

## IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION

**Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate  
Street, ROTHERHAM.  
S60 2TH**

**Date: Wednesday, 24th October, 2012**

**Time: 1.30 p.m.**

### A G E N D A

1. To determine if the following matters are likely to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended March 2006) to the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
3. Apologies for absence.
4. Declarations of Interest.
5. Questions from members of the public and the press.
6. Communications.
7. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 19th September, 2012. (Pages 1 - 5)
8. School Places. (Pages 6 - 8)
  - Helen Barre, Service Lead - School Admissions, Organisation and SEN Assessment Service, to report.

Report attached.

9. 'Proposal for a strategic approach to respond to the DfE SEN Green Paper 'Support and Aspirations: a New Approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability''. (Pages 9 - 15)
  - Jackie Parkin, Co-ordinator, Children's Disability Team, Children and Young People's Services, to report.

Attached: -

1. Cover report of Cabinet decision, 3rd October, 2012;
2. Report to the Improving Lives Select Commission outlining the

proposal.

10. Safeguarding Action Plan. (Pages 16 - 42)

Sue Wilson, Performance and Quality Manager, to report.

Attached: -

1. Covering report;
2. Children and Young People's Service's Improvement Panel - Action Delivery Plan, October, 2012;
3. Inspection of the Local Authority Arrangements for the Protection of Children – Metropolitan Borough of Rotherham, inspection report, August 2012.

11. Scrutiny Work Programme - update. (Pages 43 - 44)

Report attached.

12. Date and time of the next meeting:-

- Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2012, to start at 1.30 pm in the Rotherham Town Hall.

Membership: -

Councillors G. A. Russell (Chair), N. License (Vice-Chair), S. Ahmed, S. Ali, L. Astbury, A. Buckley, J. Burton, M. Clark, B. Dodson, L. Donaldson, B. Kaye, D. Lelliott, L. Pitchley, C. Read, C. Robinson, D. Roche, A. Roddison, T. Sharman.

Co-opted Members: - Mrs. A. Clough, Mrs. J. Blanch-Nicholson, Mr. M. Smith, Parish Councillor N. Tranmer, Mrs. K. Muscroft, Ms. J. Jones, Mrs. J. Fitzgerald.

**IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION**  
**19th September, 2012**

Present:- Councillor G. A. Russell (in the Chair); Councillors Ahmed, Ali, Astbury, Dodson, Kaye, Lelliott, License, Pitchley and Read; co-opted members Mrs. J. Blanch-Nicholson and Mrs. A. Clough; also in attendance was Councillor Doyle, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Buckley, Clark, Robinson and Sharman and from co-opted member Mr. M. Evans.

**17.           DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Kaye declared a personal interest in Minute No. 22 (Proposals for the joint inspection of multi-agency arrangements for the protection of children – Ofsted consultation) because of his wife's employment with one of the affected organisations.

**18.           QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

There were no questions from members of the public or the press.

**19.           COMMUNICATIONS**

The Senior Scrutiny Adviser reported the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) members were unanimous in the decision to refer the JCPCT's decision to recommend closure of Leeds surgical centre to the Secretary of State for Health, on the grounds that the decision was not in the interest of local health services. Notification of the Joint HOSC's decision has been provided to the Secretary of State. The Joint HOSC would be meeting in October 2012 to consider further evidence in support of the referral. A further report would be provided to a meeting of this Select Commission in due course.

**20.           MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 11TH JULY, 2012**

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission held on 11th July, 2012, were considered.

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

**21.           CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES**

The Select Commission received a presentation from Councillor John Doyle about his role as Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care. The presentation was entitled "Rotherham People Calling the Shots" and dealt with the following issues:-

: the impact of Central Government cuts on Council services;

: achievements in providing services for vulnerable people in Rotherham, despite funding reductions and by means of re-shaping and integrating different services and by the better use of limited resources;

: safeguarding is the bedrock of adult social care;

: receipt of customer feedback about service provision, noting the reduction in complaints received during the past twelve months;

: the changing Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection regime of residential and nursing homes; the Council's own establishments had passed their inspections;

: access to direct payments, giving vulnerable people more control of their own lives;

: HealthWatch will be in place by April 2013;

: in the year ahead, there will be a continued focus on increasing access to continuing health care;

: increasing the amount of advice and support provided for carers;

: assisting people, wherever possible, to live in their own homes rather than staying in residential care;

: improving outcomes for people experiencing domestic abuse;

: ensuring that the services provided will meet and exceed accepted standards;

: significant challenges (eg: delivering budget savings; dealing with service specific and demographic pressures; being held to account for services provided);

: the Armed Forces Covenant (support for ex-service personnel; funding is provided by Central Government) – which states that no-one who has served in the armed forces will be disadvantaged by that service – this Council has signed up to abide by this Covenant; one example of a service is to establish a drop-in centre in Rotherham; the progress being achieved in Rotherham is now recognised as good practice regionally;

The Select Commission Members asked questions about the following matters:-

: adaptations to homes, to assist people with a disability and the sometimes lengthy waiting times for adaptations to be approved and completed; it was noted that this issue was the responsibility of the Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods, whereas the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care was responsible for specialist items of equipment and aids to living for people who suffered a disability;

: the reduction in the number of people in receipt of social care packages, during the last year; it was noted that the eligibility criteria has not altered; an

individual's care package may change as a consequence of a new assessment and/or an improvement in the individual's own condition;

: issues of domestic abuse and action being taken to reduce these problems; there is continued joint working between the various Council departments and the partner agencies; it is anticipated that there may be additional pressure in respect of domestic abuse, caused in part by the Government's welfare system reforms;

: reducing long-term admissions into residential care and the provision of direct payments to service clients; appropriate systems were in place to ensure that individuals in receipt of direct payments are using that finance to meet their needs appropriately; every customer receives an annual review of their needs and care and support plan;

: ensuring that appropriate systems of monitoring are in place for service providers commissioned by the Council (eg: domiciliary care providers); the Council works with providers to maintain and improve standards, and can impose sanctions whenever standards are found to be unsatisfactory;

: very recent changes to the definition of persons affected by domestic violence and abuse, particularly young people aged 16 and 17 years – previously only adults were considered to be sufferers of such abuse;

: joint working protocols between Adult Social Care and Children and Families' Services (e.g.: joint assessments of families' needs; close working between mental health professionals and children's social workers; care packages for adults with a disability who are caring for young children);

: the Council has its own inspection regime for residential care establishments, which is operated in addition to the CQC inspection regime; 'Home from Home' takes account of the views of residents and customers;

: the Council organises a variety of consultation forums and training sessions for people and organisations involved in the provision of care for vulnerable adults.

The issue of domestic abuse is to be included in this Select Commission's future work programme.

The Select Commission thanked Councillor Doyle for his informative presentation.

## **22. PROPOSALS FOR THE JOINT INSPECTION OF MULTI-AGENCY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN - OFSTED CONSULTATION**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Business Manager of the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board, stating that, with effect from June 2013, HM Government will implement a multi-agency framework for the inspection of Child Protection Services. This was one of the main recommendations from the Munro Review of Child Protection which reported to the Government in 2011. Currently the Inspectorate which undertakes these inspections is the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), whose main

focus is the local authority Children's Social Care Services. The proposed revised framework (which was appended to the submitted report) will incorporate a number of other Inspectorates who will also evaluate the Health, Police and Probation response to and services for children at risk of harm. The proposal for the new framework has been published for consultation, which will end on 4th October, 2012.

It was noted that where an area has a Young Offenders' Unit and/or a Mother and Baby Unit within a prison establishment, any inspection of that establishment must have arrangements in place for the protection of young people.

The Select Commission's discussion of this issue included the following salient matters:-

: Members supported the view that the composition of the inspection team should be balanced and proportionate, reflecting the respective responsibilities and role of each of the partners;

: ensuring that all agencies are held to account for their actions in terms of safeguarding and protection of children; the effect upon an inspection judgement of any single agency being assessed as not performing satisfactorily;

: joint working between the various partner agencies, in the safeguarding and protection of children and the role of schools; appropriate systems are in place to ensure the strict control of the sharing of information between agencies; (it was suggested that the issue of sharing information might be included in this Select Commission's future work programme);

: discussion took place on the various questions contained in the Government's consultation document;

: there was criticism of a lack of detail in certain of the proposals contained in the consultation document;

: Members considered that the role of the Police in child protection must be subject to official inspection;

: leadership, governance, the quality of partnership working; that the importance of Elected Members as decision makers and the role of Scrutiny Members in holding bodies to account – these issues should be included in the response.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That the Improving Lives Select Commission shall receive a further report about the arrangements for the revised inspection framework.

