

## **Update on the Safeguarding and Looked after Children Inspection**

### **Purpose of the report and Summary**

This report is to provide the Corporate Parenting Board with an update of progress against the inspection action plan.

As the Corporate Parenting Board will be aware we had our safeguarding and looked after children inspection last year. Overall the outcome was positive with the inspectors judging us as good with outstanding features. There were a number of areas where the inspectors felt we could improve which were highlighted in their report. As a result of this we developed an action plan to address the areas for improvement highlighted and other areas within the report where we felt we could also further improve. A multi-agency group was established to monitor the progress of this action plan.

### **Key Information and Questions for Board Members**

- The action plan contains actions in addition to those identified as areas for improvement within the inspection report
- All immediate safeguarding areas for improvement have been addressed
- All three month safeguarding areas for improvement have been addressed with the exception of one part which relates to training for health staff
- Five out of the nine Safeguarding areas for improvement to be completed within six months have been completed. The four remaining actions relate to major pieces of work e.g. obtaining a new IT system which were likely to take longer than the six months. All are in the process of being completed.
- In respect to looked after children areas for improvement there were no immediate actions.
- All five actions to be completed within three months have been completed, except one part which relates to training advance nurse practitioners so they can undertake initial health assessments as this will take longer than this.
- Six out of the nine looked after children areas for improvement to be completed within six months have been completed. The areas outstanding relate to increasing the numbers of Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO's) and ensuring care leavers who remain in education are supported financially.
- The Corporate parenting Board and young people may want to consider how well they feel they are supported financially when continuing in education.
- As outlined the action plan contains additional actions and the majority of these actions with a completion date before January 2013 have been completed.
- In order to check that the actions that have been completed are making a difference we also undertake internal inspections, ask agencies to carry out audits. How do the Corporate Parenting Boards and young people see that they can assist in this?

## **Background**

Between 23 January and 3 February 2012 Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission undertook an inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children's Services in Lancashire. The purpose of the inspection was to evaluate the contribution made by relevant services in the local area towards ensuring that children and young people are properly safeguarded and to determine the quality of service provision for looked after children and care leavers. The Ofsted report was published on 9 March 2012, with the Care Quality Commission report published in May 2012.

The report identified a numbers of areas of improvement which were:

## **Safeguarding**

### **Immediately:**

- urgently and comprehensively review the governance and safeguarding arrangements for children and young people within University Hospital Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust and Royal Lancaster Infirmary to ensure children are effectively safeguarded
- urgently and comprehensively review the safeguarding arrangements across out of hours, walk-in and accident and emergency health services across Lancashire to ensure children are effectively safeguarded.

### **Within three months:**

- improve the arrangements for recording strategy discussions so that there is a single record of discussions and actions required by the agencies involved
- ensure that the views of the child are represented in child protection case conferences
- ensure all health trusts have robust systems for capturing data to report on compliance with the required safeguarding training standard, and that full compliance is achieved
- ensure that there is sufficient capacity in designated and named health professional roles across the county, and that roles and responsibilities are specified in job descriptions or service level agreements
- ensure assessment and plans include the wishes and feelings of children, including the behaviours of pre-school age children and reports for conferences, child protection plans and core groups are outcome focused
- ensure the LADO arrangements are disseminated across the diverse communities of Lancashire so all sectors are aware of their responsibilities to make notifications.

### **Within six months:**

- review the existing domestic violence service provision to determine future needs and requirements including a commitment to fund early intervention programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence before they enter the criminal justice system and counselling support for children who experience domestic violence before they reach the threshold for access to child protection services
- ensure there is sufficient management capacity to support the out of hours service to consolidate the improvements made in child protection and safeguarding responses

- ensure systems for completing pre-CAF assessments and CAF assessments are consistent and of good quality to provide a sound basis for early intervention work with families and where appropriate to assist social workers when cases escalate into the child protection system
- accelerate plans to improve the electronic integrated recording system to improve the efficiency of case recording, supervision and recording the rationale for management decisions

## **Services for Looked After Children**

### **Within three months:**

- improve the timeliness of initial health assessments
- improve the rate of children who receive a routine dental health examination
- improve the arrangements and quality of looked after children's health records and ensure there is an audit trail to demonstrate all health issues are acted on promptly.

### **Within six months:**

- ensure looked after children independent reviewing officers' caseloads are manageable
- ensure the capacity of family group conference service provision is sufficient to meet demand
- ensure that all PEPs effectively support looked after children to achieve the best educational outcomes
- ensure that reports of looked after children's reviews are completed and distributed within a timely fashion
- ensure appropriate training in independent living skills is consistently available for young people in preparation for them leaving care
- ensure all care leavers aged 18 who remain in education are adequately supported financially
- ensure the clinical psychologist service has sufficient capacity to meet the needs of looked after children.

A multi agency safeguarding continuous improvement group which is chaired by Health developed an Action Plan to address the above areas for improvement. The inspection action plan contains not only priorities and actions in response to areas for improvement, but also where reference is made within the narrative of the Ofsted/CQC reports that we could further improve on our present practice.

## **Decisions required**

*What do you want the Board to do (note or approve) what outcome would you wish to achieve by presenting your report to the Board, how can decisions made by the Board help to meet the needs of Children and Young People.*

- (i) The Corporate Parenting Board is asked to note the report and the progress made against the areas for improvement identified by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission and the additional actions taken by partners to further improve the effectiveness of our services to safeguarding and looked after children.

- (ii) The Corporate Parenting Board is asked to consider how it can also play a role in ensuring the actions taken are making a difference to looked after children lives

Tony Morrissey  
Head of Safeguarding Inspection & Audit  
Children and Young People Directorate,  
01772 532276  
[Tony.Morrissey@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:Tony.Morrissey@lancashire.gov.uk)  
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