

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND TACKLING INEQUALITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Agenda Item No. 5
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Report of the Executive Director of Children's Services

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UPDATE FOLLOWING OFSTED INSPECTION OF SAFEGUARDING

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update the Committee on the Inspection Judgement following the Inspection from 28th January to 6th February 2013

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note the outcome of the Inspection and endorse its recommendations

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 3.1 The sustainable community Strategy identifies Improving health and Supporting Vulnerable People as priorities. Improvement in Social care is key to the delivery of these priorities.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Children's Services safeguarding services was judged inadequate following an Ofsted inspection in May 2010 and a Notice to Improve was issued by the Minister. Since then, the department has been working to an improvement programme and awaiting a re-inspection by Ofsted which took place on the dates noted in 1.1 above.

5. KEY ISSUES

- 5.1 The overall judgement across all outcome areas including overall effectiveness, the quality of practice, and leadership and governance is adequate.

Key highlights

Overall Effectiveness:

'Lessons found from previous inspections have been taken seriously resulting in determined drive to address the identified deficiencies through rapid improvement.'

- Support of politicians and partners been key to improvement
- No children found to be inadequately protected or at risk of significant harm at time of report
- Robust arrangements in the re-designed contact and referral teams
- Decisions made promptly and referrals are appropriately moved into assessments within required timescales
- Child sexual exploitation has recently been a focus of activity accelerating learning for council
- Early help services are accessible with increasingly well established wider range of services. Use of Common Assessment Framework (CAF) increasing.
- Views of children and young people are being gathered and most children and families report positively on the services they are receiving
- Particular challenge to council is provision of a reliable interpreting service
- High intensity family support offered to reduce and minimise risk

Leadership and Governance:

- Leadership and Governance arrangements at Councillor and Senior Officer Level

‘strong with evidence of a real drive and energy to address the past failings and achieve sustained improvements’.

- ‘Engagement of elected members has become strong through an increased confidence, oversight, challenge, and sense of responsibility’.
- Elected member visits to teams and accompanying social workers on visits applauded
- Senior Leadership team needs permanent appointment of Assistant Director of safeguarding
- PSCB meets its statutory responsibilities, but scrutiny function not well developed. At time of Inspection Report, PSCB recruiting to a permanent chair.
- Effective central data base regarded by staff as being effective

Quality of Practice:

- Examples of good, excellent and poor work .Practice variable.
- No unallocated cases
- Partner agencies have increasing confidence in Social Care and are referring appropriately
- Thresholds appropriately applied
- Initial and Core assessments conducted in timely way
- Involvement of children and young people in assessments, service delivery and planning too inconsistent
- Social Work reports to conferences not always shared with families

The report is attached as an appendix to this report together with the key recommendations

6. IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Children Services will continue on its improvement journey. There is no room for complacency and the implementation of the OFSTED recommendations will be incorporated into the newly refreshed Children’s Services delivery plan and monitored through the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group.

Children’s Services must not return to an Improvement notice.

7. CONSULTATION

Not applicable

8. NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 Monitor implementation at continued External Improvement Board and Scrutiny safeguarding Task and Finish group.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 9.1
- Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding: Peterborough 6th September 2011
 - Ofsted Unannounced Inspection of contact referral and assessment arrangements 3rd March 2011
 - Ofsted Safeguarding and Looked after Children Inspection: Peterborough 21st May 2010
 - Ofsted Local Authority Arrangements for the Protection of Children – inspection report 8th March 2013

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 Ofsted Local Authority Arrangements for the Protection of Children Inspection Report – 28 January – 6 February 2013.