## **23. CARE FOR OUR FUTURE: WHITE PAPER AND DRAFT CARE AND SUPPORT BILL**

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Scrutiny and Policy Manager concerning the Government's publication of its vision for a reformed

Care and Support System in a White Paper and draft Bill. Consultation was currently taking place on the draft Bill and the White Paper for Adult Social Care in England, entitled "Caring for Our Future: Reforming Care and Support". Responses to the consultation had to be submitted by Friday, 19th October, 2012. The report summarised the key headlines from both documents and outlined the themes and questions in relation to the Bill, upon which the Government was seeking views.

The consultation is in an online format, therefore it is being proposed that a separate group of Scrutiny Members, from both the Health Select Commission and the Improving Lives Commission, be established to scrutinise the documents in detail and respond accordingly.

It was noted that this matter had been considered by the Health Select Commission at its meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2012.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That Councillors Ahmed, Astbury and Lelliott be nominated as the representatives of the Improving Lives Select Commission to the sub-group, established by the Health Select Commission, to consider the consultation documents and prepare a response.

#### **24. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE: 2012/13**

Further to Minute No. 6 of the meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission held on 6<sup>th</sup> June, 2012, discussion took place on the Select Commission's work programme for the 2012/2013 Municipal Year.

Resolved:- (1) That the details of the Select Commission's work programme be received.

(2) That the following subjects be included in the future work programme of the Improving Lives Select Commission:-

(i) services provided for people suffering domestic violence and abuse

(ii) the process of assessment of children at risk, including the Common Assessment Framework

(iii) agencies' joint working and information sharing, in respect of the protection and safeguarding of children.

<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS</b>
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Improving Lives Select Commission</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup> October 2012</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>CYPS Capital Projects Team and School Admissions, Organisation and SEN Assessment Service report on school place planning</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Children and Young People's Services</b>

### **5. Summary**

Pupil numbers are increasing within the Borough and creating a shortage of places available in certain areas. There is increasing pressure on school places due to the numbers of pupils and it is necessary to increase the number of school places available to meet demand. This report outlines the recent and future projects being undertaken to increase place availability within the Borough.

### **6. Recommendation:**

**That the content of the Report be received as an overview of the current position and future direction of travel.**

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## 7. Proposals and Details

Pupil numbers are increasing in the Borough, currently at the Primary stage and there is increasing pressure on school places in certain areas of the Borough.

### School Organisation

- The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to maintained schools) (England) Regulations 2007 and the DfE's Guidance 'Expanding a maintained mainstream school by enlargement or adding a 6<sup>th</sup> Form' states that it is the LA's duty to ensure there are sufficient school places, promote diversity and increase parental choice. There should be a system where all parents feel they have the same opportunities to apply for the schools they want for their child. The aim is to provide quality provision for all children that is responsive to the needs of parents and children.
- DfE advise that proposals to expand successful and popular schools should be approved. The existence of surplus capacity in neighbouring schools should not in itself be sufficient to prevent expansion.
- Given the limited amount of Basic Need funds available, modular buildings are considered to be the most efficient approach to providing quality, affordable additional capacity within schools
- A number of consultations have been completed, a number of consultations are in progress and further consultations are planned during 2012/13

The presentation to the Commission provides details of work carried out / planned to provide additional school places.

### Admissions

#### Number of applications processed annually

Transfer groups:

- Primary: 3,500 (FS2) / 500 (Y2/3)
- Secondary: 3,000 (Y6/7)
- TOTAL = 7,000

In Year Transfers: 2011/12

- Primary: 2,681
- Secondary: 850
- TOTAL = 3,531

CUMULATIVE TOTAL = 10,531

53 Schools are full or over subscribed in FS2 for the academic year 2012/13

## **8. Finance**

The capital cost of the building projects is currently met from 'Basic Need' funding allocated to the Authority from the DfE. Basic needs funding is provided for the provision of sufficient school places.

Section 106 agreements are also in place for future developments and this funding requested for the provision of school places will be utilised to contribute to the provision of school places in future projects where applicable. Section 106 agreements are contracted to be activated at set points eg at 50% completion of a development etc.

In some cases there is also a need to request allocations from the Rotherham Schools' Forum to provide interim financial support to schools that have been expanded to bridge the gap between 1<sup>st</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> March as funding is allocated to schools following census day and additional pupils are not on roll for that financial year.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

There are always risks and uncertainties when school place provision is considered since future pupil numbers are based on estimations. Over provision at one school could influence pupil numbers at other schools. LAs are obliged, however, to provide sufficient places, promote diversity and increase parental choice.

## **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

The major theme supported by the forward planning and provision of school places is 'to ensure that everyone has access to skills, knowledge and information to enable them to play their part in society'. It is likely that the expansion would enable more parents to access their first preference school for their child and, therefore, increase that performance indicator.

## **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

Details of the work being carried out to ensure that there are sufficient school places are detailed in the presentation.

## **12 Contact Name**

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<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS</b>
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:-</b>	Improving Lives Select Commission
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:-</b>	24th October, 2012
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:-</b>	Cabinet Report: - 'Proposal for a strategic approach to respond to the DfE SEN Green Paper 'Support and Aspirations: a New Approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability'' 3rd October, 2012.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Directorate:-</b>	Children and Young People's Services and Resources

### 5. Summary

The Cabinet approved a report on 3rd October, 2012, which was seeking permission to develop a strategic approach towards the provisions within the Department for Education's Green Paper 'Support and Aspirations: a New Approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability'.

### 6. Recommendations

- That Members of the Improving Lives Select Commission note the decision of the Cabinet on 3rd October, 2012.
- That Members of the Improving Lives Select Commission consider the role of the Commission in scrutinising the strategic approach that is being developed.

## 7. Proposals and Details

Following consideration of the report presented, Minute C67 of the Cabinet meeting held on 3rd October, 2012, confirmed: -

Resolved:- (1) That the proposal for a change management programme and project management approach to respond to the requirements of the DfE SEN Green Paper, 'Support and Aspirations; a New Approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability' be approved.

(2) That further reports be submitted on the progress and outcomes of the change management project.

An updated report outlining progress since the Cabinet decision has been submitted to the Improving Lives Select Commission.

## 8. Finance

As outlined in the Cabinet report of 3rd October, 2012.

## 9. Risks and Uncertainties

As outlined in the Cabinet report of 3rd October, 2012.

## 10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

As outlined in the Cabinet report of 3rd October, 2012.

## 11. Background Papers and Consultation

- Minute C67 of the Cabinet meeting held on 3rd October, 2012.
- Cabinet Report 'Proposal for a strategic approach to respond to the DfE SEN Green Paper 'Support and Aspirations: a New Approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability'', 3rd October, 2012.
- Green Paper 'Support and Aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and Disability'.
- Aiming High for Disabled Children.
- Statutory Duty to produce a Short Breaks statement.
- TLAP (Think Local Act Personal) (2011) – Making it Real.
- DH (2010) Equality and Excellence – Liberating the NHS.
- HMG (2007) 'Putting People First'.
- DH (2008) Independent Living Strategy.
- DH (2008) Commissioning for Personalisation: A Framework for Local Authority Commissioners.
- In Control (2008) Smart Commissioning: exploring the impact of personalisation on commissioning.

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**ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL –  
REPORT TO IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION**

1.	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Improving Lives Select Commission</b>
2.	<b>Date:</b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup> October 2012</b>
3.	<b>Title</b>	<b>Proposal for a strategic approach in response to the DfE SEN Green Paper, ‘Support and Aspirations; a New Approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability’.</b>
4.	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>Resources Directorate</b>

## 5. Summary

A Children and Families Bill is expected to be introduced early in 2013. This Bill follows the biggest SEN reforms for 30 years as set out in the DfE SEN Green Paper, *‘Support and Aspirations; a New Approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability’*

These are significant requirements and a change management programme and project management approach is proposed in this report to take forward a strategic partnership response that will include Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP), Personal Budgets, Joint and integrated commissioning, Market facilitation and parental participation.

