

**Learning & Culture Policy & Scrutiny
Committee**

11 January 2017

Report of the Assistant Director for Children's Specialist Services

Bi-Annual Safeguarding Update

Summary

1. At a meeting of the Committee in June 2012, Members agreed to receive a six monthly update on childrens safeguarding issues. This report updates the Committee on key local and national safeguarding developments since July 2016.

Background

City of York - Childrens Safeguarding Developments

Brief Overview

2. The review period has been characterised by significant service development, policy change and scrutiny of safeguarding services for children in York.
 - a) In September 2016, following extensive review and consultation, York Childrens Social Care services implemented a new service structure.
 - b) This new structure is supported by the introduction, in March 2016, of a new case management system (MOSAIC).
 - c) This review period has also seen some important regional service developments with York playing a key role in shaping and leading some of this work. Specifically:
 - York has been at the heart of developing a regional response to the National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.

- This Local Authority is also playing a key role in the development of a regional response to the adoption reforms set out in the Education and Adoption Act 2016.

- d) In July 2016 a new school wellbeing worker service, developed in partnership with the Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group and the local CAMHS provider Tees Esk and Weir Valley Mental Health Trust [TEWV] was launched.
- e) The review period has also included the most comprehensive Ofsted inspection of childrens services since 2012.
- f) This period saw the formal launch of the new Children and Young People in Care Strategy 2016 – 2020 with its presentation to full Council on 21 July 2016
- g) In every area of our work children and young people’s voices continue to shape, help review and challenge the services we deliver. The review period has been no exception with considerable input from the Show Me that I Matter group (young people in Care Council) the wider voice groups across the City.
- h) Safe workforce checks (snapshot) in review period.
- i) Some operational challenges and pressures in the review period.

a) Childrens Social Care Service Restructure

- 3. A comprehensive review of Childrens Social Care structure was completed in 2015/16. This review was not prompted by any failings in the existing service structure but in recognition of new national policy changes, emerging best practice findings and feedback from children young people and their families. Fully launched in September 2016 the new structure and underlying rationale is described in detail in [Annex 1].

b) Introduction of a New Client Management System

- 4. To support the practice changes and developments associated with the new service structure, Children’s Social Care successfully went live with ‘Mosaic’, a state-of-the-art Case Management System. This development was the culmination of a two year intensive, complex and multi partner project. Mosaic directly captures and supports the work across Childrens Social Care.

5. This particular system was chosen, following a comprehensive and rigorous procurement process in which a number of systems were demonstrated to stakeholders, including front-line staff.
6. Mosaic offers range of functions not available on previous systems with an emphasis on reducing the screen time required by social workers. Mosaic was designed to reflect the need identified by Professor Eileen Munro in her national review of child protection to move away from overly bureaucratic processes and focus on outcomes for children and their families.
7. This new system enables, for the first time, the child's journey with York Council to be in one place, in an instantly accessible and joined up way, with Early Help, SEND, Family Focus (Troubled Families) and Children's Social Care all on one system. Mosaic also integrates financial spending (resulting from the replacement of a separate two decade old payment system), providing accurate and timely payments to York's Foster Carers.
8. Crucially this system also supports social workers to respond to safeguarding concerns, for example, Child Sexual Exploitation and areas of current national priority, such as Adoption and outcomes for Children and Young People in Care.
9. MOSAIC also enables a clear focus on the local priorities of high quality and timely assessments and the involvement and participation – 'the Voice' - of the child in all that is done to help them fulfil their potential.
10. This new case management system represents a very significant contribution to the delivery of York's continuous improvement journey. Mosaic was implemented successfully as part of a strong commitment to ensure that systems and processes support effective practice and help achieve the best possible outcome for vulnerable children and young people and their families in the City.

c) Regional Developments

Responding to the National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children [UASC]

11. This scheme, announced in a letter to All Council Leaders from Rt Hon James Brokenshire in June 2016, was implemented to respond to the growing number of UASC in Calais and those arriving in Kent.

