

<h1>BRIEFING</h1>	TO:	Improving Lives
	DATE:	29.12.19
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	TITLE:	CYPS Directorate Workforce Strategy

1. Background

The Purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the current directorate workforce strategy for Children and Young people's services, with a focus on the Rotherham Family Approach and Rotherham Learning Academy.

Since 2015 there has been a specific focus on developing a workforce across CYPS that would support Rotherham on a journey to achieving outstanding outcomes for the children and families of Rotherham. Key to this offer was ensuring Rotherham worked to embed a learning culture across the organisation and is committed to evidence-based approaches when working with children, young people and families, as well as working together as professionals. The strategy has supported the improvements noted by Ofsted in the last inspection published in 2018 and the more recent focused visit around Children in Care.

The Rotherham Family Approach

A key part of the CYPS workforce strategy has been around the development of the Rotherham Family Approach (RFA). As part of the journey towards 'Outstanding', Rotherham selected three methodologies to support a consistent operating model and the methodologies complement one another to help practitioners deliver the best possible interventions to support children and families to achieve. Through each of the methodologies share a golden thread of exploring strengths, not just risk or deficits. The Rotherham Family approach also embodies our obsession with keeping the following question at the heart of all that we do: "**Would this be good enough for my child and family?**" This simple, but powerful question is held at the centre of practice across Rotherham and is visible from front line practitioners through to the senior leadership of the organisation.

The RFA approach incorporates three methodologies; Signs of Safety; Restorative Practice and Social Pedagogy and over the past three years the leadership team and Learning and development Team have worked to ensure the approaches and the key ethos is embedded in all work and decision making with children and their families.

Signs of Safety has become an integral part of our assessment framework and decision making around children in need, child protection processes and children looked after. Ensuring that all children have a danger statement and safety goal.

Social Pedagogy training has been focused around practitioners working with children in care and leaving care; the approach advocates thinking beyond processes (the head),

which professionals often feel comfortable with; to being led by the views of the child and or family (heart). This recognises that change is much more achievable, powerful and longer lasting if we take on board the perspective of others.

Restorative Practice focuses on high support high challenge; an approach Rotherham has ensured is in place when practitioners from across CYPS work with children and their families, to support effective planning together. The approach has also been embedded in how practitioners work with each other and the wider partnership.

The Rotherham Learning Academy

The Rotherham Learning Academy's overarching aim is to embed a learning culture across the organisation that is committed to evidence-based approaches when working with children, young people and families, as well as working together as professionals. The RFA represents a reorganised approach to prevention, intervention, protection and care. Workforce wide training, learning and development across CYPS, including Social Care, Early Help, Education, Commissioning and Performance has been recognised as key in delivering a skilled, committed and passionate workforce able to support excellent outcomes for the children and families of Rotherham. Launched in 2017 the Academy sought to coordinate exiting pathways and to embed the Rotherham Family approach in all we do. The aims are:

- to offer a clear development pathway across the Children Young People Services for the entire workforce.
- to provide support, challenge, clarity and continuity, as well as opportunity for progression and development
- to support a virtual learning environment
- the offer of up to 15 working days of training , learning and development activities.

2. Key Issues

2.1 What's Working Well?

- The RFA has been embedded over the past 18 months with a particular focus on using the Signs of safety methodology as a framework for how CYPS communicate with, assess and plan with families.
- Over the past 18 months we have linked with partner through the Rotherham Children's Safeguarding Partnership and wider RMBC associated directorates, to ensure that partners and colleagues understand the RFA approach and feel empowered to contribute to the multiagency partnership work which seeks to effectively support child in need, looked after and protect those where there remain Child Protection concerns.
- The embedding of the RFA particularly through the social work field teams continues to strengthen the quality of safety planning and working with families to find solutions. This is reflected in the improved outcomes from audit in November 2019; 4% completed were scored as outstanding, 60% good and 36% requires improvement.
- This improvement in quality also needs to be considered alongside a steady gradual reduction in the number of children in care and reducing number of children subject to Child Protection planning.
- Together with the outcomes and reduction in numbers there is building evidence to suggest we have a skilled workforce, supported by a whole systems approach to effectively manage risk, through a strengths based approach.
- Feedback from practitioners is that they have welcomed the investment of 15

days training, learning and development. This has supported improved worker morale, better staff retention and supported a workforce culture based on practice and learning. Social workers are confident in their assessments and able to provide a clearer identification of strengths and risks, with a focus on the child's day to day lived experience.

- This has been one of the factors supporting better staff retention and a reduction in sickness. The use of agency decreased from 14.5% in July 2018 and reduced around 2.8% in June 2019 and figures since have remained settled. The level of sickness across the service stood at 10.71 full time equivalent days lost in September 2018 and reduced to fte 8.21 days lost in September 2019).
- The confidence in Rotherham practitioners skill set and experience is reflected in the positive level of appointments progressed internally, at Team manager, Service Manager and Head of Service level over the past 18 months. Succession planning continues as the Quality Learning and Development offer supports staff to access corporate and external leadership opportunities via the Association of Directors for Children's services (ADCS) and the local South Yorkshire Teaching Partnership (SYTP).
- The Rotherham Learning Academy relaunched in December 2019, to support a refreshed focus on continuous professional development across CYPS.
- RMBC continue to successfully recruit and retain Newly Qualified Social workers, with 15 joining us in the past 18 months and a further 5 position being recruited too currently.
- RMBC is part of a national Department of Education pilot for the National Assessment and Accreditation System (NAAS) for Children and Family Social Workers. RMBC agreed to undertake the pilot phase to ensure that if accreditation is made mandatory as per the Social Work Act 2017, there are the systems in place to support roll out across the Social Work workforce.

What are we Worried About?

- We need to maintain a continued focus on the RFA; research around implementing practice models, highlight that it takes around 5 years to fully to maximise the potential outcomes of implementation and support change through the whole system. This means we need to continue to support refreshed training to practitioners, and ensure that our quality assurance maintains a focus on the RFA.
- While work is ongoing to ensure the electronic systems reflect the RFA this is not fully embedded and a project plan has been developed to aid this.
- Signs of safety for children in care needs to be an area of focus moving forward; ensuring emerging practitioner confidence is built upon to make sure that Signs of safety /signs of Success for children in care is more apparent in their journey through care.
- The Rotherham Learning Academy needs to further develop the virtual CPD offer, with a focus on the website being the gateway to learning opportunities across the directorate.

3. Key Actions and Timelines

Next Steps (What needs to happen)

- Maintain a positive focus on embedding the RFA – This role is undertaken by the Implementing Evidenced Based Approaches and Achieving Excellence sub groups of the CYPS Strategic Workforce Board – ongoing.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project plan for Liquid Logic and Signs of safety Framework to be implemented – by April 2020 • Embed Signs of Safety and Success across children in care – by April 2020 • Development of the Rotherham Learning Academy website – we have appointed a coordinator for 12 months and part of their role will be to support this development, with a relaunch by April 2020.
4. Recommendations	
	It is recommended that Elected Members note the current position and progress made in relation to the RFA and CYPS workforce strategy.

Appendix list

Appendix 1: Rotherham Family Approach narrative

Appendix 2: Rotherham Learning Academy slides