## 6. Recommendations

**That Improving Lives Select Commission:**

- 6.1 Notes the change management programme and project management approach that is being established to enable Rotherham to respond to the reforms outlined in the Children and Families Bill**
- 6.2 Receive further papers that report on the progress and outcomes of the change management project**

## 7. Proposals and Details

### 7.1 Green Paper for Disabled Children

As announced in the Queens speech in May 2012 there is to be a Children and Families Bill which is expected to be introduced early in 2013. This Bill follows the biggest SEN reforms for 30 years as set out in the DfE SEN Green Paper, *‘Support and Aspirations; a New Approach to Special Educational Needs and*

*Disability* published for consultation in March 2011. The interim evaluation will be published in autumn 2012 and final evaluation in 2013. The government is piloting the reforms in 20 pathfinders, covering 31 local authorities; the work of the pathfinders will continue to inform the changes made to legislation through the Bill.

This report sets out our proposed approach to responding to these significant reforms as detailed below.

The DfE website states;

“Every child deserves a fair start in life, with the best opportunity to succeed. Currently, life changes for the approximately two million children and young people in England who are identified as having a special educational need (SEN), or who are disabled, are disproportionately poor.

‘Support and Aspirations: a New Approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability’ makes wide-ranging proposals to the frustrations of children and young people, their families and the professionals who work with them.

The vision for reform set out in this green paper includes wide ranging proposals to improve outcomes for children and young people who are disabled or have SEN, minimise the adversarial nature of the system for families and maximise value for money. The Green Paper states:

“By 2014, our intention is that all families with the proposed ‘Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)’ will be entitled to a personal budget. Subjecting to piloting, this would include funding for education and health support as well as social care.”

The Green paper for Disabled Children will give us the opportunity to work with children, young people, their families and adults with disabilities. Within the Green Paper there are significant proposals for change to:

- better support life outcomes
- give parents confidence by giving them more control
- transfer power to professionals on the front line and to local Communities

The 5 main areas of proposed changes are under the following headings:

- Early Identification and Support
- Giving Parents Control
- Learning and Achieving
- Preparing for Adulthood

- Services working together for families

The main points in relation to strategic commissioning from the Green Paper include:

- Supporting 0-25yr olds with disability or special educational needs
- Personal budgets option to families by 2014
- Early (and earlier) intervention and prevention
- Joint working – health, social care, education
- Partnerships – in and across agencies, communities and the Voluntary and Community Sector
- Parental participation – individual and strategic level through consultation
- Structural and cultural change necessary
- Focus on outcomes

## **7.2 Pathfinders and Pilots**

There are a number of pathfinder pilots announced by the Minister for Children and Families services to take forward the proposed changes and test the core elements of reform, including:

- A single education, health and care plan from birth to 25 years old, focusing on whether outcomes for disabled children and their parents have been improved.
- Personal budgets for parents of disabled children and those with SEN so they can choose which services best suit the needs of their children.
- Strong partnership between all local services and agencies working together to help disabled children and those with SEN.
- Improved commissioning, particularly through links to health reforms.
- The role of voluntary and community sector organisations and parents in a new system.
- The cost of reform.

Currently a number of local authorities are acting as pilots in two identified areas as follows:

- Developing a health, education, care plan from birth to 25 years
- Personal budgets

Learning from the pilot authorities has been published, 'The Final Evaluation Report – the IB process: Individual Budgets for families with disabled children. It is clear that the pilot Local authorities have faced a number of challenges particularly in delivery of Personal Budgets.

## **7.3 Proposal**

The Green Paper DfE SEN Green Paper, 'Support and Aspirations; a New Approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability' offers an early opportunity to develop a strategic, coordinated approach with our key partners that meets the requirements of the Green Paper and subsequent Children and Families Bill.

These are significant requirements and a change management programme and project management approach is proposed. The details of this are that a project group be set up as the overarching body to take forward this work. Issues that require a strategic approach include the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), Personal Budgets, Joint and integrated Commissioning, market facilitation and market management. The group will also need to consider the HR workforce implications for training and cultural shift in moving to increased choice and control through Personal Budgets and the opportunity for families to choose alternatives to in-house provision. These changes are a significant cultural challenge for our staff in shifting their thinking and practise around Personal Budgets and choice and control.

There will be a number of task and finish groups, for example, Finance and the Resource Allocation System (RAS), Personal Budgets, Consultation, Commissioning, HR and Education. These groups will all report into the overarching Project Group to ensure a coordinated coherent approach across all partners, agencies and functions. There has been a significant amount of work already undertaken in the SEN Assessment service on the new EHCP. In addition to this work the outcomes from the current scrutiny review of Autistic Spectrum Disorder will be integrated into the work programme.

Membership of the group will be drawn from Strategic Commissioning for CYPS, Disabled Children's service, Health – Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Education, finance, HR, Improving Lives Select Commission and the voluntary sector. There will be robust and comprehensive engagement of parents and carers in developing the way forward.

The governance for this work will be via the Children, Young People and Families Partnership to the Health and Well Being Board, Cabinet Member Children, Young People and Families and Cabinet as appropriate.

## **8. Finance**

The intention is that any service redesign to meet the requirements of the Green Paper and subsequent Children and Families Bill will be within existing resources.



There are no further financial implications arising from this report at this time

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

The key risks to the council are:

- That the requirements of the Green Paper and subsequent Children and Families Bill will not be delivered unless a robust change management programme and project management approach is adopted
- That unless the key issues of capacity, financial implications, workforce training and cultural shift, market stimulation and joint commissioning are included in a change management approach there is a risk that Rotherham's disabled children and families will not receive the highest quality of service along with improved outcomes
- That the introduction of Personal budgets for disabled children and their families may mean that service users choose not to use in-house provision and long term commissioned services resulting in reduced sustainability

## **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

This approach will enable an integrated response to the emerging agenda for Disabled Children and their families

## **12. Background Papers and Consultation**

Green Paper 'Support and Aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and Disability'

Aiming High for Disabled Children

Statutory Duty to produce a Short Breaks statement

TLAP (Think Local Act Personal) (2011) – Making it Real

DH (2010) Equality and Excellence – Liberating the NHS

HMG (2007) 'Putting People First':

DH (2008) Independent Living Strategy

DH (2008) Commissioning for Personalisation: A Framework for Local Authority Commissioners

In Control (2008) Smart Commissioning: exploring the impact of personalisation on commissioning

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<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS</b>
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Improving Lives Select Commission</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup> October 2012</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>OFSTED Inspection of local authority arrangements for the protection of children</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Resources Directorate and Children and Young People's Services</b>

**5. Summary**

Between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> July 2012 OFSTED carried out an unannounced inspection of the arrangements within Rotherham for the protection of children. This inspection was carried out under the new framework and the Authority was only the second in the country to have such inspection at that time. The report was published on the 10<sup>th</sup> August 2012 and overall the arrangements were found to be adequate.

**6. Recommendations**

- (i) **That Improving Lives Select Commission accept the report.**

## 7. Proposals and Details

OFSTED carried out an unannounced inspection of the arrangements for the protection of children in Rotherham from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> July 2012, the report was formally published on the 10<sup>th</sup> August. Rotherham was only the second Local Authority in the country to receive such an inspection under the new, much tougher framework.

During the 8 day inspection there were 5 inspectors on-site carrying out intensive work during their visit which included:

- Tracking of 73 case files
- 11 practice observations
- 20 interviews with staff - individually and in groups
- Inspection of supervision files
- Reading of a large range of documents and submissions

Within the first 24 hours the inspectors expected to receive the contents of "Annex A" which includes:

- details of children within the Child Protection system
- organisational structures and workforce profile of social workers
- evidence of Quality Assurance Activity
- LSCB meetings and work priorities
- Strategic Needs Assessments
- Details of multi-agency activity ( case conferences, core groups) during the fieldwork period

The new framework now covers 4 judgements, a rating is given to each judgement ( including the overall effectiveness judgement)

- Overall effectiveness - **Adequate**
- The effectiveness of the help and protection provided to children, young people, families and carers – **Adequate**
- The quality of practice – **Adequate**
- Leadership and governance – **Adequate.**

The inspectors recognised the series of improvements that have been made since 2009. In some areas the inspectors said that the services provided are good, while in other areas, changes that have been made were seen to be positive but it is still too early to judge their full impact - hence the overall grading. The key element of the judgements given was in relation to lack of consistency across the whole of the service.

