

# PEOPLE (CHILDREN) SCRUTINY PANEL

26 January 2012

## UPDATE ON SAFEGUARDING

Report of the Strategic Director for People

STRATEGIC AIM:	Creating a brighter future for all
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### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update on the progress made by children's social care to improve the performance of the teams dealing with children's safeguarding and ensure that children are protected effectively in Rutland. This is in line with the current strategic priority to monitor social care performance to maintain a trajectory of progress.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Scrutiny Panel notes the progress and endorses the actions being taken.

### 3 PERFORMANCE DATA FOR CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

- 3.1 Referrals remain relatively high, with a 24% increase (263 compared with 212 for the same period last year) and the total of contacts has increased by 10% (234 compared with 212)
- 3.2 The re-referral rate is 25% so performance is now on target. We will continue to monitor this situation and undertake further audits if needed. The target will be set at 23% for next year.
- 3.3 There has been a 62% increase of Initial Assessments (195 compared to 120) and 80.5% were completed within 10 days. Although this is below target, performance compares favourably with comparator authorities which are currently at 63%. There has been a 225% increase of core assessments (156 compared to 48) and the performance for timescale is below target (53% completed within 35 days). Following feedback from OFSTED, we are reviewing thresholds to ensure that cases progress to core assessment only when that level of response is commensurate with the level of risk/ need. Timeliness of core assessments continue to be a challenge for Team 11 even with increased staffing levels and this has been affected by the turnover of agency staff.
- 3.4 The number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan is 17. This has fluctuated between 10 and 17 since April 11
- 3.5 The number of Looked After Children has remained steady at 31.
- 3.6 The overall caseload of the service is 241 The total for Team 11 is 204 and for Team 12 is 37, these are active individual children.

- 3.7 There is a backlog of child protection conference minutes and a plan is in place to address this.
- 3.8 The new Team Manager for Team 12 is now in place and we have recruited to the Principal Social Worker vacancy but the successful applicant has to give three months notice so we are still using an agency worker.
- 3.9 We recruited to one of the social worker vacancies in Team 11 but another full time worker has secured alternative employment so we still have 2 full time vacancies and are in the process of recruiting to those posts and to the Principal Social worker vacancy. We are having to use agency staff to fill these posts in the meantime. Also Team 3 have not yet filled the social worker vacancy who will be case responsible for disabled children so these cases continue to be in Team 11.
- 3.10 The staffing difficulties during the year which has necessitated the ongoing use of agency staff means that the staffing budget is overspent. In addition the Chief Executive and Strategic Director for People agreed to an increase in establishment during the financial year so this means that the overspend is projected to be £123,754. Growth bids for the increase in establishment to continue have been submitted for the next financial year.
- 3.11 Recruitment and retention of social work staff continues to present challenges for Rutland and we are conducting exit interviews with staff to ensure that we have useful feedback as to whether there are other actions that could be taken to promote continuity.

#### 4. RISK MANAGEMENT

RISK	IMPACT	COMMENTS
Time	Medium	Performance is improving but targets on timeliness of assessments will not be met this year.
Viability	Medium	Recruitment and retention issues remain a risk.
Finance	High	The staffing budget is overspent .
Profile	High	Working with vulnerable families is very high profile.
Equality and Diversity	Low	Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed but there are no specific indicators of concern in this area.

#### 5. CONCLUSIONS

Positive progress is being made with regard to safeguarding activity within the Children's Social Care teams. We are optimistic that this good progress will continue.

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