



CHILDREN AND LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Subject Heading:

Title **Follow up to Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding February 2013**

CMT Lead:

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Policy context:

SUMMARY

Ofsted made a number of recommendations following inspection. Some of these have been fully implemented and some partially implemented but others are still in the planning stage.

The main progress since the inspection has been evident in addressing MASH timescales, reviewing the LSCB and its links to Overview and Scrutiny and the establishment of the Children's Society service for advocacy and for following up on Missing Children.

Other areas have been more difficult. Workforce has possibly been one of the more challenging areas, especially as there is a London wide and to an extent a national shortage of experienced social workers who are willing and able to undertake child protection work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That members note the report and ask for any further detail they require.

REPORT DETAIL

Summary of action taken since Ofsted inspection February – March 2013

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The main progress since the inspection has been evident in addressing MASH timescales, reviewing the LSCB and its links to Overview and Scrutiny and the establishment of the Children's Society service for advocacy and for following up on Missing Children.

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I have reviewed progress against each of the recommendations and grouped them into categories. I have also provided a summary of the evidence behind each category.

Fully implemented

- **Review the functioning and membership of the London Borough of Havering Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) to ensure it is fully constituted and provides sufficient scrutiny and oversight of the effectiveness of child protection practice and the effectiveness of arrangements for children in need .**

Evidence

The Board has been under review and a new chairperson, Brian Boxall was appointed in the summer with a planned transition between the outgoing chairperson, Sue Dunstall and Brian. Brian has been actively engaged in finding out where there are areas of difficulty and has already made his presence known and thereby raised the profile of the Board.

There is now voluntary sector representation on the board from the Children's Society and work is in hand to encourage partners to chair subgroups. A successful Board Development Day was held in October 2013.

- **Review the governance responsibilities and accountabilities to ensure there is communication and a formal link between HSCB and the Chair of the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Evidence

The Chair of Children's Overview and Scrutiny receives the papers from the LSCB and a reporting arrangement for O and S to receive the Annual Report has been implemented. O and S received the 2012-2013 report in September and arranged this further special meeting to drill down further into activity and progress against the Ofsted recommendations.

The Chair of the LSCB has agreed to annual meetings with Overview and Scrutiny so that the committee will have opportunities to share their work and hear from the LSCB chair directly about the work of the LSCB.

- **Continue to develop and adopt a more consistent approach to supervision in order to ensure that it provides the right level of critical challenge and opportunity for reflection and is a vehicle for driving up practice standards**

Evidence

Since the inspection there has been a focus on developing supervision skills which has included mentoring of the group managers by experienced social work consultants alongside mentoring of practice managers by the Principal Social Worker. Auditing of supervision records and of case files has shown improvement in this area.

- **Ensure work is progressed to enable children and young people to access advocacy services which support them to attend child protection conferences**

Evidence

The Children's Society are now providing an advocacy service which has been widely advertised in the department and which young people can easily access for support. This service is open to all children in need.

- **Ensure that the tracking system for all referrals in the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) service is embedded and that timescales for response outlined in the threshold to services document are met**

Evidence

Since the inspection a number of improvements have been made to MASH processes. The tracking system is now fully in place the timescales for MASH responses are being met almost 100% of the time. In the last three weeks only one case went slightly over timescale. We had considered purchasing a large screen with live data of waiting times but have instead gone for a low tech solution whereby anyone in MASH can see if there are cases at risk of missing timescales.

- **Undertake a detailed analysis and evaluation, following the implementation of the newly formed MASH, to formally consider any early lessons to define the service and forward plan**

Evidence

The review of the first year of MASH implementation has been completed and will be presented to Overview and Scrutiny and the LSCB shortly. Although there have been challenges, there is clear evidence that MASH has improved working relationships between a range of partners and that benefits have been achieved for children.

- **Complete the roll out of the children's case management system (CCM) in order to ensure that managers and staff have the tools to do their job properly**

Evidence

CCM is fully rolled out across all the children's social work teams and all active cases are on the system.

- **Complete the overarching service plan for delivering against the corporate and strategic priorities for children's services and make clear through aligned operational plans the journey ahead for staff, members and partners**

Evidence

The service plan was completed within the corporate timescales and was shared with partners via the LSCB. There is a mid-year refresh under way at present.

