

Meeting: Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date: 26 February 2013
Subject: Progress report on the implementation of the post inspection Action Plan agreed by the Council's Executive on 21 August 2012

Report of: Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Children's Services

Summary: This report advises Members of the operational progress of the Ofsted Action Plan.

Advising Officer: Edwina Grant – Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services
Contact Officer: Edwina Grant – Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Children's Services
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The annual report for noting links to the priorities

- Promote health and wellbeing and protecting the vulnerable
- Improved educational attainment

Financial:

1. The financial provision to implement this plan is within budget allocations.

Legal:

2. There are no additional legal implications for the Council in implementing the Action Plan.

Risk Management:

3. Actions on Ofsted recommendations would be high risk if not secure by the next Ofsted Inspection.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

4. There are no direct H.R. implications.

Equalities/Human Rights:

5. The Action Plan contains recommendations on equalities.

Community Safety:

6. There are no additional implications other than existing child protection and safeguarding responsibilities.

Sustainability:

7. There are no additional implications other than existing child protection and safeguarding responsibilities.

RECOMMENDATION:

- **That the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee comment on the content of the report.**

Introduction

8. This reports sets out details of the current situation regarding the Children's Services and NHS response to the Ofsted Action Plan. A member of the NHS will be present at the meeting to talk about the health aspects of the Plan.

Purpose of this report

9. This report advises the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the present situation regarding the progress on the Ofsted Action Plan and the preparation for future Ofsted Inspections.

Background

10. The Ofsted inspection of Central Bedfordshire Council Safeguarding and Looked After Children was carried out between 20 February and 2 March 2012. The report was published on 10 April 2012. The overall effectiveness of safeguarding services was judged to be good and capacity for improvement was also judged to be good. The overall effectiveness of services for looked after children were judged to be adequate. Health was judged to be an inadequate in terms of provision for children.

11. For the Council, the report contained a number of important areas for action to improve safeguarding and looked after children services. Areas for improvement which were required to be addressed were captured in the Action Plan. Staff from the NHS led on their own workstreams, reporting progress to a Monitoring Board which is explained later in the report. The necessary actions for the Council were developed into workstreams corresponding to the Ofsted recommendations in the report.

12. A number of other areas for development were identified in the body of the report but not subject to specific action. All the actions were linked to a peer challenge programme to support the improvement journey. This short peer challenge to inform the improvement journey will take place in March 2013 and will offer practical pointers to further improvement in the areas of Looked After Children and children's health.
13. The Action Plan was completed in July and went to the Council's Executive on 21 August 2012. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee also saw and commented on the Plan. A Programme Board was established to oversee the implementation of the Action Plan.

Governance

14. Since the Plan was approved monitoring has been managed through a Programme Board currently chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services. The Board monitors the delivery of the whole Plan, including the Health related aspects of the Plan. In addition, the Director of Nursing and Quality oversees the delivery of the Health related workstreams in the Action Plan which are the responsibility of the Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group.
15. The Action Plan sits within the reporting structures and delivery arrangements of both the Children's Trust Board and the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board. All members of these Boards and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board have received a progress letter from the Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Children's Services in her role as Chair of the Programme Board.

Progress

16. Programme Boards have been held to monitor progress on a regular basis and relevant officers and NHS staff are present at the meeting to answer questions about progress.

The Future of Ofsted Inspections

17. The framework for inspections of Councils and their partners will have changed twice since the Central Bedfordshire inspection. Councils are currently being inspected on an interim framework which Ofsted say has "raised the bar" in performance.
18. From April 2013 onwards, Ofsted have indicated, but not yet confirmed, that there will be two inspection frameworks. One will address Children's Safeguarding and will focus largely on Council, Partners and Local Safeguarding Children's Board activity and the other will be an inspection of provision for Looked After Children and some aspects of Fostering and Adoption.

19. Central Bedfordshire Council has recently had a Fostering Inspection which is reported elsewhere on this agenda.
20. At the meeting the Director will talk through the appendix which indicates progress on the Plan.

Appendices: Appendix A: Summary of Ofsted progress

Location of papers: Priory House, Chicksands