

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Panel
2.	Date:	Friday 19th November, 2010
3.	Title:	Children and Young People’s Services Notice to Improve - Progress and Exception Report
4.	Directorate:	Children and Young People’s Services

5. **Summary**

This report provides an overview of the progress made since the Notice to Improve was received in December 2009, the overarching action plan used to monitor improvements identifies a RAG rating and a direction of travel for the areas of improvement, some areas of good performance and key risks and issues to meeting the stretching targets set for the council and its strategic partners.

6. **Recommendations**

- (i) **That Children and Young People’s Services Scrutiny Panel notes the progress being made against the targets set in the Notice to Improve.**

7. Proposals and Details

This report provides an overview of the progress made and reported to the Improvement Panel Meeting on 4th November, 2010.

The action plan used to monitor improvements identifies a RAG rating and a direction of travel for the areas of improvement, and key risks and issues to meeting the stretching targets set for the council and its strategic partners.

There are 29 individual actions covering the key performance measures (including the 3 social care indicators) in addition to the operational targets around Staying Safe, Enjoying and Achieving, Leadership and Management and Capacity Building, Performance Management, and Recruitment and Retention.

Based on a RAG rating the following is the current position as at 4th November, 2010.

Red: 1 – 3%
Amber: 22 - 76%
Green: 6 – 21% (of which two are completed)

Social Care Indicators

The commentary on the social care indicators includes the performance of statistical neighbours and national as a comparator.

	Baseline Performance (Nov 09)	Current Performance	Targets	Statistical Neighbour (March 10)	National (March 10)
NI 68 (Referrals to initial)	59.8%	83.15% 09/10 outturn 73.4%	Oct 10 – 68% Mar 11- 70%	67.5%	64.3%
NI 59 (initial assessment)	73%	82% 09/10 outturn 75.2%	Oct 10 – 85% Mar 11- 87%	69.2%	67.1%
NI 60 (core assessment)	68%	86.42% 09/10 outturn 80%	Oct 10 – 84% Mar 11- 87%	77.6%	73.4%

NI 68 – referrals of children in need which go onto initial assessment

From 1st April 83.15% of referrals to social care go onto an initial assessment, this is from the baseline of 59.8% in November 2009.

Performance continues to exceed both the October 2010 and March 2011 targets of 68% and 70%. The March 2009/10 outturn was 73.4% which is higher than statistical neighbour and national comparators.

NI59 – initial assessments in 7 working days

From 1st April 2010 82% of initial assessments were carried out in time, this is from the baseline of 73% in November 2009.

The targets for October 2010 and March 2011 are 85% and 87%. The March 2009/10 outturn was 75.2% which is higher than statistical neighbours and national comparators.

This indicator is one of the key parts of the social care process and trends over the last 10 months are showing the following improvements:

January:	72%
February:	76%
March:	77%
April:	80.17%
May:	76.01%
June:	83.78%
July:	76.92%
August:	80.08%
September:	86.17%
October:	83.46%

Although there have been major improvements in performance around this indicator, and given that the milestone target for October 2010 of 85% is not being met, an internal challenge session took place at DLT on 12th October to explore further the performance of this National Indicator. Additional support was agreed to be provided for Rotherham Central (formerly Rotherham South) and a validation exercise to take place on assessments recorded on SWIFT.

NI60 – Core Assessments in 35 working days

From 1st April 2010 86.42% of core assessments were carried out in time, this is from the baseline of 68% in November 2009.

Performance continues to exceed the October 2010 and slightly below the March 2011 targets of 84% and 87% respectively.

The March 2009/10 outturn was 80% which is higher than statistical neighbour and national comparators,

High Risk areas (red risks)

The expenditure on agency staff continues to increase with currently £776,973 having been spent on social workers and team managers and £33,219 on admin staff since the 1st April 2010. This does not include expenditure on Practice Improvement Partners which were commissioned separately.

