

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

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	27 November 2015
Subject:	Frontline Social Workers and Safeguarding Scrutiny Review – Second Monitoring Update

Summary:

This report provides an update on the content and progress of the original action plan devised from the Frontline Social Workers and Safeguarding 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 Executive response and action plan
2. give consideration to the need for any further examination to be conducted through the framework highlighted in the Local Government Association (LGA) and Centre for Public Scrutiny's document "Safeguarding Children- A practical guide for overview and scrutiny councillors."

1. Background

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee agreed at its meeting on 18 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 24 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 13 June 2014 and to the Executive on 1 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 and has an update of the current position. This action plan was reviewed in June 2015 where it was agreed a second round of visits by Councillors to frontline teams would be completed.

November 2015 Update.

Two rounds of visits to the frontline teams have been completed between February and October 2015. This has taken the form of 12 Councillor visits to teams covering the county. Scrutiny members have not identified any concerns during these visits that would suggest that there is any reduction in the robustness of safeguarding practice in the frontline teams or issues about the levels of support frontline social workers are receiving. The action plan devised from the Task and Finish Group is attached (Appendix A) and evidences the completed tasks and those that have been superseded by other work streams currently being undertaken.

Since this original scrutiny review, the Local Government Association (LGA) and Centre for Public Scrutiny's document "Safeguarding Children - A practical guide for overview and scrutiny councillors" was published in May 2015 (attached at Appendix B). This offers helpful advice on the completion of a scrutiny review in relation to safeguarding children and offers a series of helpful questions which Members may wish to consider. Whilst many Members asked very similar questions during the review and at subsequent visits, members may wish to give consideration to the need for any further examination to be conducted through the framework highlighted in the Local Government Association (LGA) and Centre for Public Scrutiny's document "Safeguarding Children- A practical guide for overview and scrutiny councillors".

2. Conclusion

Overall Scrutiny members have been satisfied that Lincolnshire Children's Services has robust measures in place to ensure safeguarding is robust and the staff have the necessary support in place to fulfil their duties effectively. The action plan attached at Appendix A provides the most recent update on progress against actions and recommendations outlined in the scrutiny review.

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	Local Government Association (LGA) and Centre for Public Scrutiny's document "Safeguarding Children- A practical guide for overview and scrutiny councillors

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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