



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

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| Report to: | Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee |
| Date: | 08 September 2017 |
| Subject: | Partners in Practice Programme |

Summary:
 This report provides the Committee with an overview of Lincolnshire's Partners in Practice Programme.

Actions Required:
 The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is asked to endorse and comment on the proposals.

1. Background

Partners in Practice Overview

Under the Department for Education (DfE) reform programme the Putting Children First document (published July 2016) set out the three fundamental pillars of reform:

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| People and Leadership | Practice and Systems | Governance and Accountability |
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To achieve the desired outcomes set out under each pillar the DfE has established a Partners in Practice (PiP) programme that brings together the country's eight leading authorities, Lincolnshire being one. The DfE together with the PiP authorities will work together to achieve the following:

- Understand how the PiP authorities got to 'good'
- Establish how to go from 'good' to 'outstanding'
- Boost sector led improvement
- Investigate the most difficult practice questions facing the children's social care system

Putting Children First, is at the heart of our work in Lincolnshire, Working Together with Families to Enhance Children's Present and Future Lives. It explains the way Lincolnshire Children's Services works, with children being put first to not only make their current situation better, but to also shape their future; and the importance of doing this 'with' families and not 'to' them.

- **Children, Young People and Families in Lincolnshire will be:**
 - Helped to make changes for themselves
 - Seen as a positive solution to the challenges they face
 - Able to get the right service at the right time
 - Understood as a whole family

- **Supported by an integrated Children's Services workforce that:**
 - Uses evidence informed practice
 - Understands and applies Relationship Based Practice
 - Is Restorative in approach
 - Is well trained and supported

- **Enabled and equipped by:**
 - Clear governance that puts children and families at the heart of how we plan and deliver support for them
 - Using Signs of Safety methodology that builds on families' strengths.

Programme Overview

For many years now, Lincolnshire Children's Services has consistently achieved 'good' or 'outstanding' Ofsted judgements.

In Lincolnshire, the foundation of good children's social care is exceptional early help arrangements, as effective safeguarding occurs within a system of commitment by all agencies, which have a role and responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

The Partners in Practice (PIP) programme will improve practice in Lincolnshire and other Children's Services, transforming the quality of children's social care services and early help arrangements, and support the reform of the wider system; putting practice excellence and achieving more for the children we serve at its heart.

Lincolnshire has a proven track record of continuous improvement and good performance, and the vision is to improve Children's Services in Lincolnshire and elsewhere.

The PiP programme is scheduled to run until 31st March 2020 and is made up of three workstreams that align directly to the three fundamental pillars of the DfE reforms. The eight individual projects sit below the overarching workstreams, that once implemented will deliver the desired outcomes and positive impacts. Each project has a project manager and a senior manager lead as set out below.

| | | Project | Project Manager | Senior Manager Lead |
|-------------------|---|----------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Workstream | 1 | Signs of Safety | Danielle Marshall | Roz Cordy |
| | 1 | Early Help/Social care interface | Nicky Myers | Damian Elcock |
| | 1 | Risky Behaviours | Nicky Myers | Jo Kavanagh |
| | 1 | Caring2Learn | Vacant | Kieran Barnes/John Harris |
| | 1 | Youth Justice | TBC | Andy Cook |
| | 2 | Alternative organisational model | Tara Jones | Debbie Barnes |
| | 3 | Assessment & Accreditation | Samantha Clayton | Tara Jones |
| | 3 | Improvement Offer | Tara Jones | Debbie Barnes |

Workstream 1

Practice and systems – creating the right environment for excellent practice and innovation to flourish, reducing bureaucracy, whilst creating a culture which prioritises excellent practice, based around the principles of innovation and excellence. Whilst the power to innovate to test where legislation and regulations might be getting in the way of excellent practice was removed from the Children and Families Bill, PiP's did get the flexibility to propose changes from statutory guidance.

Project 1

Signs of Safety is well embedded in Lincolnshire but the constraints of Working Together and Ofsted means that it currently has to be shoe-horned into other existing policy and practice, which leads to extensive duplication. We will redesign Social Work Policy, Procedure and Practice to place Signs of Safety at the heart of all that we do, and remove this duplication. The project will aim to:

- Review and revise Child in Need process
- New Social Care Assessment process and documents
- New published 'Meeting the Needs' document
- Conferences and LAC (Looked After Children) reviews to be creative in how the model is applied, working with families and children to facilitate change
- Training for Foster Carers in the approach

Project 2

The interface between Early Help and Social Care is not fluid enough and does not lend itself to Relationship Based Practice, and continuity of relationships and trust for children and families. The project will set out to implement a culture change, with respect, reciprocity, appreciative enquiry and reflective practice at the core that will improve the interface between Early Help and Social Care. Social Workers and Early Help workers through working better together and sharing risk, will help to ensure continuous trusting relationships with children, young people and families are maintained, improving support and outcomes. At the heart of our approach will be the Signs of Safety methodology.