12. A cross departmental¹ briefing note dated 7th June 2016 set out the principles and details of the National Transfer scheme arrangements. This document committed to have the scheme operating from July 2016 and set out the following principles;
 - Be fair, equitable and transparent
 - Be voluntary and locally-led
 - Have distribution based on a proportion of the total child population (up to 0.07% of the child population)
 - Build on existing structures and regional models with a phased introduction
 - Pool knowledge and resources; joining up with, and recognising existing commitments.
13. Tasked by the Yorkshire and Humber ADCS, the regional Assistant Directors [Safeguarding] group² in partnership with Migration Yorkshire met on 24th June to consider how the region could best engage with the Transfer Scheme to ensure the safe and effective reception of UASC to the area.
14. This meeting concluded with some proposed delivery principles for the region which while largely reflecting those included in the national Briefing Paper are intended to steer the delivery of a regional approach which puts the UASC first. These included;
 - a consistent warm and safe welcome across the region
 - health, care and education support tailored to the unique needs of this group
 - a system that minimises further separation and loss³
 - equitable access to legal advice and support
 - a safe reliable point of contact throughout the journey from pre arrival to safe settlement
 - a system that is owned by the region including risks, pressures and costs
 - a system overseen and sponsored by the Yorkshire & Humber Assoc. Directors of Childrens Services
15. Working with colleagues across the region York has developed a model which reflects the above principles and supports the safe and planned

¹ DfE / HO / DCLG / DfID briefing note 7th June 2016

² comprising representatives from all 15 LAs in Y&H

³ under a conventional approach and given the current pressures on LAs' Looked After Children systems many UASC could find themselves in a secondary dispersal system as they are placed at some distance from the responsible LAs

arrival of UASC into the region. This shared approach has helped to mitigate some of the risks and pressures that may otherwise emerge.

16. However, it is right to report that to date; those young people who have been received through these arrangements have been well supported and are making good progress.
17. A further update on this regional work and York's response will be included in the July 2017 report to this Committee.

Developing a Regional Adoption Agency

18. With the implementation of the Education and Adoption Act 2016 the Government requires that all local authority adoption functions should be delivered as part of a Regional Adoption Agency [RAA] or be delegated to an RAA by 2020.
19. York has been working in collaboration with other local authorities and the Voluntary sector throughout the Yorkshire and Humber region to create a new model of service delivery for adoption services, in line with the government's agenda. The intention is to improve services for children and adoptive families and deliver a more effective and cost efficient service, utilising government transitional funding to manage the change.
20. There will be three RAAs, West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and North and Humber, in the Yorkshire and Humber region. The North and Humber RAA will consist of the adoption services of York, East Riding, North Yorkshire, North Lincolnshire, North East Lincolnshire and Hull Councils. The RAA will deliver adopter recruitment; timely linking of children with a suitable adoptive family and adoption support to the child and family. Some services will be jointly commissioned via a shared regional 'hub'. The local authorities will retain responsibility for the plan for adoption for a child and agreeing a match with an adoptive family.
21. The final model for the North and Humber RAA has yet to be agreed, however, York has led the early development of this work and expects to play a key role in the future delivery of these arrangements.
22. A more detailed briefing on the developments will be presented to the July 2017 meeting of this committee.

d) Supporting the Emotional and Mental Health of Children and Young People

23. Responding to the emotional and mental health needs of children and young people in the City has been a key priority throughout the review period.
24. In October 2014, the Department of Health published Future in Mind an ambitious five year programme to improve the emotional and mental health of children and young people. This programme required local Clinical Commissioning Group [CCG] areas to develop Transformation Plans that focused on:
 - Promoting resilience, prevention and early intervention
 - Improving access to effective support – a system without tiers
 - Care for the most vulnerable
 - Accountability and transparency
 - Developing the workforce
25. In York, the Local Authority and schools have worked in partnership with the Vale of York CCG colleagues to develop a local transformation plan.
26. A key development in the first year of this plan has focussed on the need to further develop prevention and early intervention arrangements based on the principle that children and young people's mental health is *everybody's business*.
27. In fact, work to strengthen a preventative service offer to children and young people was already well underway with an emotional wellbeing school cluster pilot underway. This work was extensively evaluated in August 2016 [Annex 2] and led to the development of York's School Wellbeing Service.
28. Launched in July 2016 this service includes the deployment of specially trained emotional and mental health workers across the school community in York. A full service overview is set out at [Annex 3].
29. Early ongoing evaluation of this new service demonstrates some very positive outcomes with school staff reporting greater confidence in their ability to support and where needed refer onwards children and young people with emerging emotional and mental health concerns.
30. Further development of this service is planned as part of the wider Future in Mind Transformation Plan for York.

