

# CABINET

17 September 2013

## PROGRESS REPORT – UPDATED OFSTED CHILD PROTECTION ACTION PLAN

Report of the Director of People

STRATEGIC AIM:	<b>Creating a Brighter Future for All</b>		
KEY DECISION	NO	DATE ITEM FIRST APPEARED ON FORWARD PLAN	April 2013

### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides Members with a comprehensive update on the Ofsted Child Protection Action Plan. It gives details of progress achieved in the areas identified for improvement within the Ofsted inspection and also what this means for children and families in Rutland.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That Cabinet notes the Progress Report which provides an update on the Ofsted Child Protection Action Plan, as requested by Cabinet in April 2013.**

### 3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Ofsted Inspection Report and Child Protection Action Plan have been presented to Children's Scrutiny Panel (143/2013 on 13 June 2013) and to Cabinet (89/2013 on 16 April 2013).
- 3.2 On 16 April 2013, Cabinet made the decision that the two areas for improvement as specified by Ofsted for completion within six months should be completed within four months, with a further report to Cabinet at the end of July 2013.
- 3.3 The original action plan was therefore revised to ensure that the key actions could be completed within this new timescale.

### 4. PROGRESS REPORT- UPDATED OFSTED CHILD PROTECTION ACTION PLAN

- 4.1 This report provides an update of the progress achieved against the actions identified in the Ofsted Inspection report. It also details what this means for children and their families in Rutland. The updated action plan is attached at Appendix A.
- 4.2 The Ofsted inspection report had identified a number of areas for improvement in respect of the quality of the help and protection given to children and young people and their families in Rutland.

- 4.3 Significant progress has been made across the range of Children's Services provided within the Directorate. A number of "tracker" tools have been developed to provide more robust management oversight. The relevant Heads of Service meet regularly to review and co-ordinate progress on the action plan and they report to the Assistant Director with overall responsibility for implementing the action plan.

## 5 OFSTED IMMEDIATE ACTIONS;

### 5.1 **Action 1 - Ensure that decision making regarding new referrals is consistent and robust, clearly and fully recorded and subject to regular management overview**

#### 5.1.1 Progress achieved;

This action is specifically aimed at the work undertaken within the Duty team regarding the management of contacts and referrals and the decisions made on next steps.

- 5.1.2 A screening tool has been developed and implemented. This guides and enables social workers to collate all the information they have received in respect of the child and their family and to clearly record their rationale and recommendations. These are then sent to the duty manager for the final decision. The use of this ensures that decision making is consistently recorded and linked to thresholds.

- 5.1.3 As a result of this implementation, the quarter 1 (13/14) performance improved compared to quarter 4 (12/13). There was a 21% increase in the number of contacts received by the duty team but the number that progressed to a referral decreased from 67% in quarter 4 to 33.5% in quarter 1. Moreover the re-referral rate for quarter 1 decreased to 12.9% compared to 17.4% in quarter 4.

#### 5.1.4 What does this mean for children and families?

Families receive the right help at the right time; interventions are timely and proportionate to risk and need. Those more vulnerable children and families who need a service from social care are identified early and their needs assessed. Those children who do not meet the threshold for social care are signposted to the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) or a single agency to access early help service to prevent their problems escalating.

### 5.2 **Action 2 - Ensure that all children in need cases have a clear plan focused on addressing their assessed needs and that the progress and appropriateness of the plan is regularly reviewed**

#### 5.2.1 Progress achieved;

A 'Child in Need (CIN) Tracker' has been developed and implemented which is regularly updated and reviewed by a Principal Social Worker and Team Manager who report to the Head of Service (Vulnerable Children). The 'CIN Tracker' collates information on all children in need cases open to the long term team. It records the dates of Core Assessments, CIN Plans and the Multi Agency CIN Review Meetings where the child's plan is discussed with family and agency partners including updates and status of the case on the continuum of need.

