

CABINET	AGENDA ITEM No. 9
26 March 2012	PUBLIC REPORT

Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Scott, Cabinet Member for Children's Services	
Contact Officer(s):	Director of Children's Services	Tel: 01733 863606

IMPROVING CHILDREN'S SERVICES UPDATE

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	
FROM : Director of Children's Services	Deadline date : N/A
1. That Cabinet notes the improvement activity and progress within Children's Services	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

This report is the second quarterly update on progress in implementing the actions and recommendations arising from the Ofsted Inspection.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet with details of improvement actions undertaken since the 12th December 2011 meeting in response to the findings of the Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding carried out in August 2011.
- 2.2 This report is for Cabinet to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 3.2.3. To take a leading role in promoting the economic, environmental and social well-being of the area.

3. TIMESCALE

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO
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4. PROGRESS REPORT

Since the previous report to Cabinet in December 2011, significant progress has been made in putting down the building blocks for sustainable improvement.

We have now put in place a permanent team of Assistant Directors with the appointment of Sue Westcott as Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Wendi Ogle-Welbourn as Assistant Director of Strategic Commissioning. These are both high performing individuals with a track record of delivering improvement and high quality services. They will both be in place by the end of March and will join Jonathan Lewis to make up a very strong senior leadership team.

We have rebased the establishment at 81 social workers and the budget report approved by Council agreed to an additional one million pounds to fund this and a further £2million to

fund the cost of Looked after Children. We are currently developing the marketing and attraction strategy to drive the recruitment of the additional 25 permanent staff.

In the meantime, we have commissioned and procured a peripatetic team of experienced social workers and management. They commenced working as an additional pod in the Referral and Assessment team on the 18th January. This team has provided the additional capacity to tackle the backlogs within the Referral Assessment Team and there has been a marked improvement in the timeliness of assessments. On March 14th the total open cases in that team had reduced to 296 compared to 724 on 28th November. The outstanding initial assessments have been reduced from 192 to 7 and the outstanding core assessments from 78 to 2 within that team.

The Early Intervention Support (EIS) team was set up in January comprising a manager and six workers from the 8-19 service. This team has diverted 110 families to early intervention services primarily within the Early Years or 8-19 teams.

Good progress has been made on the project to replace the Integrated Children's System (ICS). All the data from the legacy system has been cleansed and migrated over to Liquidlogic. The training programme is now in its final phases. All users have completed the basic course and we are now half way through Part Two which focuses on how individual teams will use the system. Attendance at the training has been almost 100% with the social worker teams really supporting the initiative and welcoming the change. The go-live and post go-live support has been engaged and trained, training manuals are being prepared.

A new Quality Assurance and Performance framework has been approved and will be rolled out in April. This will include comprehensive auditing of the quality of casework and the monitoring of supervision and the oversight of decision making.

Members, led by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, have been actively engaged in challenging and supporting this improvement activity. A Member Task and Finish Group has met on three occasions to examine the improvement programme and the evidence around for progress. This has included a deep dive into the ICS implementation programme. Regular progress reports have also been considered by the Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities Scrutiny Panel.

5. CONSULTATION

Partner agencies through the Peterborough Safeguarding Children's Board and the External Improvement Board are involved in the improvement activity.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

The improvement activity has been planned to secure the following outcomes laid out in the Children's Services Improvement programme:

- Providing confident leadership across children's services
- Putting in place effective front-line practice
- Creating an organisation fit for purpose
- Strengthening partnerships to make a difference
- Becoming the employer of choice in the region
- Robustly managing performance

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council needs to secure immediate improvements to safeguard children and in the longer term put in place a sustainable high quality Children's Services in Peterborough.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Not applicable.

9. IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The cost of the improvement programme can be met from within existing budgets. Resources are available to secure improvement in the immediate and longer term.
- 9.2 The Secretary of State has the power to issue a statutory notice if he or she deems this is required to secure the necessary improvements within a failing service.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

None.

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