Clearly there is more work to be done to continue to raise standards but what is clear from the report is the commitment of all staff to keeping children and young people safe and ensuring their well-being across all of the work.

The recommendations in the report broadly match the areas that have already been identified in the improvement work across all agencies. An action plan has been developed covering the 13 recommendations, some needing to be done immediately and others within either three or six months.

## 8. Finance

There were minimal financial implications from the inspection itself including officer time plus car parking costs and refreshments for the inspectors. However, it is critical to note that the potential broader impact of the welfare reform could have on our local communities and as a result of this child neglect cases may increase. This in itself would have a direct impact on the size of caseloads. We regularly review caseloads and are confident in our assessment of the need to realign resources to augment the social worker cohort.

## 9. Risks and Uncertainties

The report has been shared with partners, a learning event was held on the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2012 where partners will challenge each other, case studies will be developed and the priorities for improvement will be confirmed. This will also begin the joint planning with partners for the emerging framework for the new joint inspection regime from 2013.

The new framework from 2013 will be even more rigorous and will hold to account partner agencies in relation to their contribution to the protection of children.

## 10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The new OFSTED framework for the inspection of local authority arrangements for the protection of children replaces the both the three yearly Safeguarding and Looked After Children inspection and the yearly Unannounced inspection of Contact, Referral and Assessment. This new framework will only be in place for one year as this will also be replaced by a new multi-agency framework, similar to the previous Joint Area Review (JAR). Judgements from other Local Authorities are being monitored as part of a benchmarking exercise to establish how results compare and to learn from others experiences, particular those who are rated "good".

An action plan has been developed and will be monitored by the Improvement Panel which has recently been strengthened to ensure that senior staff from partner agencies are accountable for their contribution to the improvements required.

## 11. Background Papers and Consultation

- OFSTED report "Inspection of local authority arrangements for the protection of children – Metropolitan Borough of Rotherham" – published 10<sup>th</sup> August 2012

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**ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES**  
**Improvement Panel - Action Delivery Plan – October 2012**

Ref No	Recommendation	Action Required	Planned Completion Date	Lead Officer / Agency	Progress and related outcomes
<b>Immediate</b>					
CP1	Undertake a multi-agency review of cases of serious neglect where children's social care services have been involved for a significant period of time.	Review to be based on 10% sample of Child Protection and CIN cases where 'neglect' is the main category of concern.	<b>complete</b>	LSCB P&QA Sub Group	Sample agreed, full briefing has been issued by Director of Safeguarding, Children and Families. re this action.
		Leading to 65 cases to be reviewed (32 CP 33 CIN). Identification of these cases will prioritise the length of plan and focus on long standing cases.	<b>complete</b>	LSCB P&QA Sub Group	Case samples have been identified and social workers have been contacted to instruct them to commence the work  Director of Safeguarding, Children and Families has received list of cases.
		Initiation of review by Social Workers undertaking a graded care profile	Nov 12	LSCB P&QA Sub Group	Briefing events have been held on 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 9 <sup>th</sup> October, where the Graded Care Profile has been shared with staff and timescales set for completion. Further session booked for 23 <sup>rd</sup> October. Director of Safeguarding, Children and Families to review cases and to identify the ones to be referred for full MA audit.
		MA review panel to be convened	Nov 12	LSCB P&QA sub group	Panel to be arranged
		Completion of detailed multi-agency review	Mar 13	LSCB P&QA Sub Group	P&Q subgroup scheduled for 1 <sup>st</sup> February 2013, with full RSCB sign off in March 2013
CP2	Ensure all strategy	ICS Form to be amended with		Warren Carratt	Briefing has been issued by Director

Ref No	Recommendation	Action Required	Planned Completion Date	Lead Officer / Agency	Progress and related outcomes
	discussions meet statutory requirements, are clearly and fully recorded and signed off by a manager.	awareness sessions delivered	<b>Complete</b>		Safeguarding, Children & Families re: this action. Forms have been amended and uploaded to Documents Library. Ongoing compliance to be monitored as part of QA framework
		Incorporation of strategy discussion process with Q.A. Framework	<b>Complete</b>	Warren Carratt	Included in QA framework and addressed with staff in Team Manager event on 9 <sup>th</sup> October 2012.
CP3	Ensure the outcomes and rationale for all Section 47 enquiries are clearly recorded and signed off by a manager.	Compliance issue. To be discussed at Ofsted feedback sessions.	<b>Complete</b>	Warren Carratt	Briefing has been issued by Director Safeguarding, Children & Families re: this action.  Feedback has been provided to social workers via OfSTED feedback event on 20 <sup>th</sup> September. Additional awareness raising took place at Team Manager event on 9 <sup>th</sup> October 2012  Compliance checks as part of QA framework
<b>Within 3 Months</b>					
CP4	Improve the consistency and quality of referrals from partner agencies to the contact and referral team.	Multi Agency Referral Form (MARF) to be refreshed to facilitate referrals to CART	Nov 12	Terry Irvine	MARF launched 12 months ago, further work due to take place around the thresholds and to publish these and to create a link between the form and the threshold descriptors. Policy Sub committee for approval 19 <sup>th</sup> October 2012
		Revised Multi Agency Threshold Descriptors to inform MARF.	Nov 12	Terry Irvine	Early Help Partnership seminar taking place on 29 <sup>th</sup> November 2012. Thresholds to be re-published
		Workforce development programme to be delivered to support roll out of refreshed Early Help Strategy.	Nov 12	Warren Carratt	Event planned for 29 <sup>th</sup> November 2012 to launch workforce development programme and communicate pathways to frontline practitioners.

Ref No	Recommendation	Action Required	Planned Completion Date	Lead Officer / Agency	Progress and related outcomes
CP5	Ensure that domestic violence notifications from the police are timely and include a child focused risk assessment.	Ongoing process issue with South Yorkshire Police and social care. Resolution to be progressed with new District Commander.	Nov 12	Howard Woolfenden / Jason Harwin  <i>Borough wide Service Manager</i>	New arrangements put in place to ensure all non urgent notifications are received within 2 working days of police report. New screening tools and training (Barnado's) being developed and negotiations for CART and PPU to co-locate on a rota basis.
CP6	Improve the quality and consistency of child protection and children in need plans, ensuring they are appropriately focused on key risks and the actions required to reduce risks and set clear, specific and measurable outcomes.	Implementation of conference chairs "preparation for conference checklist" and the escalation procedure	<b>complete</b>	Linda Alcock	Procedure and checklist issued 15 <sup>th</sup> October for immediate effect.
		Review, improve and simplify the CP and CIN plan document.	Nov 12	Warren Carratt	CIN and CP plan documents revised and subject to consultation. Final amendments to be made by QA Manager before revised forms are launched.
		New Statutory Visit will be implemented to ensure consistency and relationship to plan.	<b>complete</b>	Warren Carratt	New stat visit form launched and shared with Team Managers at TM action learning sets on 27 <sup>th</sup> September 2012.
		Targeted learning sets and workshops to take place with teams and Team Managers	<b>complete</b>	Warren Carratt	Learning sets scheduled monthly across all teams (2 per area), first session delivered 2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2012. TM ALS taking place monthly
CP7	Ensure that core groups, children in need meetings and supervision sessions focus on the progress made to reduce the risks identified in plans.	Develop and implement the template for Core Groups and upload to Documents Library and linked to policies and procedures.	Nov 12	Diane Hyner	Documents revised and subject to consultation. Final amendments to be made by QA Manager before revised forms are launched.
		New supervision policy to be	Sept 12	Warren Carratt	Supervision policy part of Tri-X policy library

