

Appendix B

Ofsted Post Inspection Update

Background and Advice

Ofsted carried out an unannounced inspection of Children's Services which commenced on 14 September 2015 and which lasted for four weeks.

The inspection focused on the experiences and progress of children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. It also included looking at the effectiveness of our services and arrangements to help these children, including adoption and fostering. Ofsted also carried out a review of the effectiveness of the Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board (LCSB) at the same time.

Ofsted published its report on Friday 27 November 2015 rating the overall effectiveness of the Children's Services as inadequate. The judgement for the LCSB was good.

Actions taken since the last CCPI

A number of actions have been put in place and developed since the last report to CCPI in July 2016:

Recruitment drive - increasing capacity and, in turn, reducing caseloads in social work teams is a vital part of solving the challenges identified during the Ofsted inspection. To support this around £4.6 million in additional staffing capacity across children's social care, adoption, safeguarding, inspection and audit.

Children's social care is a challenging area to recruit to, not only in Lancashire but also across many parts of the country, but the summer campaign to recruit to various roles in children's services has had a positive effect. To date more than 133 permanent posts have been recruited to including social workers, team managers and independent reviewing officers.

A significant amount of funding and staff has also been made available to further develop our Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) team. The new team will build on existing good relationships with partners through Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) and will work closely with police and health staff to support children and young people at risk of CSE and help keep them safe.

Service developments – the first week of October see the launch of work, initially in Fylde and Wyre, to focus on how new ways of working and improvement related projects are effectively implemented on an area footprint to enable quality and consistency of practice. The aim will be to ensure rapid and sustainable improvement within our local teams while fostering creativity, innovation and partnership working.

Framework agreement – Skylakes continue to provide additional capacity by taking on new work and assessments on behalf of for children's social care and agreement is being sought that this will continue until January 2017. The additional capacity is allowing social work teams to address the backlog of work that has accumulated so that they are better placed to deal with the rising demand in areas of children's social care.

Director of Children's Services role - Linda Clegg was appointed to the statutory Director of Children's Services role on an interim basis earlier this year to help us quickly address the challenges set out by Ofsted following their inspection in late 2015. Linda shares her time between the county council and Blackburn with Darwen Council, and her work here is currently focused on our safeguarding and children's social care teams.

The process has now started to fill the role on a permanent basis, with applications having closed last week and interviews due to take place in November.

Ofsted quarterly monitoring inspection - during their most recent visit in September, inspectors spent two days in the county assessing the progress the council, with its partners, is making in relation to care leavers, children in need cases and those subject to child protection plans.

In a letter published on the Ofsted website (3 October 2016), inspectors recognise the increased 'pace of positive change' the council is making to improve services for children and young people. Inspectors also shared our own view that, while momentum behind the improvement plan from the council and its partners remains strong, further work needs to be carried out to embed good practice and improve consistency in the quality of social practice. Work to address variations in the consistency of social work practice by clarifying standards and expectations is well underway and continues to be a key priority area for us.

The full letter which details the findings from the monitoring inspection was published on 3 October 2016 and can be found [here](#).

Peer Challenge – on 10 and 11 October 2016, Jane Ivory (Assistant Director, Wigan), will lead a team of colleagues from across the region to assess and challenge the improvements that have been made to children's services in Lancashire. They will spend approximately half their time looking at cases and talking to social workers about these cases and then they will facilitate a number of focus groups made up of different cohorts of staff and partners. Jane will provide formal feedback around the findings of the peer review on the 9 November and this will then inform future priorities and plans.

DfE Review – one of the conditions of the Improvement Notice from the secretary of state was that as well as the quarterly monitoring inspections from Ofsted the DfE would also undertake a review every six months. The first DfE Review will take place on 19 and 20 October and will be led by Tony Crane (DfE Advisor) and two senior civil servants from the department. The key lines of enquiry for the DfE have been determined as follows:

- Front door and Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub – progress and impact.

- Quality of practice – impact of non-generic workload and progress against Operating Model delivery.
- Managerial oversight – sustainability and capacity to improve.
- Our sustainable sufficiency strategy (edge of care / residential /adoption / fostering).
- Pace of change – are we going fast enough?

The outcome of the DfE review will be a formal report to ministers that appraises the progress being made in Lancashire and identifies area of future focus.

DCS briefings – the second round of staff briefings led by Linda Clegg have started with a session in Fleetwood for children's services staff in the North of the county. The purpose of these staff briefings is to ensure the workforce is fully aware and able to inform improvement and so that Linda can share and discuss the key priorities moving forwards. Briefings for staff in the east and central areas of the county will be held on the 21st October.

12 week improvement plan – this plan was produced and agreed by the Improvement Board in May 2016 and is framed around three themes: the workforce; managing change; and managing demand. The plan has now been delivered and has been positively received not only because it enabled a clear focus on some very short term priorities but it was also helpful for staff to understand how their day work supported strategic improvement activity. The success of the plan has prompted the development of a new 12 week which will be informed by the feedback from the recent Ofsted monitoring inspection and will be signed off by the Improvement Board on 12 October.

Project Accuracy –

Project Accuracy was developed to increase the accuracy of the data in management reports which were derived from the data entry made onto the Lancashire Children's System by Social Work Practitioners.

The system reports were felt by managers to be unreliable due to either data entry errors; report design problems or system issues but because it was not clear which was the root cause, confidence had fallen and problems were not being addressed leading to loss of accurate information which could be used to manage the service.

Since the commencement of the project key areas of management information have been focused on and in wave 2 this included looking at the accuracy of information about care leavers, supervisions and chronologies. Progress has been made toward identifying and solving problems of inaccuracy through weekly review of specific areas of data in the system and through involving managers in assessing and feeding back on the accuracy of the data.

A comprehensive suite of management reports are now in the process of being developed and rolled out within the service covering Children in Need, Child protection, Section 47 and strategy discussions, Children Looked After and Care Leavers. The intention moving forward is that a working group will continue the focus on maintaining the quality of the data so that performance can be maintained.

Newton Europe, having led the first waves of accuracy improvement work have now handed over ownership to the service with support from the Programme Office while processes become embedded. The DCS has taken ownership of embedding the new practices within the service and is updating the 0-25 Board on progress and escalation issues.

It is anticipated that the changes will be fully embedded within the service by January 2017

Risk sensible – the implementation of this model is being led by Mick Muir (an independent consultant) and will improve the skills and confidence of staff in identifying risk and making the appropriate decisions about how this risk is managed. The risk sensible model continues to be implemented and all managers / IROs / MASH will have been trained in this by November 16 at which point the Advanced Practitioners will also begin training all of the social workers across County. This training will run from the beginning of December 16 through to January 2017. From January 17 until the end of March 2017 there will be 1 training session booked for every team, including Senior, Team and Practice managers, social workers and IROs to work through the model. Partner organisations are also interested in understanding and practicing in line with the risk sensible approach and funding has been agreed by the LSCB to facilitate this.