

Young People and Children Scrutiny Committee – Ofsted Subgroup

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2015

Present:

Councillor Stone– in the Chair

Councillor Cox, Midgley and Reid

Mrs E Holt, Co-opted Member, Parent Governor Representative

Mrs B Kelner, Co-opted Member, Representative of the Diocese of Manchester

Councillor S Newman, Executive Member for Children's Services

Apologies:

Mrs M Gadian, Co-opted Member, Teacher Representative

YPC/OSG/15/01

Minutes

Decision

To agree the minutes of the Ofsted Subgroup meeting held on 11 November 2014 as a correct record.

YPC/OSG/15/02

Ofsted Inspection into Help, Protection and Care of Children Action Plan

The Committee considered the updated action plan that is designed to monitor the actions identified in response to the issues raised in the recent Ofsted inspection of the Council's safeguarding arrangements.

The Head of Care addressed the Subgroup and provided an oral update. She informed the Subgroup that the Improvement Board had met for the third time and an Operational Board, consisting of practitioners, officers and partners had been established. She stated that the purpose of this new Board was to shadow the Improvement Board, offer feedback and constructive challenge to the Action Plan. The Subgroup recommended that the Chair of the Improvement Board is invited to a future meeting of the group.

The Head of Care clarified that the reason why some actions remain red on the Plan despite stating that these actions had been completed was because that they are not fully embedded yet.

The Head of Care advised that the draft Improvement Notice had been received from the DfE. She said that this draft notice broadly reflected the Ofsted inspection comments and that the Action Plan is to be reviewed and workshops are scheduled to ensure that the Plan meets all of the requirements of the Improvement Notice. The Subgroup requested that when the finalised Improvement Notice is received that this be circulated to all members of the Subgroup for information.

The Head of Care stated that progress continues to be made with regard to staff motivation. She informed the group that issues relating to hot desking had been resolved at the Harpurhey office, with the ratio of staff to desks greatly improved. In

response to a question, she advised that all of the desks have the correct technology available at them to allow staff to work. She further advised that all Social Workers had been issued with Blackberry device that allows access to email but not the MICARE system.

The Head of Care advised that work continues to address the high case load of Social Workers. She stated that referrals remain high across the city and the recruitment process continues to meet this demand. She advised that workloads will continue to be monitored and managed as part of performance management. The Executive Member for Children's Services stated that once caseloads are at a manageable level more effective monitoring of case management can be implemented to ensure there is constant good practice.

The Interim Head of Improvement Transformation and Change provided an update on the work undertaken to improve Social Work standards. She advised that HCL Work Force Solutions had been appointed, based on specific criteria, quality and price to provide expert support for Team Managers and Social Workers.

She advised that all Social Workers are MICARE trained and that a process of reviewing the 1200 Child in Need cases, with the assistance of HCL staff had begun. The review will identify those cases that can be either 'stepped up' or 'stepped down', close or remain. In answer to a question, she reassured the group that she holds overall responsibility for this process to ensure it is completed correctly and consistently. This audit of cases will deliver a better understanding of the correct caseload.

The Subgroup requested that case studies describing a Childs Journey be submitted for consideration at the next meeting.

The Group then discussed Performance. The Head of Care advised the following;

- Looked After Children (LAC) figures are reducing month on month, and the number of children being discharged from care as they reach the age of 18 can help explain this.
- The Interim Head of Improvement Transformation and Change advised that work would continue with partners to address the number of Police Protection Orders and to develop a more appropriate partnership response to children at risk, utilising appropriate family members and resources MCC have to hand rather than bringing children into care.
- A review of the Out of Hours Service is to be undertaken. A recommendation was agreed by the Subgroup to visit the Emergency Duty Service.
- Early Years Help provision is to be reviewed to ensure it is robust, co-ordinated and consistent in all schools.
- Work continues regarding Fostering.

- Performance Clinics are due to commence at the end of February and these will feed into the Operational Board and Improvement Board.
- Missing From Home cases – Work continues with GMP with regard to these cases with a dedicated Social Worker within the Police team.
- Personal Education Plans (PEPs) – These will be reviewed to avoid duplication and ensure consistency. Members agreed to a recommendation to invite Jane Johnson to a future meeting of the Subgroup to discuss further the work being undertaken with regard to PEPs.

The Head of Care further commented that the Partnership Board is fully committed to partnership working to deliver the best outcomes for the children and families of Manchester. A member commented that to deliver this there needed to be a commitment to real culture change across all partners to ensure they are delivering and taking ownership of issues.

Decisions

1. To invite the Chair of the Improvement Board to next meeting of the Subgroup.
2. To invite Jane Johnson, Virtual Head Teacher to the next meeting of the Subgroup.
3. To request that a copy of the Ofsted Improvement Notice is circulated to members of the Subgroup.
4. Request that case studies describing a Childs Journey be submitted for consideration at the next meeting
5. That members of the Subgroup visit the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and Emergency Duty Service.

YPC/OSG/15/03 Work Programme

The Subgroup considered the Work Programme.

Decision

1. The Subgroup will meet monthly.
2. The next meetings of the Subgroup will be 24 February 2015 and 17 March 2015.
3. The information relating to urgent Ofsted School reports, Early Years and received inspections will be included for consideration at the meetings.