Areas of Concern

Currently all social worker posts are filled either covered by permanent establishment posts or agency staff (13.8 posts covered) out of the 12 posts vacant (14.99%) with further permanent staff being interviewed in the next few weeks to fill vacancies in the newly reconfigured service.

In relation to team manager posts, there are 4 vacancies (16.7%) with 3 covered by agency staff.

Areas of Improvement

Following the Ofsted Safeguarding and Looked After Children Inspection in July and the DfE meeting on the 3rd August. A clear message from the Ofsted inspectors was that we needed to focus now on driving up the quality of practice to underpin the work we had done in improving the quantitative figures.

In addition, the letter sent to Councillor Stone on the 27th August from Tim Loughton MP he stated that "In light of Ofsted's findings if in December we can evidence continued improvement and more secure supervision and quality assurance mechanisms, I will consider lifting the improvement notice early"

Quality Assurance therefore continues to be a high focus and improvements are being seen specifically around key documentation / information being in place on cases.

A single framework was launched in October which covers more of the quality of practice in the audits.

8. Finance

The DfE has agreed up to £150,000 financial support to assist with recovery, a further £125,000 has been secured from the RIEP to fund the work around implementation of Common Assessment Framework. The DfE funding is being used to supplement social work staffing resources and to employ independent staff to assist in the review and further improvement of and service quality activities.

A review has been conducted of Children and Young People's placements; both Rotherham based and in out of authority facilities. This has focussed on whether the placements can end, in line with the care plan review, whether the council is getting the best value for money and that the placements are of the required quality.

In order to strengthen financial management arrangements all managers with budget holder responsibility attended specific training. The moratorium which has been in place since December 2009 continues into 2010/11 to ensure that resources are directed to priority areas. In addition, a savings work programme is in place to identify efficiencies and enable re-investment into priority areas.

Further work is now taking place in relation to the overall budget position and the recent government announcements, with more anticipated in the Comprehensive Spending Review.

9. **Risks and Uncertainties**

The key performance risks (red) are identified in the report and there are service delivery risks associated with the Notice to Improve action plan. Where these are significant they are being fed into the CYPS risk register.

There is still a light risk that the annual Children's Service Assessment rating which is due to be published formally in December could be 'inadequate'. The rating in the draft letter is 'adequate' and this was confirmed at the meeting with Ofsted on 18th October. However, there is a possibility of another unannounced inspection of the Contact and Referral process before the publication date which, if there are any areas for priority action found, could change the rating. Work is under way to plan for such an inspection with a self-assessment currently being completed and a mock inspection has taken place to establish risks and concerns.

10. **Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

The Annual Performance Assessment 2008 result was the trigger for the CYPS Review, which was commissioned jointly by the Council and NHS Rotherham. A number of recommendations arose from this Review which were included in an Improvement action plan.

On 4th and 5th August 2009, CYPS received an unannounced inspection of its Contact, Referral and Assessment service. The inspection confirmed many issues related to performance, caseload and capacity, quality assurance. Ofsted's recommendation was that we should take immediate action to address the issues raised in order to prevent further decline in service performance, quality and capacity. A notice to improve was issued in December 2009.

The annual Fostering Inspection was concluded in June 2010 and found to be adequate. However the letter indicated that significant improvements were visible. The Safeguarding and Looked After Children Inspection took place between the 19th and 30th July, the outcome of this was adequate.

Action plans are in place to monitor the implementation of both sets of recommendations.

Failure to address these issues would impact further on the CYPS and the council and could still lead to external intervention.

11. **Background Papers and Consultation**

The Notice to Improve

Ofsted Inspection - Contact, Referral and Assessment, 4th and 5th August 2009

Children First Review and Resource Benchmarking – Jan to June 2009

Fostering Inspection June 2010

Safeguarding and LAC inspection July 2010

CYP Directorate Performance reports

Notice to Improve Action Plan

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