The project will also look at the role of the Lead Professional, to determine how this role can be supported to ensure more consistency throughout the child, young person or family's journey at times when families require statutory intervention.

Project 3

This will build on the Research in Practice (RiP) 7 principles. RiP brings together research and practitioner expertise to build the sector's capacity for evidence informed practice. RiP has developed seven service and practice principles to improve LA's responses to adolescent risk. This project will explore how to best intervene and support young people who are engaging in risky behaviours to effectively enact change outside of child protection arrangements. This will involve developing an evidence based practice framework of what works, based on the RiP research, and creating a local system together with partner agencies that effectively safeguards a young person, recognises adolescent development and is based on relationship based practice. The project will aim to:

- reduce the need for statutory intervention in families' lives' enabling more young people to be supported through a multi-agency relationship based approach.
- improve the experience that families receive through a consistent approach.
- increase efficiencies by introducing a skills mix into the sector.
- identify potential siblings risk taking behaviour early, with early intervention where risk taking behaviours have been an issue in families/sibling.
- identify and understand the triggers early, which lead to the individuals risk taking behaviour.
- embed a strengths based approach, recognising particular characteristics of adolescents, and managing the risks effectively with the individual and their family.

This will be delivered within the context of the Signs of Safety Methodology.

Project 4

We want to create an innovative and sustainable multi-disciplinary approach to improving academic outcomes, progress, life choices and opportunities for all Lincolnshire children in care; and on the edge of care. This will be done through the development and implementation of a clearly defined strategy that will support schools to be able to nurture and promote attachment, ensure looked after children achieve better than expected progress whilst in care; and support foster carers to give children a thirst for learning so that education is cherished and encouraged. We aim to:

- upskill our Foster Carer workforce in order to help them better support Children and Young People in Care, to improve educational outcomes
- improve the learning outcomes for all Lincolnshire looked after children (a looked after child sometimes referred to as LAC, is a child who is accommodated by the local authority, a child who is the subject of an interim care order, full care order or emergency protection order; or who is remanded by a court into local authority accommodation), through improved home-school links, and create learning communities in which our children feel safe and believe they belong

- improve emotional stability as indicated through improved Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) scores for Lincolnshire LAC. (The SDQ is a brief emotional and behavioural screening questionnaire for children, their parents/carers and teachers. The questionnaire can be used for clinical assessment, evaluation of outcomes, research and screening).
- have fewer Post-16 LAC in Lincolnshire who are classed as 'NEET' (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and build upon improving aspiration and self-esteem through forging strong home-school relationships
- encourage active participation in learning and improving the attendance of Lincolnshire LAC
- reduce the number of fixed-term and permanent exclusions of Lincolnshire LAC, by creating more effective learning environments which meet the unique needs of Children in Care
- reduce the need for statutory intervention in families lives, enabling more young people to be supported through a multi-agency relationship based approach
- improve the experience that families receive through a consistent approach
- increase efficiencies by introducing a skills mix into the sector
- identify potential siblings risk taking behaviour early, with early intervention where risk taking behaviours have been an issue in families/siblings
- identify and understand the triggers early, which lead to the individuals risk taking behaviour.
- embed a strengths based approach, recognising particular characteristics of adolescents and managing the risks effectively with the individual and their family.

Project 5

The project will achieve integration of the Youth Offending Service within the wider Children Services. In doing so, it will promote a cohesive and comprehensive support structure for young people to mitigate their risk of further offending and maximise their opportunities to achieve positive outcomes.

By integrating the youth justice staff and delivery model into wider children's services, it will enable a relationship based whole family approach wherever possible. We aim to:

- drive the full integration of youth justice practice within the existing Children Service's locality delivery model
- formulate a governance structure that reflects and encapsulates the widest needs of children and young people
- reduce the criminalisation of looked after children
- embed Signs of Safety (SoS) within youth justice practice
- reduce the potential for children and young people to formally enter the justice system, through the creation of out of court decision making panels
- enhance practice through the development of new holistic assessment tools, which fully reflect children and young people's needs
- work with partners to trial the development of 'problem solving courts' for children and young people.

- develop effective group work interventions to support prevention and diversion
- create efficiency and avoid duplication by examining key roles and functions currently undertaken
- enhance the management of adolescents engaged in risk taking behaviour (aligned to PiP aspiration)
- create a coherent and efficient approach to the management of children with both Youth Justice and Children's Services
- promote a desistance based approach to addressing youth crime, through the development of positive activities through a comprehensive Youth Hub offer

Workstream 2

Governance and accountability – exploring innovative new organisational models with the potential to radically improve services.

