improvement Board

The fourth Improvement Board meeting will take place on 10th January 2012. Relevant information will be shared with the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel on 24th January 2012.

5.4 Improvement Plan

The Improvement Plan has been signed off by the Minister. A copy of his letter is attached at Appendix 3.

5.5. 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
- e. A review of the IRO service

Work has started on all five areas, although the review of the IRO service was delayed due to an Ofsted announced inspection in the authority of the nominated lead. It will begin in January 2012.

5.6 Local Safeguarding Children Board

Paul Burnett has been appointed as Interim Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, and will act as Chair until the appointment of a permanent Chair by April 2012. Recruitment of the permanent chair will begin in January 2012.

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. Appendices Attached

Appendix 1 – Safeguarding Improvement Plan: Risk Register

Appendix 2 - Safeguarding Improvement Board; Highlight Report November 2011

Appendix 3 – Letter from Tim Loughton MP to Cheryl Miller, Chair of the Improvement Board dated 22.11.11

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: Ofsted report on the Announced Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel on 12th October 2011:
Agenda item 5: Ofsted report on the Announced Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel on 24th November 2011:
Agenda item 5: Ofsted report on the Announced Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children

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