Ref No	Recommendation	Action Required	Planned Completion Date	Lead Officer / Agency	Progress and related outcomes
		launched in September with Team Managers			(due to go live end of October), though already launched and shared with Team Managers at TM action learning sets on 27 <sup>th</sup> September 2012.
		Regular sample audit to be undertaken to review success of implementation to be tested	<b>complete</b>	Kevin Stevens	Included in QA framework
CP8	Take action to reduce the caseloads of the busiest teams and workers, ensure all newly qualified social workers have a caseload appropriate to their skills and experience and review the overall social work capacity needs of the service.	Caseload review to be undertaken to ensure all caseloads are weighted and reflect current caseloads	Oct 12	Phil Bradley & Ailsa Barr	The Review of caseloads is currently underway with proposals for moving resources around the service being developed.
		Identify any gaps in workforce capacity and need for additional resources and/or their realignment, based on skills and experience of practitioners	Nov 12	Phil Bradley & Ailsa Barr	Changes to take place following above review
CP9	Ensure that full consideration is always given as to how children and young people's views are represented in child protection conferences including, when appropriate, enabling access to advocacy support.	Implementation of conference chairs "preparation for conference checklist" to QA the process.	<b>Complete</b>	Linda Alcock <i>with P&amp;Q Team</i> <i>Lynne Grice</i> <i>Saddington</i>	Procedure and checklist issued 15 <sup>th</sup> October for immediate effect.
		Ensure any information that we hold is captured, recording and presented in conferences.	Nov 12	Linda Alcock	Views of children are being captured in case notes as part of the conference preparation and presented at the conferences.
		Develop better and more innovative	Nov 12	Linda Alcock	P&Q team are pulling together a tool kit for use



Ref No	Recommendation	Action Required	Planned Completion Date	Lead Officer / Agency	Progress and related outcomes
		ways of capturing and hearing the child's voice.			by practitioners to evidence the voice of the child.
		Investigate the options for advocacy services including commissioned and in-house with proposals developed	Nov 12	Linda Alcock <i>Lynne Grice</i> <i>Saddington</i>	Pilot to take place around the use of Rights to Rights Volunteers as part of an in-house advocacy service.
CP 10	Ensure all social workers and managers in duty and children in need teams understand the requirements for identifying, assessing and monitoring private fostering arrangements.				
		Private Fostering workshops planned for 18 <sup>th</sup> Sept to Duty & CART.	<b>complete</b>	Gillian Ackerley	Completed on Workshops held on 18 <sup>th</sup> October
		LAC, North and South Services to receive briefing sessions.	<b>complete</b>	Gillian Ackerley	CYPS Team Managers and Service Managers received presentation on the 9 <sup>th</sup> October. presentation and information distributed to all Team managers and Service Managers on 15 <sup>th</sup> October for use with their teams.
		Ensure all "private fostering" arrangements are appropriately assessed	Dec 12	Gillian Ackerley	The presentation is a start of this process in terms of educating to ensure that early identification takes place. Audit work will be undertaken in next month in preparation for report back to safeguarding board in December
<b>Within 6 Months</b>					
CP 11	Develop and implement systems to collate and evaluate feedback from children and families subject to child protection processes and use this feedback to inform service	Development of customer satisfaction processes in relation to the child protection process;-	Mar 13	Sue Wilson	Overall programme of improved customer satisfaction measures being developed to incorporate inspection recommendations
		Gather baseline customer experience information	<b>complete</b>	Sue Wilson	Baseline information complete

Ref No	Recommendation	Action Required	Planned Completion Date	Lead Officer / Agency	Progress and related outcomes
	development.	Analysis of baseline including gap analysis	Oct 12	Sue Wilson	Currently in progress on target for completion end of October 12
		M2/M3 Session re child's voice/customer experience	Nov 12	Sue Wilson	23 <sup>rd</sup> November M2/M3 session to be used for the presentation
		Prioritisation work for development of customer experience programme	Nov 12	Sue Wilson	To take place once gap analysis complete to include CPP as a key area of work
		Begin implementation of customer experience programme	Dec 12	Sue Wilson	Customer journey mapping commenced in Fostering as part of broader work programme. Feedback obtained from newly approved Foster Carers and results currently in analysis
CP 12	Strengthen the degree of independent challenge in the child protection system by, for example, creating direct links between the manager of the child protection chairs, the Strategic Director of Children's Services and the chair of Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board (RLSCB).	Strategic Director CYPS to convene meetings with Independent Chair of LSCB and Case Conference Chairs	<b>Complete</b>	Joyce Thacker <i>Alan Hazell</i> <i>Linda Alcock</i>	Regular meetings have now commenced between all parties required.
CP 13	Fully implement the proposed quality assurance framework. Include in this the regular collation of practice issues noted by child protection chairs and ensure that findings from all quality	Embed new framework to ensure compliance with timeframes.	Mar 13	Kevin Stevens <i>With Senior Management Team</i>	The framework has recently been revised taking into account feedback from managers. The January meeting of Safeguarding Children and Families M2 and M3 managers will be used to re-enforce the importance and expectations of the usage of the framework. The Framework is currently being used as a bespoke tool for deep dive audits eg Care Planning.

<b>Ref No</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Action Required</b>	<b>Planned Completion Date</b>	<b>Lead Officer / Agency</b>	<b>Progress and related outcomes</b>
	assurance work undertaken by partner agencies are reported to RLSCB.				

# Inspection of local authority arrangements for the protection of children

Metropolitan Borough of Rotherham

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**Inspection dates:** 2 July to 11 July 2012  
**Lead inspector:** Nicholas McMullen HMI

**Age group:** All  
**Published:** 10 August 2012

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# Inspection of local authority arrangements for the protection of children

## The inspection judgements and what they mean

1. All inspection judgements are made using the following four point scale.

Outstanding	a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements
Good	a service that exceeds minimum requirements
Adequate	a service that meets minimum requirements
Inadequate	a service that does not meet minimum requirements

## Overall effectiveness

2. The overall effectiveness of the arrangements to protect children in Rotherham is judged to be adequate.

## Areas for improvement

3. In order to improve the quality of help and protection given to children and young people in Rotherham, the local authority and its partners should take the following action.

### Immediately:

- undertake a multi-agency review of cases of serious neglect where children's social care services have been involved for a significant period of time
- ensure all strategy discussions meet statutory requirements, are clearly and fully recorded and signed off by a manager
- ensure the outcomes and rationale for all Section 47 enquiries are clearly recorded and signed off by a manager.

### Within three months:

- improve the consistency and quality of referrals from partner agencies to the contact and referral team
- ensure that domestic violence notifications from the police are timely and include a child focused risk assessment
- improve the quality and consistency of child protection and children in need plans, ensuring they are appropriately focused on key risks

and the actions required to reduce risks and set clear, specific and measurable outcomes

- ensure that core groups, children in need meetings and supervision sessions focus on the progress made to reduce the risks identified in plans
- take action to reduce the caseloads of the busiest teams and workers, ensure all newly qualified social workers have a caseload appropriate to their skills and experience and review the overall social work capacity needs of the service
- ensure that full consideration is always given as to how children and young people's views are represented in child protection conferences including, when appropriate, enabling access to advocacy support
- ensure all social workers and managers in duty and children in need teams understand the requirements for identifying, assessing and monitoring private fostering arrangements.

**Within six months:**

- develop and implement systems to collate and evaluate feedback from children and families subject to child protection processes and use this feedback to inform service development
- strengthen the degree of independent challenge in the child protection system by, for example, creating direct links between the manager of the child protection chairs, the Strategic Director of Children's Services and the chair of Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board (RLSCB)
- fully implement the proposed quality assurance framework. Include in this the regular collation of practice issues noted by child protection chairs and ensure that findings from all quality assurance work undertaken by partner agencies are reported to RLSCB.



