

**CHILDREN'S BOARD
16TH SEPTEMBER, 2009**

Present:- Councillor S. Wright (in the Chair); Ann Lawrence, Joyce Thacker, Richard Tweed, Sarah Whittle and Janet Wheatley.

Martin Kimber and Alan Hazell attended as Observers.

An apology for absence was submitted from Andy Buck.

19. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE CHILDREN'S BOARD HELD ON 14TH JULY, 2009

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Children's Board, held on 14th July, 2009, were approved as a correct record.

20. MATTERS ARISING

An update was given on various matters arising.

21. CURRENT ISSUES/CONCERNS

An update was provided on Swine Flu and various activities.

22. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE INDICATOR REPORT - 2009/10 QUARTER 1

Consideration was given to a report and accompanying appendices by Deborah Johnson which outlined performance at the end of the first quarter 2009/10 (June 2009). The report provided analysis against targets, direction of travel against previous performance and, where possible, comparisons with statistical neighbour and national data.

The format of the report has changed to provide more analysis and assessment of comparison and direction of travel, which will be valuable to managers, Directors and Members under the Comprehensive Area Assessment regime.

As presented at outturn 2008/09, the format performance reports have been developed to reflect these new CAA arrangements and it is proposed that future quarterly reports will continue to develop alongside the publication and contents of the Ofsted quarterly Performance Profile.

Attention was drawn to 'Appendix A - Performance Assessment by Every Child Matters Outcome' which provides details of performance by each Every Child Matters theme including:-

- Performance against targets (Comparing outturn performance against set targets)
- Direction of travel analysis (Comparing 2008/09 performance to 2007/08)
- Year to Date Performance (Judged by corporate monitoring system Performance Plus)

- Areas of Success
- Areas of Under-performance
- Recommendations for performance clinics

Full details of performance and commentary at indicator level is provided in the table within Appendix B which is referenced throughout the Performance Assessment (Appendix A).

A category of risk is applied to each quarterly reported Performance Indicator using the PI managers' projection of year-end performance and takes into account any known internal or external influences with comparison against targets.

Agreed:- (1) That the Performance Report and accompanying Assessment and table (Appendix A & B) be received and performance noted.

(2) That the recommendations regarding performance clinics (within Appendix A) be approved.

23. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES REVIEW IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

Consideration was given to a report presented by Joyce Thacker on the Children and Young People's Services Review Improvement Action Plan.

Following the outcomes of the Children First review of CYPS an action plan was developed to implement improvements against the recommendations in the report. The action plan and covering report was submitted to Cabinet on 17th July 2009.

Whilst the original action plan addressed many of the recommendations, it is being regularly updated to reflect progress against the target dates and milestones. The Improvement Action Plan reflects the position as at 18th August 2009.

In 2008, the Audit Commission conducted a review of Rotherham CYPS Integration, using key lines of enquiry they had formulated for a Nationwide study earlier in 2008. The recommendations and actions arising from this have been incorporated into the Improvement Action Plan, as there was a significant degree of overlap.

Furthermore, following the unannounced Inspection of Contact, Referral and Assessment in CYPS, that took place on 4th and 5th August 2009, a number of recommendations were made. Given the relationship between these and the recommendations referred to in the aforementioned reports, these have also been incorporated.

It is possible to track the origins and progress through a prefix code, which is detailed in the Improvement Action Plan.

There are a number of risks associated with the Improvement Action Plan. Where these are significant, they will be incorporated into the CYPS risk register. Mitigating actions include developing and monitoring a Programme Plan which includes a series of Projects associated with the change

management process. The actions identified in the improvement plan will be incorporated into the relevant project.

An update was also given on the following:-

- The unannounced Ofsted Inspection (Contact, Referral and Assessment Inspection (CAA) (4th and 5th August, 2009)
- The establishment of a Corporate Improvement Panel to provide a Council-wide input into CYPS matters
- Appointments to CYPS Senior Management posts
- An Interim Safeguarding Director, a Safeguarding Manager and a Chairman of the Safeguarding Children's Board

A range of questions were asked on the Plan and its implementation and evaluation, including the number and grades of Social Worker posts, that were answered by Joyce.

Agreed:- (1) That the report be received.

(2) That the progress being made in the Improvement Action Plan be noted.

(3) That regular updates be submitted to the Board.

24. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT 2008 IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Consideration was given to the most recent update report presented by Joyce Thacker concerning the Annual Performance Assessment (APA) 2008 Improvement Plan.

The action plan is monitored on a regular basis and the latest update is contained in the appendix to the report.

In January 2009 the results of the 2008 Annual Performance Assessment were formally reported to Members. This is the latest update of the improvement plan.

The risks associated with delivery are managed through the Council's risk management system. Specifically they are increased pressures due to rising numbers of looked after children, and continued emphasis on local government to deliver more with diminishing resources.

Agreed:- (1) That the action plan, as submitted, be noted.

(2) That a progress update against the areas for improvement be made in three months in order to track indicative outcomes from inspection activity.

