



COMMENTS ON REPORT C3000 (CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PLAN) TO BE CONSIDERED AT COUNCIL 20 JULY 2015

UNISON is disappointed that it, along with other recognised trade unions under the West Berkshire Council umbrella, was not consulted on the proposals contained within the report in advance of them being made public.

Broadly, UNISON is very supportive of the aims of the plan and the intention for the Council to become 'good at safeguarding'. This support is however subject to the following caveats

1. Staff, as the key component in achieving the aim of 'good', should be fundamentally involved in the delivery, monitoring and further development of the plan. This will avoid the risk that in the implementation of its plan, the authority is seen by its social workers (who are already working very hard) to be going against its own restorative practice ethos of doing 'with', rather than 'to'.

Staff involvement and consultation might take the form of UNISON and other employees providing representation on the body responsible for the plan's oversight.

It is regrettable that the expertise, knowledge and views of front line staff do not appear to have been sought prior to the publication of the plan.

2. Care will need to be taken that a disproportionate emphasis is not placed on administrative 'box ticking' or a rush to engage the capability process. Whilst supervision and support are welcome, over-supervision and a desire by management to protect their own positions at the expense of those at the front line would not be.

The risk of a counter-productive or perverse effect, on either morale or retention, should be carefully managed, and this is particularly so in the immediate period before resources catch up with demand.