## About this inspection

4. This inspection was unannounced.
5. This inspection considered key aspects of a child's journey through the child protection system, focusing on the experiences of the child or young person, and the effectiveness of the help and protection that they are offered. Inspectors have scrutinised 73 case files, observed practice and discussed the help and protection given to these children and young people with social workers, managers and other professionals including members of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Wherever possible, they have talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have analysed performance data, reports and management information that the local authority holds to inform its work with children and young people.
6. This inspection focused on the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements for identifying children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, harm from abuse or neglect, and for the provision of early help where it is needed. It also considered the effectiveness of the local authority and its partners in protecting these children if the risk remains or intensifies.
7. The inspection team consisted of four of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and an Additional Inspector.
8. This inspection was carried out under Section 136 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

### Service information

9. Rotherham has approximately 56,000 children and young people under the age of 18 years. This represents 22% of the total population. Overall deprivation is significant and increasing, with Rotherham ranked as the 53<sup>rd</sup> most deprived local authority area in the 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation, placing it amongst the top 20% most deprived areas. Rotherham's minority ethnic population is relatively small but growing in size and diversity. The Kashmiri and Pakistani communities are the largest minority ethnic groups in the borough, but other newer communities are growing, including a growing Slovak and Czech Roma community of around 3,700.
10. Referrals to children's social care services are now managed through the contact and referral team (CART), which was established in January 2012 and provides a Borough wide service. Its work is coordinated with the parent support service and common assessment framework (CAF) coordinators to support the swift diversion of appropriate cases into early intervention services. Initial and core assessments and Section 47 enquiries are carried out by four duty teams. Following assessment, cases

requiring child protection or children in need support are transferred to one of eight local children in need teams. Assessments for children in court proceedings are undertaken by a specialist family assessment team (FAT) and there is also a developing specialist multi-agency team to support children at risk of sexual exploitation. Referrals of disabled children are screened by the CART, with assessments and support provided by a specialist disabled children's service. A range of services provides early intervention, including 23 children's centres and multi-disciplinary teams structured around Rotherham's local learning communities. A family recovery project provides intensive support for children on the cusp of care.

## Overall effectiveness

### Adequate

11. The overall effectiveness of local authority arrangements to protect children in Rotherham is adequate. Significant improvements have been made since 2009, when services were failing to adequately protect children. These improvements have been driven by clear and resilient leadership and informed by a sound and realistic understanding of the needs of the local community. However, further work is required to consolidate this improvement, address current weaknesses and provide services of a consistently good quality.
12. A good range of family support and early intervention services is in place and these are promoting improved outcomes for children, supported in many cases by appropriate use of the CAF. The local authority has a clear early intervention strategy and operational plan although these are at a relatively early stage of implementation, and inconsistencies remain in the accessibility and quality of early support.
13. The creation of the CART and duty teams in January 2012 has improved the consistency and timeliness of responses to contacts and referrals. Contacts are swiftly and usually appropriately categorised as requiring a social care assessment or being suitable for early help support. However, more work is needed by partner agencies to improve the timeliness and quality of some referrals, including domestic violence notifications.
14. In all cases seen by inspectors, children at immediate risk were identified and received a robust response to ensure their safety. In a few cases where risk was less immediate, the response was less assured. The planning, recording and management oversight of Section 47 enquiries are also too variable.
15. Children with multi-agency child protection plans are visited and seen regularly. Examples were seen of intervention achieving improved outcomes for children through effective family support, sound social work practice and good collaborative partnership working. However, too many

child protection plans lacked a clear focus on risk and how this was to be reduced, and generally plans were not functioning as effective tools to assist the development and monitoring of work to protect children. Where difficulties were more entrenched, inspectors found evidence of inconsistency in decision making in determining when situations required escalating into legal proceedings. In some cases this was timely and appropriate; in other, seemingly similar, cases children were maintained in unsatisfactory circumstances for too long with little evidence or prospect of improvement.

16. Performance management has focused effectively on national performance indicators and compliance issues but there has been insufficient attention and action on assessing and improving the quality of practice, which is too variable. The local authority recognises this and has developed and piloted a new comprehensive quality assurance framework and is now planning its implementation with the aim of addressing this deficit.
17. RLSCB has recently completed and published a serious case review concerning the murder of a teenage girl. This clearly identified important lessons to be learned for example concerning the risk assessment of vulnerable young people and the quality assurance of safeguarding work. The local authority and its partners are developing a programme for disseminating this learning. However, it is too early to see impact in some key areas. RLSCB has not been sufficiently focused or challenging in some core areas of child protection activity such as the quality of child protection planning and ensuring the appropriate application of service and care thresholds. Senior managers are knowledgeable and clear about their responsibilities but there is only limited evidence of professional challenge holding senior managers to account for their management of child protection services.
18. Workforce planning has been effective in reducing vacancies, turnover and dependence on agency workers. Social workers report feeling well supported and show a strong commitment to the children on their caseloads and to working for Rotherham. However, despite some progress, caseloads in some teams, including those of newly qualified social workers (NQSWs), remain too high. As a result supervision, whilst happening, is not consistently effective in evaluating and challenging the progress of child protection and children in need plans and some workers, despite working long hours, do not have enough time to give appropriate attention to all their cases or to their own professional development.

## **The effectiveness of the help and protection provided to children, young people, families and carers**

### **Adequate**

19. The effectiveness of help and protection provided to children, young people, and their families and carers is adequate. The common assessment framework (CAF) is often used well; its use is increasing across agencies and more children and young people are getting the support they need at an early stage. There are many examples of children and their families benefiting from the practical and timely support available. Local community and school resources include individualised support for parenting, practical support in the home or access to courses such as hygiene or safety in the home. Outcomes for children receiving early support are generally good and some children and families are being effectively diverted from requiring more targeted provision.
20. Concerns about children and young people are identified appropriately by a wide range of professionals, agencies and the public. When children are receiving early help, agencies are alert to where action is needed to protect children and make timely referrals to children's social care services. When children are identified as being at immediate risk of harm, risks are investigated and assessed and appropriate and prompt steps are taken to ensure that children are protected. In a few cases where risk was less immediate inspectors noted delays in initiating appropriate enquiries.
21. In the majority of cases, risks to children subject to child protection plans are tackled successfully. Effective multi-agency support is put in place and key risks are reduced. There is clear evidence in these cases that children are safe and are making satisfactory and often good progress overall. The Family Recovery Project is a valuable resource in helping to tackle entrenched parenting problems, though it does not currently have sufficient capacity to support all families who require such intensive support. As a result some children are waiting too long to have their basic needs met. Steps have already been taken to increase this resource. In most cases seen when children are no longer at risk of significant harm but need continued support, this continues to be provided through children in need services or the CAF process.
22. Child protection plans are not consistently effective. In some cases this is because there is insufficient focus on the key risks. In other cases, particularly where neglect is the key concern, progress is limited, often despite considerable support, persistence and appropriate challenge by social workers and other staff. Decision making on these cases is inconsistent. Sometimes prompt and appropriate decisions are taken to instigate care proceedings when children can no longer remain safely at home and there are no other appropriate family carers available. In other cases timely decisions are not always made to escalate concerns, even when it is agreed that the threshold for legal proceedings is met and there is a considerable weight of evidence that the parents are unable to make or sustain improvements. As a result some children are left too long at continuing risk of harm with parents who cannot meet their needs.

23. In most cases timely pre-birth risk assessments are completed and appropriate steps are taken to support parents and monitor their baby's well-being. However, there are delays in completing pre-birth assessments in a small number of cases. Decisions are made appropriately to initiate care proceedings and remove babies at birth when that is the only safe course of action. Social workers make good efforts to place children and young people within their extended family or with family friends when they cannot be cared for safely by their parents. Arrangements to identify and monitor private fostering placements are not robust and as a result the local authority cannot assure itself that private foster carers are able to meet the needs of the children and young people in their care.
24. Parents who met with inspectors and whose children received early help were very positive about the difference this had made, particularly in helping them to parent more effectively. An evaluation of outcomes from the CAF and 'team around the child' work highlighted the positive impact on the ability of parents and carers to look after their children. Parents' evaluations of early support parent workshops record a wide range of positive comments about the impact of the workshops on improving family life and gaining confidence in managing challenging behaviour. Social workers engage well with parents. Most parents who met with inspectors understood what the risks and concerns were, though some had difficulty in understanding or accepting the changes that were needed. Most parents were happy with the support they were receiving and were positive about the progress their children had made. However, the extent to which children and young people feel they have been effectively helped is not clear as recording of children's views is inconsistent at all stages of help and intervention.
25. A wide range of early help is available and easily accessible in local communities to families. Effective work has been carried out to improve take up of early support services by newly arrived families and by the Roma community. Sensitivity to cultural and ethnic backgrounds of European migrants has had a positive impact on stabilising the community and helping parents to understand the procedures required to enrol their child at school. Assessments, support and intervention take appropriate account of children's ethnicity, culture, religion, language and disability. Interpreters are accessed and used appropriately.
26. Agencies, including voluntary and community groups based in local communities, work well together to identify children and families who may need additional help. They work closely together to offer support and tackle concerns with individual children and their families. Information on children who go missing and young people at risk of sexual exploitation is shared effectively at an early stage and work is well coordinated to support these children and young people.