Partially implemented or in progress

- **Complete the proposed re-commissioning of the emergency duty team (EDT) with minimum delay and as part of that process set clear and unambiguous performance and quality standards for the new service**

Evidence

The new EDT arrangements are being commissioned across 4 boroughs. We are close to getting approval through our respective decision making arrangements and the new service should be in place early next year under the management of LB Redbridge

- **Ensure effective consideration is given to a child or young person's ethnicity, culture, religion and language in assessments so as to inform planning**

Evidence

The new client database enables managers to run reports on a range of areas which includes recording of ethnic and cultural data, language and religion. Compliance is improving. However, we cannot yet report this as fully met pending more auditing activity which is planned for next month.

- **Develop a more robust approach to quality assurance in order to be able to track qualitative improvements over time, for example the percentage of child protection plans that are outcome focused and/ or measurable**

Evidence

Our approach to quality assurance in respect of tracking quality of practice was at a relatively early stage when the inspectors were here. This has continued to develop both within our service and with partners under the auspices of the LSCB. We have incorporated user feedback as a routine practice. We have been auditing child protection plans to assess outcome focus both during CP processes but also in respect of step down CIN plans.

- **Review and refine the performance management framework to include key indicators, including measures that are currently missing, as well as comparative data, trend information and projections, with commentary and key information broken down to team or pod level**

Evidence

Our performance data is now more comprehensive and includes for example workforce data. Also data is now benchmarked against comparators and includes better trend data. More work is going on in this area between the new head of Business and Performance and CYPS senior management team to develop a good quality performance management framework which will meet all the requirements of Ofsted in respect of this inspection and the new inspection framework.

- **Ensure the collation and analysis of performance management information to effectively interpret and monitor the quality and impact of all aspects of child protection practice and processes, and the effectiveness of help and support for children in need**

Evidence

As above.

- **Record and analyse contact, referral and re-referral patterns in order to be better able to evaluate how effectively children's social care and its partners are applying the threshold criteria, meeting needs and reducing risks**

Evidence

As above. There have been improvements in this area but like the previous recommendation it is one where we have made some progress but need to review and agree a comprehensive framework which will meet Ofsted's recommendations fully.

- **Ensure the timely completion and review of core assessments to ensure that children and young people are receiving the appropriate level of services when they need them**

Evidence

Assessment timescales are not yet timely in terms of completion. Some of this is due to carrying over 'old' processes into a new system and is being addressed. Also some

individual performance issues have been addressed in recent months. We are seeing some improvement and this is an area that is being closely monitored. However, allocation of services and early help are not dependent on completion of assessment.

- **Ensure chronologies are clear, recorded and fit for purpose**

Evidence

The new CCM system has a feature which can be used to select significant event to populate a chronology which would meet the required standard in all cases. However, this is not yet consistently understood and in use. Meetings are planned for November to take this forward as part of our move from implementation to Business as usual.

- **Ensure that the common assessment framework (CAF) is sufficiently embedded in the reconfigured early help services within a required time frame and that this is evaluated by the HSCB**

Evidence

We have replaced the CAF with an Early Help Assessment which was designed with our partner agencies. Training has been rolled out across all agencies and is being supplemented by fortnightly drop in sessions for staff. Take up has increased by 50% with 46 assessments undertaken in 6 weeks from 1st September this year against 30 at the same time last year. It has been pleasing too that adult agencies including adult mental health and probation have asked for dedicated training for adult professionals and this is being provided. Feedback on the training has been positive.

At the planning stage

- **Ensure the development of a workforce action plan in line with the transformation agenda and workforce strategy that can be monitored, reviewed and evaluated.**

We are still at the discussion stage on wider workforce strategy although elements are in place including Early Help Assessment training above and new training for social workers. A social worker recruitment and retention strategy has been drafted and work is taking place with HR.

- **Feedback from children, young people, parents and carers are used to plan and improve service delivery. This includes implementing a system for the analysis of service user feedback in early help and preventative services.**

Although progress has been made in this area there is still a lot to do. Since the inspection . Viewpoint has been launched with Looked After children and more recently for children aged over 8 years who have a child protection plan. However, this is not yet at the stage where it can be claimed that it is impacting positively on service delivery. There is not yet a comprehensive system for analysing service user feedback in Early Help although there are elements of this in the Troubled Families programme and Early help audits.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

Legal implications and risks:

Human Resources implications and risks:

Equalities implications and risks:

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Inspection of LA arrangements for the protection of children. See attached.