

CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 7
20 JULY 2023	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	John Gregg, Executive Director for Children and Young People's Services	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cllr Lynne Ayres - Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Skills and the University	
Contact Officer(s):	Gary Jones, Service Director, Children's Social Care and Targeted Support	Tel. 01733863624

INTEGRATED FRONT DOOR

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: John Gregg, Executive Director for Children and Young People's Services	Deadline date: N/A
<p>It is recommended that Children and Education Scrutiny Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comment on the report of the Integrated Front Door and the contents of the Ofsted Focused Visit inspection outcome letter at Appendix 1. 2. Endorse the action plan at Appendix 2 to improve areas of practice identified by Ofsted as requiring improvement. 3. Include in the work plan an opportunity to scrutinise the impact of the proposed action plan and to achieve the ambition to develop a consistently good service for children and families in all areas of practice at the Integrated Front Door. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report was requested by the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 This report updates the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the outcome of the Ofsted Focused Visit of the Integrated Front Door undertaken between the 1st and 2nd March 2023, with the Ofsted letter being published on 9th May 2023. This report also sets out the proposed actions to address the improvement areas identified in the Ofsted Focused Visit letter.

2.2 This report is for the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference Part 3, Section 4 - Overview and Scrutiny Functions, paragraph No. 2.1 Functions determined by Council:

1. Children's Services including
 - a) Social Care of Children;
 - b) Safeguarding;
 - c) Children's Health and;
 - d) Targeted Youth Support (including youth offending).

2.3 The report links to the children in care promise which underpins all the work of children's services.

3. **TIMESCALES**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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4. **BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

4.1.1 Local authority Children's Services receives contacts from practitioners, agencies and the public which usually fall in to two categories:

1. Requests for information from local authority children's social care.
2. Requests for services for a child, or safeguarding concerns which will be in the form of a referral.

4.1.2 Anyone who has concerns about a child's welfare can make a referral to a local authority Children's Services. Referrals can come from the child themselves, practitioners such as teachers, early years providers, the police, probation service, GPs and health visitors as well as family members and members of the public. Local Authority Children's Services has the responsibility to clarify with the referrer the nature of the concerns and how and why they have arisen.

4.1.3 The referrer must always have the opportunity to discuss their concerns with a qualified social worker. Local authority Children's Services should make clear in their local area how this should happen as local arrangements vary for receiving referrals. Most Local Authorities have arrangements in place to manage referrals via a multi-agency safeguarding hub process usually referred to as the MASH.

4.1.4 The Integrated Front Door is a shared service between Peterborough and Cambridgeshire bringing together the Contact Centre, the MASH and our Early Help Hub which is the point of entry for all notifications regarding safeguarding and promoting the well-being of children.

It does this by:

1. Acting as a "front door" to manage all safeguarding referrals.
2. Acting as a "front door" to our Early Help Hubs.
3. The MASH and Early Help Hubs are designed to meet the two key principles of effective safeguarding as defined by Working Together 2018.
4. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part; and
5. A child-centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.

4.2 **MASH: Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub**

4.2.1 The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is part of the Integrated Front Door (IFD), which involves Customer Service Centre and the Early Help Hub. Peterborough County Council along with partner agencies operate a MASH model which was implemented in November 2018.

4.2.2 The MASH is a partnership between agencies that have a duty to safeguard children and who have agreed to share information they have on families and children and work within an integrated team to improve decision-making whenever there are concerns about a child.

4.2.3 The staff co-located within the MASH (Social Care, Education, Health, Police, Early Help and IDVA) continue to be employed by and are accountable to their employing agency. Co-location is the most effective way of building relationships, trust and understanding between the agencies and promoting confidence in sharing information to maximise safeguarding opportunities for children in Peterborough.

4.3 **Early Help Hub**

4.3.1 The Early Help Hub decides which service/s will be best placed to support a family's needs (universal or targeted support). The Early Help Hub works with other professionals who know the family such as a child's school a family worker or health visitor to create an Early Help Plan.