27. Professionals' attendance and involvement in meetings are generally good. Multi-agency meetings are held regularly and are used effectively to share information. However, this work is not always well focused on assessing the progress and impact of child protection plans and children in need plans. In many cases the discussion focuses on the activity undertaken rather than on outcomes for the children. Some children on child protection plans have to wait too long for assessment and support with their therapeutic needs by the child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), but the local authority is seeking to address this with health services.
28. Decisions to make children and young people subject to child protection plans are usually appropriate, and child protection plans are ended when the threshold for child protection is no longer met. However, the thresholds between children in need and child protection are not consistently applied and understood. Some children are supported as children in need when the levels of concern indicate that thresholds for child protection may be met.

## **The quality of practice**

### **Adequate**

29. The quality of practice is adequate. In most cases considered by inspectors, children were being seen regularly and seen alone, with careful consideration of the children's presentation and the home environment. Children subject to child protection plans are seen in accordance with the requirements of the plan both at home and at school, with an appropriate balance between announced and unannounced visits. Practice is generally focused on understanding and improving the daily experiences of children and young people, although in a small number of cases this focus had been lost or is not sufficiently clear. Case records show that social workers are talking with and listening to children but the representation of their views in assessments (including those undertaken using the CAF and reports to child protection conferences) is too inconsistent and often indistinct. Very few children or young people attend their child protection conferences and whilst some very good examples were seen of work to present children's views to conferences, this was not consistent or routinely expected and so is dependent on the initiative of individual social workers. Children and young people involved in child protection processes do not have clear access to advocacy services.
30. The quality of referrals from some partner agencies to children's social care services is inconsistent. A clear, thorough and appropriate guidance document on service thresholds is in place, as is a multi-agency referral form, but neither are being used consistently by referrers. A number of referrals seen contained scant information and no evidence that the referrer had given appropriate consideration as to whether the service

threshold might be met. However, the CART is effective in screening these referrals and provides sound professional advice to assist referrers in making appropriate referrals. This service is valued by school staff, who report improvements in the communication with social workers and in feedback on the outcomes of referrals.

31. The response to contacts and referrals by the CART is well managed and timely. Close monitoring of activity by the CART manager ensures appropriate decisions are made on nearly all contacts within 24 hours. Diligent practice is evident within the CART whereby social workers focus not just on the presenting issue and the named children in the contact but, through robust checking, identify other children within the family whose welfare need to be considered. Good consideration is also given to past history, which promotes well informed decision making.
32. The volume of police notifications of domestic abuse is high. Cases assessed as high risk by the police are referred promptly but situations assessed as medium risk which can involve significant potential risk to children are not always being notified in a timely fashion. The children's service out of hours team provides a sound response to referrals. The team has access to children's social care records and liaises well with both duty and long term teams.
33. Strategy discussions are routinely held by social workers with the police over the telephone and other agencies are rarely involved in these discussions. The content of the discussions, actions agreed, individual responsibilities and timescales are not clearly recorded and it was often therefore not clear whether and how these discussions met statutory requirements. Section 47 enquiries are undertaken by suitably qualified social workers and in recent cases seen by inspectors enquiries appeared thorough with appropriate decision making. However, the recording of the outcomes of Section 47 enquiries is inconsistent and therefore findings in relation to significant harm are sometimes unclear or not clearly evidenced. Multi-agency strategy meetings for complex cases are chaired by a manager and are recorded appropriately.
34. The timeliness of assessments has improved significantly, with most now completed within expected timescales. The quality of assessments seen by inspectors is variable. Some include extensive information, are supported by a detailed chronology and pay good attention to past history and the individual needs of children. However, some assessments do not analyse the available information well enough to provide a clear risk assessment and so determine the focus of support and monitoring. Partner agencies are generally well engaged in assessments although information sharing and engagement from the probation service are not always evident. Assessments seen of Roma Slovak children gave good attention to the cultural context and needs of these children. In child protection cases considered by inspectors, most reports for review case conferences did

not clearly present progress made in relation to the child protection plan. The quality of most CAFs seen was good, albeit with the proviso that most did not reflect the child's views and wishes. These assessments informed purposeful and effective action planning.

35. The quality and format of child protection plans and children in need plans vary across the service, with few being of good quality. In some cases, the social worker has written their own version of the plan for parents to understand. Outcomes are often not clearly specified or measurable and some plans lack clarity about the key needs and risks to be addressed in work with the family. Contingency arrangements within plans are not included in many cases. Core groups are held regularly, are well attended and recorded and in most cases promote good information sharing, with attention given to the individual needs of each child. However, it was much less clear how core groups were monitoring and evaluating the overall progress of the child protection plans, and the current content of most plans did not assist in this. Where review child protection conferences have decided that the child protection threshold is no longer met, children in need plans are appropriately used to support sustained progress and improved outcomes. Conference chairs clearly set out the detailed actions for the children in need plan, for this to be further developed at a child in need meeting. In most cases, the child in need meeting is held within an appropriate timescale. However, in a number of children in need cases, including some which have been stepped down from child protection, there was no evidence of a children in need plan being in place.
36. Child protection conferences are chaired confidently and professionally with appropriate sensitivity to parental anxieties. This helps parents and relatives to actively contribute and share their views. In most cases there is good attendance and participation from all relevant agencies. Reports are consistently provided to parents prior to the meeting and agencies are challenged by the chair if this has not happened. Actions from previous conferences are followed up; incidents of concern and also positive progress receive appropriate focus.
37. In the majority of cases seen by inspectors there was evidence of regular supervision and management oversight. Social workers spoken to confirmed this and reported that they could access management support and advice. However, the quality of oversight and supervision was too variable between teams and managers. Supervision at the point of allocation in duty teams is regular, with clear evidence of discussions about cases, risk factors and required actions. Examples were also seen in the children in need teams of good quality, reflective and challenging supervision. However, most supervision records were primarily task focused, with limited evidence of supervision being used to evaluate progress in child protection and children in need plans or to ensure actions are being completed.



38. Decision making on cases is undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced social work staff. Decision making at child protection conferences is largely appropriate but conference chairs are not consistently providing clear and authoritative guidance to partner agencies when there is uncertainty about whether the threshold for a child protection plan is met. The local authority has established a multi-agency support panel to consider cases which require high intensity multi-agency resource packages and this is also used as the gateway for commencing legal proceedings. Whilst appropriate decisions are made in most cases considered by the panel, cases of long standing neglect are not consistently managed and in some cases decisions lead to significant further delays in both considering and in initiating care proceedings.
39. Case recording is clear and generally up to date. Some good examples were seen of chronologies being compiled and used to inform case planning and decision making, but up to date chronologies of a good standard were not present in the majority of case files. Child protection visits are well recorded and clearly evidence whether a child was seen and spoken to. This recording also shows that the visits are well focused on risk factors and concerns are appropriately raised with parents. In some of the more comprehensive recording, examples of reflection and an analysis of the situation are documented.

## **Leadership and governance**

### **Adequate**

40. Leadership and governance are adequate. The local authority has established and resourced a clear focus on the provision of child protection services and delivered some key priorities, such as improving the consistency and timeliness of responses to referrals and facilitating access to support services for children who do not meet thresholds for statutory services. In order to reduce pressure on child protection services, and improve the outcomes for children, an early help and support strategy, based on a detailed analysis of need, has been developed with partners. The operational framework to deliver this includes clear thresholds for accessing services but its implementation is at an early stage.
41. The level of partner agency support is variable. Despite extensive efforts by the local authority there are not, as yet, multi-agency arrangements to screen the incidents of domestic abuse. However, good collaborative working between the police and the local authority has resulted in a targeted and successful approach to tackling child sexual exploitation, which is being further strengthened by a commitment to creating a team of qualified social workers based within the police protection unit.
42. The relationship between the Children's Trust, the RLSCB and the new Health and Wellbeing Board has been unclear, leading to confusion and

lack of effectiveness. Clarification about the accountabilities of the RLSCB and the Children's Trust has now been agreed but it is too early to assess the impact of this and to determine whether the RLSCB chair is empowered to provide robust challenge. There are regular meetings between the independent RLSCB chair, the Strategic Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services, but the chair has no regular access to the Chief Executive or Leader of the Council.