- 5.2.2 The benefit of using the tracker is that it provides an overview which easily enables management oversight and monitoring of all children in need. It quickly identifies whether children have an up to date assessment and plan and whether regular CIN meetings are taking place. Moreover, it ensures that cases are not drifting. If they need to be 'stepped up' to child protection because risks and need are increasing this is quickly identified and if outcomes are improving then children are identified as 'stepping down' to CAF or closure. This reduces caseloads enabling social workers to focus on the more vulnerable children who require safeguarding.
- 5.2.3 Since the implementation of the 'CIN Tracker' there has been a 16% increase in the number of core assessments completed in quarter 1 (13/14) compared with the previous quarter. The number of children subject to a child protection plan has not increased in the last 6 months. There has also been an increase in the number of CIN case closures.
- 5.2.4 All CIN cases that have been open for more than 6 months are reviewed by the Team Manager and the Head of Service to ensure there is no drift in care planning and that interventions with families are timely and proportionate to meet risk and need.
- 5.2.5 What does this mean for children and families?  
All children have an up to date core assessment of their needs to inform their CIN Plan so the right services are provided to meet these needs; children are regularly seen and the family have regular meetings with their social worker and those agencies involved in their plan, working towards improving outcomes.
- 5.2.6 When families are doing well they have the option of stepping down to CAF, which acts as a safety net and this helps them to continue to build on the progress they have made and to sustain this. If problems continue to escalate and there are increasing concerns swift interventions to safeguard children from significant harm take place. However, the intention is to prevent issues escalating.

**5.3 Action 3 - Ensure that management case discussions clearly record any decisions made and, where relevant, timescales for agreed actions.**

- 5.3.1 Progress achieved;  
A new case discussion/management decision record template has been developed and implemented. The electronic case record (RAISE) is set up in a way that meant it was difficult to identify key information about the important decisions on child's case file. This new template now prompts the social worker to record significant information and events and informs the case discussions with their manager. The manager then signs these off.
- 5.3.2 What does this mean for children and families?  
Social care files held on children and families evidence clearly the reasons for social work involvement and are supported by case management discussions and management decisions. The files provide an overview and chronology of key steps regarding decision-making on actions and subsequent plans. This is essential to ensure

that interventions are proportionate to risk and need and that all actions are timely in order to safeguard children and help them to achieve their full potential. Additionally, if there is a change of social worker or the case closes and is re-referred the child and family's journey/history is clearly documented to inform a reassessment. It is also beneficial and a more meaningful exercise if families request access to their files.

## **6 ACTIONS WITHIN 3 MONTHS:**

### **6.1 Action 4 - Establish robust processes for cases moving between support provided under the common assessment framework (CAF) and targeted social care interventions, including clear and well recorded access to social work advice and expertise.**

#### **6.1.1 Progress achieved:**

The Early Intervention Forum is now established with good attendance from external partners. This forum enables practitioners to discuss case issues and share ideas and solutions and is an aid to the 'Step up Step Down' Policy which is now embedded and was reviewed in July 2013. Since the implementation of the new early intervention processes, there has been a 50% increase in the number of CAF referrals in quarter 1 (13/14) in comparison to quarter 4 (12/13). A further training session has been planned for new staff to ensure a consistent approach.

6.1.2 The 'Social Work 4oversight' pilot with children's centres is now complete. This involved a social worker being placed in the children centre. In addition, there has been the introduction of a 'Safeguarding Template'. As a result, practitioners feel more confident in identifying potential safeguarding issues and having access to social work advice. The impact of this has been a reduction of 15 cases being referred to social care and an increased number of CAF or single agency referrals within early intervention.

6.1.3 A 'Common Assessment Framework (CAF) Tracker' has been developed and implemented which is regularly updated and reviewed by the Senior Early Intervention Officer for CAF and Team Manager who report to the Head of Service (Stronger Communities). The 'CAF Tracker' collates information on all open CAF cases. It records the dates of assessments, action plans and the CAF review meetings where the child's plan is discussed with family and agency partners including updates and status of the case on the continuum of need.

6.1.4 All CAF cases that have been open for more than 6 months are reviewed by the Team Manager and the Head of Service to ensure there is no drift in planning and that interventions with families are timely and proportionate to meet risk and needs.

6.1.5 A Complex Cases Panel is in place providing a multi-agency response to the allocation of resources to meet the needs of families. This panel is currently under review and it is anticipated that it will develop further into a Multi-Agency Support Panel; proposal papers have been drafted and circulated for consultation. This will extend the remit of

the panel to enable it to meet new requirements and Ofsted's best practice guidance.

