
“Getting to Good”: A model for improving service delivery and building sustainable service development within Children's Social Care frontline Teams

Committee considering report:	Council on 19 May 2016
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Lynne Doherty
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1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report serves to inform on the progress of the Children and Family Services since their Ofsted Inspection of March 2015 and sets out a framework to build a 'Good' and sustainable frontline Children's Social Care Service.
- 1.2 It references the core activities of decision-making and management oversight and sets out the principles for an improved work plan and capacity to deliver further service improvement with the aim of achieving a 'Good' Ofsted Inspection rating.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The report recommends the infrastructure for the Children's Social Care frontline services and recommends the establishment of a Looked After Children's Team and builds capacity for a Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). It identifies the workload pressures and provides information on the preferred approach to building a strong Children's Social Care Service.

3. Implications

- 3.1 **Financial:** 1) The financial commitment invested into Children and Family Services is sufficient to achieve the structure outlined in this paper. There are no additional financial investments requested.
- 3.2 **Policy:** None.
- 3.3 **Personnel:** 1) There has been a review of the children's social care operating model benchmarked against national, statistical neighbour and demand data. Internal performance management and quality assurance processes have been put in place and are demonstrating increased change implementation.
2) Staffing challenges including the use of significant agency capacity do continue, albeit at a reduced rate. However,

permanent staff can be under pressure to absorb unrealistic workloads within the current frontline teams infrastructure which impacts on the stability of the workforce and the quality of the work undertaken.

- 3) There has been no consistent model applied to the frontline teams’ resourcing. The requirement of the learning and development of strategic oversight, effective case management, children’s commissioning and sufficient frontline management capacity have all been necessary to address this.
- 4) Following a review of the current infrastructure and delivery capacity this report recommends the need to confirm staffing levels across the frontline social work teams, including the Contact, Assessment and Advice Service, Locality Teams and the Disabled Children’s Team. It includes the need to secure appropriate capacity in the Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Service and to establish the Principal Social Worker role.
- 5) The posts required to secure the appropriate staffing levels into the current establishment include:

TEAM	ROLE	Total cost	Total Budget
Contact Advice & Assessment	1 ATM	£46,110	£46,110
	4 SW	£38,020	£152,080
	0.5 BSO	£25,360	£12,680
Looked After Children’s Team	1 TM	£56,030	£56,030
	3 SW	£38,020	£114,060
Children & Families	1 PSW	£64,810	£64,810
Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Service	1 IRO	£57,420	£57,420
Disabled Children’s Team	1 SW	£38,020	£38,020
Training & Development			£10,000
Total	12.5fte		£ 551,210

- 6) All of these positions are currently covered by agency arrangements, except for the 0.5 Business Support Officer which is required for the development of a Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub.

3.4 **Legal:** None

3.5 **Risk Management:** 1) The improvement work undertaken over the last six months has allowed for a more confident forecasting of activity and allowed more informed projections to be made in relation to referral rates and caseload levels, but, as remains for all Children’s Services, the volatility of demand, levels of risks and the impact vulnerability of any changes in legislation, policy or wider

influences continue to offer challenges when projecting service needs.

- 2) This paper sets out a structure that assists in mitigating issues of risk with more manageable workloads and clearer management accountability.

3.6 Property:

- 1) It will continue to be important to ensure the social care frontline teams are within working environments appropriate to the nature of their work. Over the next year it is likely that a minimum level of internal modification will be required to incorporate the delivery of a MASH in order to co-locate police colleagues within a secure room, but this should not significantly impact on property or financial commitments.

3.7 Other:

- 1) The recommendations outlined build on the Improvement work undertaken over the last six months with the DFE Improvement Advisers and Ofsted, with the aim to secure a ‘Good’ Ofsted Judgement for West Berkshire Children’s Services.

4. Other options considered

- 4.1 “Good” Local Authorities (as evidenced in their Ofsted reports, national data sets and presentations) share the following key factors: reasonable caseloads, realistic levels of management capacity and oversight, permanent social worker workforce with the skill set required to deliver “Good”, a secure decision making infrastructure, Quality Assurance and a commissioning infrastructure to oversee service development and business application to placements when required. In addition, partnership working is secure and the threshold pathway from early help to statutory social work intervention is clearly understood by all.

It is therefore proposed that the model outlined is necessary for West Berkshire to continue to deliver Children’s Services within the authority and show the necessary improvements for the children, young people and families with whom they work.

5. Executive Summary

- 5.1 The core activities of decision-making and management oversight are fundamental to ensuring safe social care practice within our frontline Children’s Social Care Teams. It was evident from our Ofsted Inspection and subsequent ‘Inadequate’ rating there was insufficient capacity within the workforce to meet workload volumes. While this has been addressed this paper seeks the endorsement to the changes required and proposes a service that puts West Berks in a position to build a ‘Good’ Children’s Services and address issues raised in the Ofsted Inspection undertaken in 2015.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Good quality Children and Families social work is not yet consistently secured or sustainable to fully address challenges within the current infrastructure. This proposed approach will ensure a sufficiency and stability to address this and put the service in an improved position to deliver ‘Good’ Children’s Services.

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix A - Supporting Information
- 7.2 Appendix B – Equalities Impact Assessment