43. The RLSCB is becoming more effective in carrying out its statutory duties. It is led by an independent chair and has appropriate membership, including lay members. The chair has been instrumental in establishing multi-agency sub groups that have delivered some constructive improvement work, for example to protect children at risk of sexual exploitation, and has overseen the recent completion of a serious case review, evaluated by Ofsted as outstanding. However, the work of the board has not been sufficiently well focused on core child protection and safeguarding activity, nor has it provided a strong enough challenge in some key areas. Much of its consideration of performance has been based on the national data set for stay safe outcomes, and it has lacked initiative in instigating its own areas of enquiry. Plans are now in place to improve this through commissioning multi-agency case audits, and the current RLSCB business plan shows a clearer sense of priorities.
44. The local authority has effective business planning processes in place. The Children and Young People's Service has a business plan that supports the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan and is in turn supported by individual service and team plans.
45. Performance monitoring systems are in place and are producing increasingly accurate, relevant and analysed data. An improvement panel has overseen the delivery of the key actions following the government improvement notice in 2009, and following the termination of this notice has continued to meet to address recommendations from subsequent inspections. The 2011 peer review of safeguarding also produced some helpful recommendations. In response, the local authority developed a detailed action plan and addressed some of the identified priorities, for example the development of a quality assurance framework and an early help strategy. However, other issues have not been sufficiently progressed such as avoiding drift, improving the quality of child protection planning and supervision, reducing caseloads, and improving screening of domestic abuse notifications.
46. Senior managers receive regular information on performance and use this to determine the agenda for the performance clinics that interrogate practice more closely. Front line managers have access to, and use, reports on a range of workload and performance issues. This has enabled them, together with the performance clinics, to improve some aspects of practice such as the timeliness of initial and core assessments, the number of children who are made the subject of a child protection plan for a second time, the number of children on a plan for more than two years

and the timeliness of conferences and reviews. The local authority recognises that its focus has been too much on monitoring performance indicators and compliance and it is now beginning to consider quality. A comprehensive file auditing framework, which assesses quality as well as process compliance, is about to be delivered.

47. At a senior management level the responsibility and accountability for child protection are insufficiently shared and there is a lack of effective professional challenge to senior management on operational and practice issues by the RLSCB and others, including child protection conference chairs. However, the Lead Member for children's services provides effective challenge within a supportive and collaborative political framework. It has been recognised that the base children's services budget was insufficient to meet the demands placed on it and, within a challenging resource climate, appropriate action has been taken to address this imbalance. As a result, children's social care services have received much needed additional investment, although it is not yet clear whether the current budget is sufficient to provide the necessary capacity to deliver the core requirements of the service.
48. Social workers, including NQSWs, have high morale and they report feeling well supported by their colleagues, managers and, in the case of NQSWs, consultant practitioners. Their access to supervision and training is good. They feel positive about the recent re-structuring of the contact and referral service and children in need teams, which they report has helped to improve services for children and families by reducing the number of changes of social workers and enabling better quality assessments. Schools describe good training and support from the CAF team to help them improve practice and increase the number of families supported by the CAF process and there is widespread praise for the safeguarding training provided through the RLSCB and individual agencies.
49. The RLSCB is considering how best to capture the views of children and young people about safeguarding but this is at a very early stage. However, the views of parents who met inspectors, and Ofsted inspections of Rotherham children's centres, consistently report high levels of satisfaction with local early help services. Support from health visitors, family support workers and parenting support advisers provide practical help that improves their confidence and parenting skills. Parents and carers feel that the quality of their family life has improved because of the care, guidance and support they have received from these family support services and which are based on strong parental engagement and responding positively to parental feedback. However, there are no processes in place for gathering and evaluating feedback from families who receive child protection services.
50. The findings from the very recently published serious case review have been effectively shared with team managers but not across the partnership or with social workers, although there are plans to do so. As a result, most practitioners are not yet fully aware of the learning from the

review and so have not been able to use it to influence their practice. There is evidence of some good learning from individual complaints, though there is less evidence of learning from complaints informing service wide improvements in practice.

51. Workforce planning, recruitment and development are good. Standards for recruitment are high and meet the needs of the authority. For example all NQSWs are required to have had previous experience in a statutory setting. The workforce broadly reflects the diversity of the communities it serves. Creative arrangements have been made to ensure that workers have access to specialist knowledge of the culture of the newly arrived eastern European families. The council has effectively reduced the number of vacant posts and the use of agency staff. The few currently vacant posts will be filled within the next three months by qualified social workers who were supported by the council in gaining their social work qualifications. This has reduced social work turnover and so is providing more stability for children and families. However, case loads in some teams and for some workers are too high and this impacts on their ability to progress lower priority work (which includes children with significant needs and vulnerabilities), work reflectively and attend to their own professional development.
52. Managers at all levels are visible and accessible. Staff report positively on their access to formal and informal supervision and training. Due to the level of demand, NQSWs undertake statutory work at an early stage but in recognition of this the council ensures frequent supervision by team managers and has employed consultant practitioners to work with NQSWs and support their case management and development. However, the volume of work currently being managed limits managers' capacity to provide sufficiently focused and reflective supervision on all cases.

## Record of main findings

<b>Local authority arrangements for the protection of children</b>	
Overall effectiveness	Adequate
The effectiveness of the help and protection provided to children, young people, families and carers	Adequate
The quality of practice	Adequate
Leadership and governance	Adequate

<b>ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS</b>
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Improving Lives Select Commission</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>24th October, 2012</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Work programme update</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Resources All wards</b>

**5. Summary**

The paper updates the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2012/13 and seeks volunteers to be part of two task and finish groups to shape input into future agendas.

**6. Recommendations****That Members:**

- a. **Agree to set up two task and finish groups to scope the Commission's work in the following areas:**
  - **anti-bullying work in schools**
  - **early help and prevention.**
- b. **Seek volunteers (up to a maximum of five) to be part of each group.**
- c. **Receive further updates at December's Commission meeting.**

**7. Proposals and details**

7.1 The Select Commission received a report to its September meeting which agreed a work programme for the 2012/13 Municipal Year. There are a number of areas identified as priorities by the Commission yet to be scheduled. These include:

- The issue of anti-bullying - this has been referred to the commission by the Youth Cabinet and has been prioritised in its Youth Manifesto.
- The Commission has also identified the importance of early help and prevention agenda.

- 7.2 Both items are wide-ranging and complex and there is considerable work underway in both fields. In order that members focus on areas where scrutiny's input can add the most value, it is suggested that two time limited task and finish groups are set up to look at each issue to identify key areas for inquiry for scrutiny to explore. Involving relevant officers and partners will ensure that the focus of the meeting accurately reflects members' concerns and interests and is timely. In addition, the task and finish groups may identify areas for future member involvement in either of these significant agendas. In respect of the anti-bullying work, this will be coordinated with Youth Cabinet members and their support officers.
- 7.3 Early help and prevention has been provisionally scheduled for December's meeting. There is scope to schedule further work on anti-bullying at the same meeting or in early 2013.
- 7.4 Other priorities identified by the Commission, including tackling domestic abuse and countering child exploitation will be scheduled in 2013. If the approach outlined above is positive, it is suggested that a similar methodology is applied to these issues.

## **8. Finance**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. However, recommendations arising from the Commission may have financial implications should they be implemented.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

The work programme must be realistic in terms of the Commission's capacity to properly examine issues that come before it. If additional items are added, the panel may have to re-prioritise which issues it wishes to scrutinise.

## **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

The proposed work programme takes on board key policy agendas the Council is currently considering and performance information as and where necessary. The areas identified for future scrutiny should complement the priorities identified in the Corporate Plan.

It is also important to note the changes that have occurred during the last year and the reduction in staffing resources. Any work programme needs to take account of this and look realistically at what can be achieved and where it is best to focus resources and efforts.

## **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

Improving Lives Select Commission; 6th June, 2012: Minute 6  
Improving Lives Select Commission; 19 September, 2012: Minute 24

## **12. Contact**

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