- 6.1.6 The work undertaken by the Complex Cases Panel has ensured a reduction in the duplication of work, pooling of resources to avoid escalation and a joint focus on achieving outcomes.
- 6.1.7 What does this mean for children and families?  
Children and families get the most appropriate service to meet their needs, are not referred to children's social care unnecessarily and get access to early help in a timely way.
- 6.1.8 All children have an up to date assessment of their needs to inform their CAF Plan so the right services are provided to meet these needs; children are regularly seen and families have regular meetings with their Lead Practitioner and those agencies involved in their plan, working towards improving outcomes.
- 6.1.9 If problems continue to escalate and there are increasing concerns swift interventions can take place to safeguard children from significant harm; however the intention is to prevent issues escalating.

## **6.2 Action 5 - Improve the consistency and quality of work undertaken under the CAF**

- 6.2.1 Progress achieved:  
Two CAF training courses have been delivered to 40 participants from a good range of partner agencies: 50% external partners and 50% Rutland County Council staff. A further 4 courses providing 80 places are planned. The majority of these places (70%) have been taken up by external partners demonstrating a real commitment to improving the quality of CAF.
- 6.2.2 The training has been refreshed to include the 'Step up Step down Policy'.
- 6.2.3 50 of our staff completed the 'Rickter Scale' training across Early Intervention Services and Children's Social Care Teams with a further 25 staff to complete in November this year. Rickter is a nationally recognised tool for the assessment and evaluation of targeted interventions which measures effective engagement and participation with families and outcomes for families.
- 6.2.4 43 Rickter Assessments have been completed to date. There is a Rickter assessment audit in progress with an expected completion date of 30<sup>th</sup> September. A full audit of all closed CAF cases is planned for October 2013.
- 6.2.5 What does this mean for children and families?  
The CAF training has been evaluated. It started with an average scoring of 4/10 for understanding and confidence in using the CAF. This has increased to 8/10. Positive feedback from staff in using the Rickter scale as an assessment tool with families has shown improved family participation and involvement in decisions. Engagement of families within assessments and care planning empowers them. This

is by far the best way to enable families to make the necessary changes and sustain improved outcomes.

**6.3 Action 6 - Ensure that Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) provides effective scrutiny and challenge of the progress of work being undertaken to improve early help services in Rutland**

**6.3.1 Progress achieved;**

The Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) has received and scrutinised a presentation on Rutland's early help arrangements and is developing ongoing scrutiny and audit arrangements to provide effective scrutiny and challenge.

6.3.2 The Executive Group have agreed to the recruitment of a short term (approx. 3 months) project worker to measure the LSCB partnership against the proposed OFSTED grade descriptors. As part of the project they will work with the LSCB to undertake any actions to ensure the LSCB is ready for inspection.

6.3.3 Areas that will be explored in the review of the LSCB include;

- a) The LSCB complies with its statutory responsibilities in accordance with the Children Act 2004 and the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006.
- b) The LSCB is able to provide evidence that it coordinates the work of statutory partners in helping, protecting and caring for children in its local area and there are mechanisms in place to monitor the effectiveness of those local arrangements.
- c) Multi-agency training in the protection and care of children is effective and evaluated regularly for impact on management and practice.
- d) Policies and procedures in respect of thresholds for intervention are understood and operate effectively.
- e) Practice challenge and casework audits drive improved front-line performance and strong management oversight.
- f) Serious case reviews, management reviews and reviews of child deaths provide learning and feedback opportunities to the local authority that drive local improvement.
- g) The LSCB is influential in using its evaluation and analysis of local performance to inform the planning and delivery of high-quality services.

**6.4 Action 7 - Undertake a safeguarding audit of open disabled children's cases and review the arrangements for management oversight of this work.**

**6.4.1 Progress achieved;**

A case audit of open disabled children's cases has taken place and recommendations for improvements have been made. These have been formulated into an action plan to monitor implementation and progress. An on-going audit schedule has been developed and a case tracking tool adopted which demonstrates how cases are monitored and reviewed and evidences regular management oversight. The

case transfer protocol has also been updated and is used by staff when a case transfers between teams.

