

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

Meeting to be held on Wednesday, 16 January 2019

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Report on the Children's Services Leadership Academy

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

The report provides an overview of the Children's Services Leadership Academy, including the background to the Academy, content, evaluation and future plans.

Recommendation

The Children's Services Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- i. Note the progress of the Children's Services Leadership Academy
- ii. Discuss and provide feedback on the information provided.

Background and Advice

The Children's Services Leadership Academy was launched in April 2018, following the successful implementation of the Social Work Academy in September 2017. In our recent inspection, (June 2018), Ofsted reported, "The ambition to develop into a learning organisation is tangible, with progress made in relation to the improved offer to newly qualified social workers, the Social Work Academy and the recently developed Leadership Academy."

The Leadership Academy brings together our internal and external training for aspiring and current social work managers and leaders, both at an operational and strategic level. The purpose of the Academy is to ensure and embed effective consistent leadership across Children's Services. The focus is to develop managerial and leadership skills, knowledge and confidence that improves both personal and organisational performance and improves outcomes for children.

The Leadership Academy hosts a range of accredited and non-accredited courses, training and development opportunities that ensures continuous professional development and opens opportunities for career progression. It has been designed to offer a tailored approach to developing successful leadership at all levels from first line management to leading a service.

The Leadership Academy forms part of our wider existing workforce development training plan that provides opportunity for continuous professional development for the social care workforce. This plan is reviewed and monitored by the Workforce Development Board.

Content of the Leadership Academy

Since its launch in April 2018, over 260 managers, practitioners and support workers across the full range of Children's Services have attended elements of the Leadership Academy, with a further 180 due to attend in the next four months. The Academy includes a key focus on developing practitioner resilience, (supporting retention and staff morale), whilst also supporting the health and wellbeing of the workforce. Courses include Mindfulness, Courageous Conversations, Coaching for Success, Conflict is Normal and Stress Management and Resilience.

Two significant developmental courses that have been hosted within the Leadership Academy are 'Improving Personal and Organisational Performance' and a 'Middle Leaders Development Programme'. The first was commissioned as a bespoke four day programme from Bournemouth University – with 20 Practice and Team Managers all completing and receiving 20 Post Graduate Level credits.

The accredited programme delivered in September and October 2018 provided key messages on how to improve personal and organisational performance through changes in behaviour for both the individual and the team, with a particular focus on equipping individuals with practical tools and techniques to manage and lead themselves and others to be more effective.

Research in Practice delivered a three day Middle Leaders Development Programme to three cohort groups - a total of 55 managers and aspiring managers have recently completed the programme. Key topics covered over the three days included: developing leadership skills, reflective and strengths based leadership, developing thinking skills and building resilience.

Evaluation and Impact

All developments within the Leadership Academy have been evaluated at initial completion – 100% of delegates were 'very satisfied' with the trainers knowledge, experience and professionalism, 100% stated they would be able to use what they have learnt in their role, 100% would recommend the course to colleagues, and 95% stated that the training would directly benefit those who use the service.

The Middle Leaders Development Programme was evaluated in slightly more detail, looking at delegate's self-assessment of their confidence, knowledge and skills prior to and immediately after the delivery. Average responses are noted below for all three cohorts across all three days of the programme:

	At the start	At the end
Knowledge rated as 'very good/good'	22%	90%
Skills rated as 'very good/good'	17%	81%
Confidence rated as 'very good/good'	10%	75%

Action Plans have been completed by all delegates on the Middle Leaders Development Programme and will be followed up at 3, 6 and 12 month intervals to evidence impact in practice.

Although the effectiveness and impact on practice of the Leadership Academy is yet to be fully evaluated (having only been running for nine months), supporting the development and wellbeing of staff and embedding a learning culture through the Leadership Academy route, has seen a significant improvement in the retention of Practice and Team Managers compared to data in the same period the previous year:

	April – Sept 2017	April – Sept 2018
Leavers – Team Manager	6	3
Leavers – Practice Manager	13	6

External Stakeholders

Ofsted's Quality Assurance Lead for the Inspection was particularly interested in the Social Work and Leadership Academies, and has since made contact with a view to implementing a similar model in an authority where she is now Director. There has also been a recommendation from the Department for Education Commissioner appointed to support a Council following an 'inadequate' judgement, to contact our Learning and Development Department and request we share our plans and vision regarding the Academy.

Future Plans

In April 2019 a detailed annual evaluation of the Leadership Academy will be undertaken. This will provide important information on the impact, effectiveness and success of the development of the workforce. It will help to shape the content of the Leadership Academy going forward and will include new priorities as the learning is embedded.

We will continue to develop an effective learning culture across Children's Services, this will be strengthened and reinforced whilst emphasising the importance of maintaining the health and wellbeing of staff.

Modules currently being developed:

The majority will be available from January 2019, and these include Vision and Leadership, Performance Management, Managing Change, Developing Teams, Employee Engagement and Motivational Interviewing. We will continue to offer a range of accredited and non-accredited routes.

There will also be an increased focus on The National Accreditation and Assessment System. (This sets out the national standards for specialist post-qualification accreditation required for child and family social workers throughout their career pathway). We will continue to embed the Knowledge and Skills Statement for child and family practice supervisors, and the Knowledge and Skills Statement for leaders and prepare practitioners for endorsement and accreditation which is likely to be in 2019/20 – 2020/21.

Consultations

N/A

Implications

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Financial Implications

There are no specific financial implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

This report has no significant risk implications.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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NA

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

NA