e) Ofsted Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers

31. On 14th November a four week 'no notice' inspection commenced. Conducted by eleven of Her Majesty's Inspectors [HMI] this was the most comprehensive inspection of services for children since 2011. The inspection scrutinised every aspect of the Local Authority's arrangements for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and included a review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
32. This inspection process involved very detailed scrutiny of over a quarter of children social care cases, direct and often very challenging interviews by inspectors with over a third of the CSC workforce, inspector meetings and interviews with elected members, the chief executive, local authority partners and many of the children, families and young people and families who receive services.
33. The formal outcome of this process is subject to a moderation process and in these circumstances it is not yet possible to publish here the final judgements. However, it is fair to report that the overall outcome was very positive. Most importantly Ofsted found that our local arrangements leave no children or young people unprotected, only those who need to be looked after are in our care, our commitment to keep children in their families, where that is safe to do so, is very evident and our care for those who are looked after or leaving care helps them and improves their outcomes.
34. In feedback, the inspection team described how they struck by the Local Authority's honest, transparent and open culture. They described the workforce as open to challenge and scrutiny and one that heeds any lessons to be learned. There was a clear message about how well social workers know the children and young people they support and an equally powerful message about how the voice of the child/young person comes through in every intervention.
35. As with any inspection the process identified some areas for improvement and further development. Encouragingly, the inspectors reported that these were issues already known to the local authority and where development work is already underway.
36. It is noteworthy that this unannounced inspection came just weeks after the implementation of the new CSC service structure and just months

after the implementation of the new case management system. Although beyond the scope of the inspection, in feedback the lead inspector commented positively on the sense and solid foundations these changes provide for the continued overall effectiveness of the local authority's services to children and young people.

37. The final inspection outcome and report will be published on 7 February. Once published the local authority is required to develop an action plan to address those areas identified for further development.
38. The full report and accompanying action plan will be presented to the July 2017 meeting of this committee.
39. Other inspection activity in this period included:
 - Ofsted inspection of The Glen residential Short Breaks centre July 2016 which confirmed:
 - i. The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home: **Good**
 - ii. The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for **Good**
 - iii. How well children and young people are helped and protected: **Good**
 - iv. The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers: **Good**
 - A Care Quality Commission inspection of childrens community short breaks service which found that:
 - i. Overall rating for the service: **Good**
 - ii. Is the service safe? **Good**
 - iii. Is the service effective? **Good**
 - iv. Is the service caring? **Good**
 - v. Is the service responsive? **Good**
 - vi. Is the service well-led? **Good**

f) Children Looked After

40. Continuing to improve the outcomes for our looked after children has remained a key priority over the past year.
41. A new Children and Young People in Care Strategy 2016 – 2020 was formally launched and presented to full Council on 21 July 2016.

42. The review period has continued to see progress against the Keeping Families Together strategy (previously presented to this Committee) with a continued overall reduction in the number of Looked After Children.
43. On 1 January 2014 there were 215 children looked after by the local authority. On 1 January 2017 there were 196 children and young people in care.
44. The year has seen real and sustained stability of the population of children and young people in care. The population has been approximately 195 with a variance of $\pm 5\%$. It is anticipated that this will continue in 2017.
45. A brief analysis of this cohort of children and young people highlights:
 - 94 children and young people have come into the care of the Council during the year and 83 children have left care during the year, including 9 achieving permanent care by way of adoption, 6 by way of Special Guardianship and 7 supported to live independently.
 - the number of children placed in external independent foster agency placements [IFA] (with an average annual cost of £48k) has decreased from 24 at the start of the year to just 13 at the end.
 - This welcome reduction in the use of placements can be attributed, in part, to the Make York Home Project which seeks to build the resilience of the York foster care community to care for children and young people previously cared for by other providers, often at some distance from York.
 - the number of young people placed in external residential placements (with an average annual cost of £166k) rose marginally from 16 at 1 January 2016 to 18 on 1 January 2017.
 - The largest cohort of children and young people in care are young people aged 14-15 with 86 young people (44%).
 - The ethnicity and gender of children and young people in care reflects the demography of the City.
 - Of the 58 children and young people in care placed 'out' of the City, 32 were placed within Local Authorities bordering the City, often within a few miles and 26 in more distant placements.

46. The overall progress of our Looked after Children continues to be routinely reported to the Corporate Parenting Board.

g) Voice of Children and Young People

47. The views of children and young people have helped to shape and improve services throughout the review period. The recent Ofsted inspection commented very positively on the inclusion and active participation of children and young people in every aspect of services design and development.

