

**Report of the Executive Director for People  
and the Director of Human Resources,  
Performance & Communications,  
to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC)  
on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

**Barnsley Safeguarding and Looked After Children Continuous Service  
Improvement Plan**

**1.0 Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 In 2012, Barnsley Children's Social Care Services were judged by Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) in to be 'inadequate' for child protection services and 'adequate' for looked after children services. Although the overall judgement was 'requires improvement' at the following inspection in June 2014, the improvement notice was lifted 5 months later in November 2014.
- 1.2 In December 2014, a review of the Continuous Service Improvement (CSI) Framework and CSI Plan was undertaken and responsibility for establishing a secure CSI system for children, young people and families transferred from the Improvement Board to the Children's Trust and the Barnsley Safeguarding Children's Board (BSCB). In April 2015, a review by the Department for Education (DfE) showed that 'improvements are sustained with no let-up in pace'.
- 1.3 The Children's Trust, chaired by the Director of Children's Services (DCS), secures the cooperation of partners to strategically plan and align service commissioning to improve children's outcomes with a view to all services being judged at least 'good'. The BSCB, a group of key representatives from local agencies and independently chaired, provides a forum to hold partners to account and test effectiveness of multi-agency working to safeguard children and promote their wellbeing. Partnership engagement is currently considered to be strong overall at both strategic and operational levels.
- 1.4 The CSI Framework & Plan provide the governance process for improving outcomes. The plan consists of the work which is being monitored as part of the CSI journey and is based on the aspirations for children and young people with the status shown against the progress being made, i.e. the right amount of progress in the right direction at the right pace; together with the status of the evidence of improvement. The Multi-Agency Officer Group track and drive the implementation of the plan and it is presented to both the BSCB and the Children's Trust Executive Group (TEG) at each meeting.
- 1.5 BSCB and Children's TEG's prime contributions to the governance process include:-
- scrutiny of the CSI Plan & Monthly Performance Reports
  - providing challenge at each Board and within the sub-group structure

- strengthening of partnerships and the relationship with the Health & Wellbeing Board
- ensuring that all agencies involved undertake regular audits to demonstrate a continuous cycle of learning and improvement

1.6 BMBC's prime contributions to the governance process include:-

- strengthening of the Corporate Parenting Panel
- holding joint meetings with the Care 4 Us Council
- provision of updates and information for Member development and briefing sessions
- performance management, including performance tracking by the People Executive Director, Service Director and Lead Member; monthly performance challenge meetings with operational managers; a programme of case file audits and a programme of visits to the front-line by the People Executive Director, Service Director and Lead Member
- adoption of the role of Corporate Parents
- presentation of the Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## **2.0 Current Position**

2.1 BSCB and Children's TEG collaborate to review the CSI Framework annually. At the most recent review (November 2016), both parties agreed that the Ofsted recommendations made in 2014, which were embedded into the plan, were well evidenced as having been addressed and met. As a result of the review, the focus of the plan has been refreshed with far greater aspirational outcomes being agreed for Barnsley's Children's Social Care Services to achieve for Barnsley's vulnerable children.

2.2 Early help continues to be a priority, which includes supporting partners to identify and respond to children's needs early, through effective partnership delivery. Equally raising aspirations and outcomes for Looked after Children and Care Leavers is a priority.

2.3 All services need to continually improve and drive the quality of practice across the workforce, achieving consistently good performance across all services for vulnerable children and young people. Timely access to therapeutic support for vulnerable children remains a priority. The Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Improvement Plan and the Children's Trust Board will drive the improved delivery of therapeutic support for children and young people to ensure they have access to services when they need them.

## **3.0 Challenges**

3.1 Achieving these ambitions are not without challenges; managing the demand for statutory social services, as well as managing the number of Children's Social Work caseloads have been identified as potential barriers to achieving the desired outcomes.

## **4.0 Invited Witnesses**

4.1 At today's meeting, a number of representatives have been invited to answer questions from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding this area of work:

- Rachel Dickinson, Executive Director, People Directorate, BMBC
- Mel John-Ross, Service Director, Children's Social Care and Safeguarding, BMBC
- Julie Govan, Improvement Programme Manager, Children's Social Care and Safeguarding, BMBC
- Sharon Galvin, Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children, Barnsley CCG
- Liz Gibson, Virtual Headteacher for Looked After Children, People Directorate
- Nina Sleight, Head of Early Start, Prevention and Sufficiency, BMBC
- Cllr Margaret Bruff, Cabinet Spokesperson - People (Safeguarding), BMBC

## **5.0 Possible Areas for Investigation**

5.1 Members may wish to ask questions around the following areas:

- How confident are you that the strategies and plans in place are effective in safeguarding our children and young people?
- What does the overall picture from the Improvement Plan and performance management information tell us?
- Do agencies have the capacity to effectively address the identified outcomes and priorities?
- How effective are performance management arrangements and to what extent do we learn from good practice in other areas?
- To what extent are partners held to account and is there genuine challenge amongst all professionals?
- What mechanisms are in place to ensure that the voice of our children and young people is heard in the design and delivery of services?
- How effective is information and intelligence sharing between partners?
- What has been learnt from the Multi-Agency Audit Programme and how has this influenced practice?
- How will you know if the rolling out of good practice to the whole workforce has been successful and having the desired effect?
- What actions could be taken by Members to assist in the safeguarding of our children and young people?

## 6.0 Background Papers and Useful Links

- Barnsley Children's Trust Executive Group (TEG):  
<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/children-families-and-education/children-young-people-and-families-trust/>
- Barnsley Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB):  
<https://www.safeguardingchildrenbarnsley.com/>

## 7.0 Glossary

BSCB	Barnsley Safeguarding Children Board
CAMHS	Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services
CSI	Continuous Service Improvement
DCS	Director of Children's Services
DfE	Department for Education
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
TEG	Children's Trust Executive Group

## 8.0 Officer Contact

- Anna Marshall, Scrutiny Officer (01226 775794)
- Mel John-Ross, Service Director, Children's Social Care and Safeguarding (01226 773665)

27<sup>th</sup> March 2017