Project 6

This project is currently on hold.

Workstream 3

People and leadership – bringing the best people into the profession, and giving them the right knowledge and skills for the incredibly challenging but hugely rewarding work we expect them to do, and developing leaders equipped to nurture practice excellence.

Project 7

The Government has committed to roll out a new national assessment and accreditation system by 2020. The introduction of the National Assessment and Accreditation System (NAAS) will provide, for the first time, a consistent way of providing assurance that effectively assesses social workers knowledge and skills.

We will implement the assessment and accreditation programme for Social Workers which will provide a national, practice focused, career pathway based on the highest levels of skill and knowledge.

Phase one of the NAAS roll out will involve local authorities that are 'Partners in Practice' piloting the assessment and accreditation system along with a group of volunteer local authorities. This will help the Department for Education shape delivery and pioneer the assessment with their workforces. It will also give an understanding of the impact of assessment and accreditation on the workforce and the ability of employers to manage the implications for their staff.

The project will ensure that refresher training, coaching and mentoring and the opportunity to attend masterclasses is available for qualified social workers in a variety of topics in relation to, but not limited to, those covered in the knowledge and skills statements. This will help ensure that the relevant level of knowledge and skill is achieved. The project sets out to deliver the training element between April

and November 2017, with assessment and accreditation beginning in January 2018.

Project 8

We welcome collaboration being a key part of improvement where good Children's Services work with other Children's Services to provide high-quality diagnosis of what is needed for improvement, with advice, guidance and monitoring as well as training and development to the workforce to drive effectiveness.

Through the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) regional groups, all Local Authorities (LAs) have had the opportunity to engage in Sector Led Improvement (SLI) support (most commonly based on existing relationships). SLI is the approach to improvement put in place by local authorities and the Local Government Association (LGA) alongside the abolition of the previous national performance framework. There are elements of commonality in existing regional SLI offers such as peer reviews based on LA self-assessments but structures and arrangements do still vary. As a Partner in Practice authority, part of this project is being an improvement partner to authorities in intervention.

To improve already established regional SLI arrangements, an ADCS Task and Finish Group has been established to articulate the construction of regional improvement alliances (a collaboration of LA's who work together to provide a robust improvement offer) this will build on existing approaches, and offer a consistent national framework which the Department for Education and Ofsted can use to facilitate and quality assure improvement. To do this, learning will be taken from the formation of teaching schools and teaching school alliances. Once established, regional improvement alliances will help to facilitate improvement within the region, and promote a self-improving system. They will:

- serve as the primary means by which the sector will address the early identification/prevention of concerns before they reach crisis point
- build and share best practice
- contribute to an evidenced based model for improvement
- create the conditions for a learning system which unites all stakeholders from regulation to delivery in a robust and collective approach to improvement

As a Partner in Practice authority, Lincolnshire will lead on the development of an East Midlands Regional Improvement alliance in addition to our formal intervention work with other Councils.

Governance Arrangements

The Programme management office provides project management support to the whole programme. The programme reports directly to the Children's Services Transformation Board Transform. Each PiP programme is partnered with a DfE advisor and project evaluation partner. Independent evaluation is an essential part of the Partners in Practice programme, as it enables the DfE to have a robust mechanism for measuring the impact of the projects and the conditions required for

change. It will also enable the Department to share insights and learning with the sector, for example through the new What Works Centre.

The Partners in Practice programme will be evaluated alongside the Innovation Programme Round Two. Opcit Research UK has been contracted by the Department for Education to co-ordinate the independent evaluation process across the Innovation Programme and Partners in Practice from 2017-19.

2. Conclusion

The project plan for the 4 year programmes is continuing to be developed. Project briefs have been signed off by the Transformation Board, with all Business cases, stakeholder engagement plans to be finalised and signed off by the Transformation Board on the 25th September 2017.

Monies have been agreed by the Department for Education (DfE), amount and regularity of payments has been confirmed. The Money will be transferred via a Section 31 grant.

3. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

Individual Risks and Issues Logs are being developed for each project.

There is an overall programme risk and issue log that is monitored by the Programme Board.

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

The Equality Impact Analysis (EIA) is in progress.

4. Background Papers

| Document title | Where the document can be viewed |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Putting Children First | https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/putting-children-first-our-vision-for-childrens-social-care |
| That Difficult Age - RiP Seven Principles | https://www.rip.org.uk/news-and-views/latest-news/evidence-scope-risks-in-adolescence/ |

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