

Report of the Corporate Director of Children, Education and Communities

## **City of York Council Safeguarding Report**

### **Summary**

1. This report is a regular annual update regarding safeguarding for City of York Council.

### **Background**

2. In November 2016 a Single Inspection by Ofsted graded City of York Children's Social Care as Good. 2017/ 2018 activity within the service has focussed on addressing the areas identified for improvement and building and consolidating the many areas of strength.
3. We have made great strides in improving the timeliness of single assessments and the percentage of those completed within 45 days has increased from 59.6 % (2016) to 88.38 (2018).
4. The timeliness of Initial Health Assessments and Repeat Health Assessments are not quite where we would want them to be but there is good cross agency working in place to address this. The Advanced Practitioner Social Work role is proving effective in providing capacity to address this and other performance issues.
5. Neglect remains the most prevalent reason for children being subject to child protection plans. In an attempt to address this we have, alongside the Healthy Child Service, trained over 150 staff in the use of the Graded Care Profile. This is a practical, evidence based tool which supports practitioners in measuring the quality of care delivered to an individual child by their parent or carer(s).

6. Our numbers of children in care remains stable and the number subject to child protection plans has only marginally varied, which is in contrast to our regional and national neighbours.
7. The unique integrated Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) role in York (IRO's review Child in Need services as well as children in care and subject to protection plans) is now established with a stable, experienced team of social workers.
8. We continue to be amongst the best performing authorities for the duration of care proceedings, with the associated positive impact on the children subject to those proceedings.
9. This positive performance was evidenced in the Hestia Group research undertaken by York University in which they found that in comparison to the other local authorities in the study:
10. 'Family risk factors including caregiver mental health and substance misuse problems were more often identified in York
11. 'Support for specific child and care givers problems was more likely to be offered in York'.
12. Monthly performance reports on supervision, audit activity and case loads are provided for the Director and the Lead Member. The reports demonstrate a significant improvement in both supervision and audit activity over this review period. Case loads continue to be monitored closely and steps taken where necessary to address any pressures which may be developing.

**Going forward:**

13. Development is well underway to provide a holistic service for disabled children and their families in need of additional support which will be delivered from a new purpose built centre (anticipated opening January 2020).
14. A comprehensive review of the City's placement offer for all children in the care of the local authority is also well underway (April 2019).

## **Dissemination of City of York Safeguarding Childrens Board (CYSCB) messages and guidance**

15. CYSCB messages and guidance are disseminated effectively in a number of ways including:
16. All practitioners receive copies of the CYSCB newsletter
17. The Principal Social Worker leads on the dissemination of learning from local and national reviews and statutory guidance.
18. The Advanced Social Workers provide capacity to the teams to undertake development sessions informed by the CYSCB messages and guidance.

## **Safeguarding children training**

### **CSA&E**

19. In collaboration with Community Care Inform (CCI) Children's Social Care (CSC) helped develop and then pilot online training on CSA&E. This training was undertaken by 70 practitioners. The aim was to both increase knowledge and understanding of the issue but also to encourage practitioners to use the wider online resource. Of the participants 72% of survey respondents said their experience was positive. Of those who engaged with the supported learning content 58% went on to look at more practice guidance, case law, research and legislation.

### **Disabled Children**

20. As a result of this successful pilot CSC are now working with CCI on the development of an online training resource for child protection and disabled children.

### **Neglect**

21. Neglect continues to be the most prevalent reason for protection plans.
22. The Graded Care Profile 2 (a neglect assessment tool) was launched in York in 2016 and is being used within Childrens Social Care and the Healthy Child Service to support single and multi-agency planning such as FEHA's, Single Assessments, within Child in Need and Child protection cases, and has been used once so far in the court arena. Feedback from staff using GCP2 is that it is helping professionals to evidence the impact of neglect and to target interventions more

specifically. Staff who use it regularly report seeing the benefit of the tool, and a case study for the NSPCC that highlights the positive impact of targeted interventions on a child stepping down from S47 has just been completed.

23. Over the last 18 months we have trained and licensed approx 150 Children's services and Healthy Child Service staff and students.

### **Outcomes and learning points from single agency or other forms of audit or inspection**

24. As stated above 2017/18 has focussed on addressing those issues identified by Ofsted for further development.

### **Voice of the child**

25. Key messages from U Matter Survey (Sept 17)
26. High numbers of young people reported knowing how to contact their social worker (85%) and an increasing number knew who to contact if their social worker was unavailable (an increase from 45% in 2015 to 70%).
27. A significant number of young people stated they didn't know who their current Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) was (37%) and only half reported that they were involved in the planning of their review meetings. However a high percentage of young people reported that they regularly attended their reviews and had the opportunity to speak to their IRO before the meetings.
28. Areas of strength include the quality of placements for children and young people (with 82% of young people describing these as good quality placements), young people's views on how they are treated by professionals and whether they are included in decision making (with 97% reporting that they are treated with respect and 85% stating that they have a say in decisions that are made about them) and young people's awareness of their right to make a complaint if they are unhappy (96%).
29. The majority of young people who were asked stated that they were currently happy in their placement (94%) and would be able to speak to their social worker if they weren't (91%).
30. In terms of seeing their family and friends, the majority of young people felt that they had received a sufficient amount of support, knew who to

contact about these arrangements and had felt that were they not able to see someone, the reasons had been explained to them.

31. The majority of young people felt they were receiving the right amount of support in their education and training (89%), knew who they could go to in school if they need any support (90%) and felt they were able to choose if they wanted to take part in after school clubs and activities (93%).
32. In relation to leaving care provision, responses were positive with the majority of care leavers reporting that they had received enough support both in preparation for leaving care (81%) and since they had left care (86%). However, in contrast, when asked about their overall experiences, 33% stated that they hadn't felt adequately prepared for leaving care. 38% didn't see the value in their Pathway Plan but the majority were happy with the contact they had with their Pathway Worker (91%) and felt they had received enough support in managing their money (92%).

### **Safeguarding Disabled Children**

33. Since the Single Inspection in November 2016 all children who are open to the Health and Disability CSC service have been reassessed with a clear focus on identifying any unmet safeguarding needs.
34. There is also now oversight at the point of referral by a social work manager to provide additional scrutiny to the identification of potential safeguarding issues.

### **Consultation**

35. This report is for information only.

### **Analysis**

36. Not applicable.

### **Council Plan**

37. Not applicable.

### **38. Implications**

- **Financial** - There are no financial implications.

- **Human Resources (HR)** - There are no HR implications.
- **Equalities** There are no equalities implications.
- **Legal** - There are no legal implications.
- **Crime and Disorder** - There are no crime and disorder implications.
- **Information Technology (IT)** - There are no IT implications.
- **Property** - There are no property implications.
- **Other** - There are no other implications.

### **Risk Management**

39. There are no risks.

### **Recommendations**

40. This report is for information and update only.

Reason: To keep the Committee updated.

### **Contact Details**

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**Report  
Approved**



**Date** 2 July 2018

**Wards Affected:**

All

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers: None**

**Annexes: None**

**Abbreviations:**

CYSCB - City of York Safeguarding Children's Board

CCI - Community Care Inform

CSC - Children's Social Care

CSA&E - Child sexual abuse and exploitation

FEHA's - Family early help assessment

GCP2 - Graded Care Profile 2

IRO - Independent Reviewing Officer