(3) That the APA 2008 Improvement Plan be merged with the overall CYPS Review Improvement Action Plan.

25. ATTENDANCE AT SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD YEAR END REPORT

Consideration was given to a report presented by Joyce Thacker which outlined attendance issues at the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Board.

Rotherham Safeguarding Children Board (RSCB) was established by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council in accordance with the provisions of The Children Act, 2004. RSCB was set up to work closely with statutory and voluntary agencies to:-

- (a) Co-ordinate the work undertaken individually or by agencies on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the borough of Rotherham; and;
- (b) Ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each person or body for that purpose.

These objectives can only be met if agencies in Rotherham both attend and actively contribute to RSCB business. Regular attendance, by members of sufficient seniority, at Board meetings is therefore essential to good governance.

The Interim Safeguarding Children Board Manager has provided attendance statistics for the year 2008 to 2009. However, attendance statistics are not available for all the Safeguarding Children Board Sub-Groups. This issue needs to be addressed. Rotherham continues to develop a proactive and responsive Safeguarding Children Board; this requires a review of the Safeguarding Board Constitution including a review of all Sub-Groups. The appointment of a new Safeguarding Children Board Chair will provide an opportunity to consider the current position, taking stock of where we are and where we need to be in light of Laming Recommendations to LSCB's.

Lord Laming set out 58 recommendations for reform all of which the Government has accepted (2009). These include:-

- Strengthening independence and quality of serious case reviews - The proposed national Safeguarding Unit will monitor implementation to ensure that lessons are learned and that public executive summaries are full and comprehensive. This has a cost and capacity issue for LSCB.
- Legislation to ensure that every LA has a statutory Children Trust Board to improve the outcomes for children and young people.
- Strengthening Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) role to make it the local watchdog for protection of children and hold Children Trust and local agencies to account. This requires a review of the RSCB Constitution and agreement from member agencies as to the way forward for safeguarding children and young people in Rotherham.
- Revised statutory guidance will set out:-
 - A presumption that all LSCBs will have an Independent Chair.
 - Directors of Children Services and Lead Member to be members of the Children Trust Board and the LSCB.
 - The Chief Executive and Council Leader will be required to confirm annually that local arrangements comply with the law.

- 2 members of the general public to be appointed to every LSCB in the country.

These recommendations have a cost and capacity issue for LSCB.

Members are asked to consider the capacity and cost implications and agree the proposed way forward and review progress regularly.

Safeguarding Children Boards need to engage with agencies to develop their expertise and increase their understanding of Government expectation of them with regard to safeguarding and promoting the health and welfare of children. Capacity in a small team is an issue, in particular, administrative time to ensure that agendas, minutes and attendance are recorded effectively and efficiently. Limited administrative services can act as a barrier to effective working relationships and ultimately how the Board is functioning.

Agreed:- (1) That the report be endorsed.

(2) That the Children's Board continue to support RSCB in ensuring that agency participation is seen as a priority.

(3) That the recommendations from Laming 2009, with reference to Safeguarding Children Boards, be implemented.

26. GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO LORD LAMING REPORT

Consideration was given to a report presented by Joyce Thacker regarding the Government's Response to Lord Laming report.

On 12th March, 2009, Lord Laming's report, 'The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report', was published. The Government published an immediate response in which it accepted all of Lord Laming's recommendations.

Rotherham Safeguarding Children Board and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's Children and Young People's Services has completed an initial assessment of the borough's position with regard to the recommendations and a report outlining the findings was presented to Rotherham Borough Council members on 15th July 2009. Lead members requested regular updates to track progress across the borough.

The attached Action Plan has been given a 'RAG Status' (Red, Amber, Green) based on a further assessment of Rotherham's ongoing position.

The Safeguarding Children Board needs to assess each agency's current provision and quality of services against the Action Plan. The risks associated with the action plan are significant as failure to address the issues identified as requiring action are likely to render agency practice unsafe.

The Safeguarding Children Board Manager will co-ordinate and review progress against each of the actions identified within the Action Plan and report this to LSCB.

Agreed:- (1) That the plan be endorsed.

(2) That the Safeguarding Board Partners undertake a self assessment of their agency's compliance with Laming's recommendations.

(3) That the Children's Board receives progress updates from across agencies in the borough.

27. CARE MATTERS

Consideration was given to a report submitted by Sue May regarding Care Matters.

A briefing on the Care Matters agenda was presented to Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's services in June 2008 and subsequent reports to Cabinet Member and the Children's Board have provided updates on developments within the DCSF agenda, the results of an initial gap analysis of Rotherham provision in respect of the Care Matters agenda and progress made to improve provision for the children of Rotherham.

The Care Matters agenda contains a range of required actions for Local Authorities, together with timescales for implementation.

The report provides a progress report following the full review of the Care Matters agenda and gap analysis of service provision within Rotherham. This agenda has implications for Directorates across Children and Young People's Services. On the whole, service provision is good and many aspects of the proposed legislation are incorporated within existing practice. Where gaps have been identified, action plans have been developed to ensure compliance.