6.4.2 What does this mean for children and families?

Disabled children are safeguarded and their families are supported to meet their needs. Regular multi-agency meetings (CIN meeting) ensure that assessments are up to date and services are in place.

## 7 OFSTED ACTIONS WITHIN 4 MONTHS:

### 7.1 **Action 8 - Ensure performance management and quality assurance arrangements include a clear and consistent focus on service quality and that progress in key areas of improvement is regularly evaluated**

7.1.1 Progress achieved;

The People Directorate has created a Quality Assurance and Performance Group which is responsible for monitoring and reviewing progress in relation to all relevant plans. Membership of the group includes quality assurance and safeguarding staff, relevant heads of service from the People Directorate, the Contracts and Procurement Manager and the Performance and Application Manager. The group meets every 6 weeks and has agreed terms of reference.

7.1.2 The group is responsible for agreeing the annual audit programme for the People Directorate taking into account any multi-agency audits that are required for external boards/groups e.g. Adult and Children Safeguarding. The group reports to the Directorate Management Team every quarter, on an exception basis, in relation to the directorate business and team plans and the key findings of any audits carried out during the quarter. The national Quality Practice Standards for Children's Services is the tool being used to inform the development of the group's work.

7.1.3 What does this mean for children and families?

Although the work of this group is still in the development stage the group will provide assurance that service users are receiving a quality service and that there is a consistent and equitable approach to work with service users.

### 7.2 **Action 9 - Establish arrangements to strengthen the influence of the experiences and views of children and their families in the development of child protection and children in need services.**

7.2.1 Progress achieved;

Young Inspectors have reviewed the ways in which Rutland County Council involves children and young people in the decision making process.. The group provided some excellent feedback to the People Directorate with many simple and practical ideas which are now being considered for implementation. There has also been a consultation with practitioners across the People Directorate requesting current practice. This is being used to identify good practice, avoid duplication and look at gaps in service provision.

7.2.2 A Quality Assurance Visit of the Children in Care Council – 'Speak Up Speak Out' (SUSO) was completed on 28<sup>th</sup> May, and was graded

Excellent – a feedback report has been sent to HOS for Vulnerable People to inform the development of our corporate parenting role.

7.2.3 What does this mean for children and families?

This feedback is a good way to ensure that officers always have children and young people’s interests at the heart of everything. Listening to children and young people really matters if we are to engage them fully and ensure their participation. This is the only way to make positive changes and sustain improved outcome.

**8 THE NEW OFSTED FRAMEWORK**

**8.1** Ofsted will launch the new Inspection Framework in November 2013. The proposed new framework supersedes the plans to launch separate frameworks for child protection and services for children looked after and now brings together the contents of those two frameworks.

**8.2** Changes to the Inspection

From November 2013, the framework will include;

- a) A judgement grade of ‘**requires improvement**’ which will replace the current ‘adequate’ judgement
- b) There will be grade descriptors to describe ‘good’ in each of the following **three key judgment areas**;
  - 1 The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection
  - 2 The experiences and progress of children looked after and achieving permanence (including additional graded judgments on (i) adoption performance and (ii) the experiences and progress of care leavers
  - 3 Leadership and governance
- c) A review of the effectiveness of the LSCB and including a graded judgment of its effectiveness
- d) Grade descriptors for ‘outstanding’, ‘requires improvement’ and ‘inadequate’ that are derived from ‘good’ as the benchmark
- e) An overall effectiveness judgement that will be made based on the evaluation of the performance in the three key judgements.

**8.3** The development of this Rutland Ofsted Child Protection Action Plan and work undertaken to implement it has put the Council in a good position to meet the requirements of the new Inspection framework.

**9. RISK MANAGEMENT**

<b>RISK</b>	<b>IMPACT</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
<b>Time</b>	<b>Low</b>	The actions are achievable within the timescales
<b>Viability</b>	<b>Low</b>	There is capacity and capability to implement the required improvements
<b>Finance</b>	<b>Low</b>	The improvements can be made within existing resources
<b>Profile</b>	<b>High</b>	If the actions are not addressed this could attract significant attention. There would also be a risk to the outcome of future Ofsted inspections.
<b>Equality and</b>	<b>Low</b>	The action plan addresses the needs of vulnerable

<b>Diversity</b>		children, young people and families
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**Background Papers**

None

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