

## Northumberland Family & Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee 18 January 2018

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### SIF IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE REPORT

Report of the Executive Director of Children's Services, Cath Mcevoy  
Lead Member: Councillor Wayne Daley

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#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present Members with an update on progress with the Local Authority improvement plan in response to the inspection that was undertaken under the Single Inspection Framework (SIF) in January 2016.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To scrutinise the effectiveness of the move to a new Improvement Plan.

#### 3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Progress is monitored and reported to the DCS and Safeguarding Children's Board (NSCB) every two months.
- 3.2 The LA has moved to an overarching Improvement Plan that takes forward all of the key areas from the SIF plan previously reported to this committee, but also introduces new areas identified during the continued improvement journey.
- 3.3 The LA Internal Audit team is currently scrutinising the new plan's fitness for purpose at the request of the DCS. The NSCB, as the agreed external scrutiny body, has ratified the approach being taken.
- 3.4 The new plan monitors the priorities detailed in the Background section. That section shows what areas have been signed off and the new areas that have been identified. Progress on each milestone is rated on a scale of 1 to 4 every two months, 1 being best.
- 3.5 The new plan includes impact measures for each priority area so that the "are we there yet" question can be answered robustly (see Appendix A). The identification of these measures is currently being firmed up and will be complete by the end of January 2018. This process has informed us where there needs to be additional evidence gathering, in particular around surveys, new performance and workforce data and audit findings. A quarterly report on these impact measures will be in place by February 2018.
- 3.6 Highlights from this round of progress updates show that the following priorities remain critical to making further progress: demand management; social work assessment and planning practice; embedding of Early Help models; quality assurance; and workforce development.
- 3.7 The LA will receive an annual children's social care conversation via a meeting with Ofsted in March 2018, where progress on this plan and its incorporation into our new self evaluation will be discussed. This will assist in informing the timing of inspection under the new ILAC framework. It is recommended that this update be brought to this committee.

#### 4. BACKGROUND - The move from SIF Improvement Plan to Overarching Improvement Plan: What is changing?

##### Original SIF Recommendations

1. Thresholds
2. SW Caseloads
3. Quality of SW assessment
4. SMARTness of of SW planning, voice of child, contingencies and monitoring oversight
5. Management oversight
6. IRO capacity
7. Permanence
8. RMG and use of CP framework
9. Legal Planning
10. Legal Services capacity
11. Foster to Adopt
12. Private fostering
13. Corporate Parenting and Scrutiny
14. Performance information on care leavers
15. EWB of care leavers and participation in EET

##### Recommendations Closed Down and Signed off (see summaries)

6  
8  
10  
11  
13

##### Recommendations Pulled Forward / Integrated

- 1 & 2 → Integrated into a theme of Demand Management
- 3 → Broadened to include strategy meetings and S47s
- 4, 7, 9, 11 → Integrated
- 5 → Broadened to include development of procedures
- 12 → Needs reallocating
- 14 & 15 → Integrated

##### Newly Identified Areas

- A. Customer service (be more accessible, reduce complaints, improve culture)
- B. Budget Management
- C. Quality Assurance (improve audit, variation of practice)

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background documents for this report within the meaning of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

## IMPLICATIONS ARISING OUT OF THE REPORT

<b>Policy</b>	Ensuring effective leadership for children's services remains a national and local priority.
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	None.
<b>Human Resources</b>	Workforce development issues are addressed in the Improvement Plan.
<b>Property</b>	No immediate implications.
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached)	This report does not propose a change requiring impact assessment.
Yes   No   N/A	
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	In rating progress against the Improvement Plan's priorities, risk assessment is undertaken every 2 months, when it is reviewed.
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	None, other than the link between the Improvement Plan and the Supporting Families Outcomes plan
<b>Customer Considerations</b>	Arrangements for listening to the views of children and young people are described in the body of the Improvement Plan.
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	No immediate implications.
<b>Wards</b>	All

### Report sign off

Finance Officer	N/A
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Liam Henry
Human Resources	Sarah Farrell
Procurement	N/A
I.T.	N/A
Chief Executive	Daljit Lally
Portfolio Holder(s)	Wayne Daley

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