The new integrated inspections of Looked after Children's services and National Occupational standards for Foster Carers and Residential staff will require close scrutiny as these will set the benchmark for judgements on service provision in Rotherham.

Some funding is available from the Government to implement this agenda, however, early indications are that this will not be sufficient.

Agreed:- That the contents of the report be noted, and the proposals contained within the report be endorsed.

28. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a joint report by Warren Carratt and Julie Westwood on the Children and Young People's Services Workforce Development Strategy.

In line with DCSF requirements and guidance from the Children's Workforce Development Council, this Workforce Development Strategy represented the strategic aims of the One Children's Workforce in Rotherham in regards to workforce development over the next three years, 2009 – 2012. The Strategy was attached at Appendix A.

This Organisational Development and Workforce Planning Strategy, together with its supporting action plan, form part of the delivery vehicle which Rotherham is using to realise their vision and improve outcomes for children and young people in Rotherham.

The key local driver is the Children and Young People's Plan and this is supported by individual service plans. The overall direction is determined through Every Child Matters, Change for Children. In order to deliver against the vision, high impact priorities and core values, there is a need to transform the workforce to ensure the needs of today are met, and that the workforce is fit for the future.

The Children and Young People's Plan pulls together this shared vision, identity and purpose, through the use of common values and language.

There is a need to focus activity under three broad headings; organisational development, workforce planning and workforce development. This strategy deals with the first two issues, and the detailed action plan contains the workforce development activity to support the delivery of the strategy. This strategy will also reflect how Rotherham will meet the requirements of the CWDC's One Children's Workforce Framework, as well as integrating the wider Corporate Strategies of RMBC and partners.

The risks associated with the workforce strategy are those which threaten its implementation. Financial resources are increasingly grant related rather than mainstream funding, in order to fulfil specific purpose. As there is now a great deal of this funding in Area Based Grants there is a risk of this being utilised for other things. This puts the whole strategy at risk but also has policy and performance implications which are detailed in the report.

Agreed:- That the Workforce Development Strategy, as submitted, be approved.

29. COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES - QUARTERLY UPDATE

Further to previous reports on the CYPS Comprehensive Area Assessment, consideration was given to an update report by Julie Westwood which provided details of the findings from an internal risk assessment and an update on Ofsted activity.

The first Quarterly Performance Profile was produced by Ofsted at the end of May 2009 and was circulated for Members' attention. Whilst the profile is updated throughout the year, the second Quarterly Profile is not due until the end of September 2009. It is this 2nd Profile that feeds into the CAA Scores which are due in November 2009.

Following receipt of the first profile, CYPS undertook a risk assessment of the service using:

- Inspection results
- Performance against National Indicators
- Performance related to Serious Case Reviews

- Ofsted criteria related to judgement limiters

A summary of the risk assessment was set out in the report, and the conclusion was that the service judgement of "Adequate" was accurate based upon Ofsted criteria and there was no increased risk from the profile. However, this was notwithstanding the risk from an unannounced inspection, a short notice inspection or a potential for decline in service performance against National Indicators.

Risks are mitigated as far as possible, but they have increased significantly as part of this new regime for inspection. Short notice and unannounced inspections can cause major disruption.

The issues that are raised in the report pose significant budget pressures, details of which are set out in separate reports.

Agreed:- That the report be received.

30. SMOKING IN PREGNANCY STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION GROUP 17TH JULY, 2009/SMOKING IN PREGNANCY JOINT STAKEHOLDER ACTION PLAN (MINUTES/REPORT HEREWITH)

Consideration was given to the minutes of a meeting of the Smoking in Pregnancy Strategy and Implementation Group held on 17th July, 2009, chaired by John Radford, NHS, Rotherham.

The meeting had discussed:-

- Local Incentive Scheme to help pregnant women stop smoking
- Smoking in Pregnancy Health Equity Audit
- Evaluation of Pregnancy Incentive Scheme
- Smoking in Pregnancy Prevalence 2008/09
- Emerging Themes for National Tobacco Control Strategy
- Review of Joint Stakeholder Action Grid
- Feedback of role play sessions with midwives on use of DH toolkit and information re. the Pregnancy Campaign

The Action Plan explained the context and background to the initiative, current work being undertaken, future work required and a number of actions to address smoking in pregnancy.

Agreed:- (1) That the minutes of the meeting of the Smoking in Pregnancy Strategy and Implementation Group held on 17th July, 2009 be received and noted.

(2) That the contents of the Smoking in Pregnancy Joint Stakeholder Action Plan 2008-2010 be received and noted.

31. INTEGRATED SERVICES DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Joyce Thacker gave an update, for information. Further discussion to be held with the Chair of the Board.

32. MINUTES OF THE SAFEGUARDING BOARD HELD ON 31ST JULY, 2009

Key issues and concerns from the minutes of a meeting of the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Board held on 31st July, 2009 were discussed.

33. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Reference was made to the "Time Out" held in July and to the next steps.

Agreed:- That a report be submitted to the next Board meeting for consideration.

34. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That the next meeting be held on Wednesday, 9th December, 2009 at 5.00 p.m.