4.4 **Deep Dive Audit**

4.4.1 The Local Authority undertook a deep dive audit (December 2022) into the work of the Integrated Front Door and Child Sexual Exploitation, including the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The deep dive audit raised several concerns about practice within the IFD.

4.5 **Ofsted Focused Visit**

4.5.1 Ofsted announced in February 2023 that they were undertaking a Focused Visit of Peterborough City Council's arrangements of their Front Door Service. The Ofsted Focused Visit outcome letter is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

4.5.2 Ofsted Focused visits evaluate an aspect of Children's Services, a theme or the experiences of a cohort of children. His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) carry out these visits under section 136(2) of the Education and Inspections Act. Ofsted carry out focused visits between standard and short inspections. Two inspectors carry out two days of fieldwork contained within one week. Focused visits include some or all the same inspection activity as a standard or short inspection.

4.5.3 In each of these focused visits, inspectors will evaluate the effectiveness of:

- performance management
- management oversight
- supervision
- quality assurance
- continuous professional development of the workforce

4.5.4 Inspectors will not make graded judgements at the outcome of a focused visit. Nor will they indicate what the grade may have been if the visit had been a short or standard inspection. The outcome will be findings about strengths and areas for improvement, reported in a published letter. If inspectors find serious weaknesses, they will identify areas for priority action.

4.5.5 An area for priority action is either:

- an area of serious weakness that is placing children at risk of inadequate protection and significant harm.
- an unnecessary delay in identifying permanent solutions for children in care that results in their welfare not being safeguarded and promoted.
- a failure to keep in touch with care leavers, or provide them with support and services, that results in their welfare not being safeguarded and promoted.

4.5.6 Inspectors will use findings from focused visits when planning their next short or standard inspection. The evidence from a focused visit will not be used as primary evidence but may enable inspectors to target their evidence-gathering more effectively.

Outcome from Focused Visit

4.6

4.6.1 In response to the outcome of the Ofsted Focused Visit in March 2023, the Local Safeguarding Partnership has developed a multi-agency plan which positively responds to the concerns identified by Ofsted inspectors during the two-day focused visit. The multi-agency plan involves contributions from the Local Authority and all partner agencies in addressing the priority actions arising from the Ofsted Focused Visit.

The governance of the plan is overseen by a MASH Partnership Implementation Group,

4.6.2 comprising of senior leaders across the partnership, thereby ensuring the effective discharge of our collective statutory functions. The MASH Partnership Implementation Group meets regularly and is chaired by the Independent Chair of the Local Safeguarding Partnership, thereby ensuring that all partners are collectively held to account for the delivery of service improvements.

4.6.3 The multi-agency safeguarding plan is attached as appendix 2 to this report. The Local Authority and partner agencies are fully committed to progressing the plan and ensuring the delivery of effective safeguarding arrangements for the Integrated Front Door.

5. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

5.1 Consider how the recommendation links to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

1. Our Places & Communities
 - Health and Wellbeing
2. Prevention, Independence & Resilience
 - Educations and Skills for All
 - Adults
 - Children

There is no carbon impact. This report relates to BAU for the service. The Local Authority will be setting up a separate IFD to Cambridgeshire but they will both continue to be hosted in a Cambridgeshire Police building.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 A report has been provided to CLT and they are aware of the outcome of the Focused Visit

7. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

7.1 Consider the anticipated outcome of this report.

8. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

8.1 To enable the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee members to be informed of the service and outcomes.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 N/A

10. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

10.1 A new Integrated Front Door needs to be created, this service was previously provided by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough paid a contribution towards this.

CLT have agreed some investment whilst this is being looked at from a decoupling perspective and the longer-term funding implications will be picked up in business planning.

Legal Implications

10.2 There are no direct legal implications in this report.

Equalities Implications

- 10.3 There are no equalities implications in this report.
- 10.4 This report has no implication for children in care or care leavers.

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

- 11.1 N/A

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix 1 - Ofsted Focused Visit Outcome Letter
Appendix 2 - Multi-agency Action Plan

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