48. This can largely be attributed to young people's willingness to volunteer their time to co-design services and meet with Senior Officers to influence policy, strategy and practice.

49. An example of this engagement is a recent consultation event about the design of a new young people's service. Young people met with architects and project leads to shape the design and use of Sycamore House.

50. Other projects such as aspire to more is promoting positive role models for care leavers <http://www.aspiretomore.wordpress.com/>.

51. The Youth Council recently coordinated record breaking participation across secondary schools in the National Make Your Mark campaign lead by the UK Youth Parliament with 5750 York young people voting.

h) Disclosure and Barring Service [DBS] Checks – Children's Social Care

52. As part of a safe recruitment and retention processes we continue to ensure that every member of childrens social care has an up to date Disclosure and Barring Service Check.

53. CSC operates a process of regular review and scrutiny, ensuring safe recruitment and retention of staff. This process includes prompts to individual staff and robust management oversight to ensure every member of Children's Social Care staff provides evidence that they have an up-to-date DBS clearance check on a three year cycle.

54. An audit undertaken in December 2016 has confirmed that as at 1 December 2016 every member of Children's Social Care staff has an up to date DBS clearance check.

55. These six monthly briefings will continue to include an update on this activity.

i) Operational challenges and pressures in the review period

56. The review period has seen an increasing number of children becoming the subject of a child protection plan. Early analysis suggests that this increase, while not fully understood, is in line with national trends and still within tolerance of our statistical neighbours. Some further analysis of this activity is underway; however this increase in very complex work is placing significant additional pressures on the social work teams both at the Referral and Assessment stage and in the subsequent safeguarding planning stage. The impact of this pressure is under constant review and reported to CEC Directorate Management Team on a fortnightly basis.

57. There are increasing difficulties in recruiting to safeguarding children social work posts and particularly to roles within the Referral and Assessment service. Although York continues to sustain a very healthy rate of staff retention this failure to recruit suitable staff during the review period (in two rounds of recruitment) is placing a strain on the teams and inevitably generating an increased reliance on agency staff. Social worker shortages are a national issue. The recent very positive Ofsted inspection outcome will help however, further work is needed to consider how to ensure that York remains an attractive and competitive employer in this area of work.

Council Plan

58. Every aspect of this report is supportive of and in line with our support for the three key priorities:

- **prosperous city for all** - where local businesses can thrive and residents have good quality jobs, housing and opportunities.
- **a focus on frontline services** - to ensure all residents, particularly the least advantaged, can access reliable services and community facilities.
- **a council that listens to residents** - to ensure it delivers the services they want and works in partnership with local communities.

Implications

59. There are no financial, HR, Equalities, Legal, Crime and Disorder, IT or property implications.

Recommendations

60. The Committee is invited to:

- i. note the revised Children Social Care structure.
- ii. note the implementation of the new case management system.
- iii. receive a further update in July 2017 on York's response to the National Transfer Scheme for UASC.
- iv. receive a further update on York's role in the development of a Regional Adoption Agency (including the implications for York children awaiting adoption).
- v. note and comment on the work to support the emotional and mental health of children and young people in York.
- vi. receive a further briefing in July 2017 on the final outcome and judgements of the recent Ofsted inspection.
- vii. note the pressures identified at i) above and receive a further update in July 2017 on the work described.

Reason: To allow Members to be fully informed on key childrens safeguarding issues in York and to support Member challenge in this area.

Contact Details

Author:

Eoin Rush, Assistant
Director, Children's
Specialist Services
01904 554212

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Jon Stonehouse, Corporate Director,
Children, Education and Communities

Report Approved



06/01/17

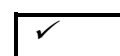
Report Approved



06/01/17

Wards Affected: List wards or tick box to indicate all

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Annexes:

Annex 1: Children's Social Care - Targeted Help to Children and Families with Safeguarding and Complex Needs

Annex 2: CAMHS Cluster Pilot in Schools - Final Project Evaluation Report

Annex 3: School Wellbeing Service – Service Overview

Abbreviations:

ADCS – Assistant Directors, Children's Services

CAMHS – Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services

CCG – Clinical Commissioning Group

CEC – Children, Education and Communities

CSC – Children's Social Care

DBS – Disclosure and Barring Service

HMI – Her Majesty's Inspectors

RAA – Regional Adoption Agency

SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disability

TEWV – Tees, Esk, Weir Valley

UASC – Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children