

Open Report on behalf of Debbie Barnes, Executive Director of Children's Services

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	05 June 2015
Subject:	Frontline Social Workers and Safeguarding Scrutiny Review – First Monitoring Update

Summary:

This report provides an update on the content and progress of the original action plan devised from the Task and Finish Group of October 2013.

Actions Required:

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is invited to

1. receive and comment on the content and progress of the action plan;
2. continue to monitor the actions arising from the review;
3. give consideration to visiting teams as an ongoing piece of work with frontline teams.

1. Background

This is an update report from the original task and finish group work completed in 2013.

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee agreed at its meeting on 18th October 2013 that there was a need for scrutiny to review and investigate the safeguarding arrangements in frontline social work teams. This review was approved by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 24th October 2013. The key purpose of the review was to:

- Examine the robustness of safeguarding practice
- To ensure sufficient support is provided to frontline social workers

A Task and Finish Group was established in November 2013 consisting of seven Members of the Committee. The Task and Finish Group identified a number of key lines of enquiry specific to the review and these included:

- An examination of the key performance indicators in relation to safeguarding.
- A consideration of key documents including the Safeguarding annual report, Self-assessments, Peer reviews, Cafcass plus evaluation and signs of safety.

- Facilitate a focus group to speak to practitioners, parents, schools and other professionals, team managers.
- Observe the work undertaken at the Customer Service Centre; observe duty work in the social care teams, a core group meeting and child protection conference and a support panel.
- To meet young people and council officers as appropriate.
- Evaluate relationships with other agencies.
- Explore decision making and support for staff.

The Task and Finish Group completed the review and presented the final report to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 13th June 2014 and to the Executive on 1st July 2014. The report contained seventeen recommendations and these have been developed into an action plan to address the issues raised in the review. The action plan is attached as Appendix A with the updated information including progress since the original recommendations.

2. Conclusion

In conclusion the work of the task and finish group continues and a second round of member visits to frontline teams has commenced. Members have been asked to provide feedback in the signs of safety format to enable and inform a more detailed update report to be compiled building on the previous recommendations. In respect of the recruitment and retention of social workers this is progressing; during April 2015 Children's Services have been able to offer 9 newly qualified social workers positions, one agency worker has been offered a permanent advanced practitioner position and six staff (five internal and one external candidate) have been successful in gaining promotion to practice supervisor positions. The rolling recruitment will continue on a monthly basis until July and then reviewed to assess outstanding vacancies. Attached at Appendix B is an update on the measures which have been introduced to improve social work recruitment.

3. Consultation

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

No policy proofing is required for this report.

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Executive Response to Frontline Social Workers and Safeguarding – Action Plan Arising from Recommendations
Appendix B	Update in respect of Social Work Recruitment

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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