

Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation Programme

Gateway Review of Children's Social Care

Final Report

Arts, Leisure and Culture Select Committee

23 February 2012

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The project scope for the gateway review of children's social care was agreed by arts leisure and culture (ALC) select committee on 26 October 2011 and base line information was reviewed on 1 December 2011.
- 1.2 This final report was endorsed by ALC select committee on 23 February 2012 before being presented to cabinet for formal approval on 8 March 2012.
- 1.3 The review considered the full range of children's social care services provided by Stockton-on-Tees borough council.
- 1.4 Given the breadth of the service area covered, six key questions were identified at the outset in order to ensure that the review addressed the most pressing issues affecting the service currently and was manageable within the required timescale.
- 1.5 A development day involving a wide cross section of staff was held in order to ensure the fullest possible participation in the review and following this, all children's social care staff were given the opportunity to comment on the emerging themes.
- 1.6 It quickly emerged that whilst there was no case for fundamental restructuring of the service, a number of key changes were required. Some of these were necessary as a result of the impact of the early intervention grant (EIG) EIT review in any event.
- 1.7 The views obtained from staff indicated that on a number of issues, there was a clear consensus in relation to the need for change in the way that the children's social care service is currently delivered, whereas in other areas there were more diverse views about the most appropriate way forward.
- 1.8 There was a strong consensus amongst the staff group that some change was required, although as would be expected there was a range of views in relation to the specific areas of the service where change was deemed to be necessary and the extent of change proposed.
- 1.9 All views put forward were given appropriate consideration by the project team before decisions were reached about the most appropriate way forward. The proposed changes relate to three key areas (these are set out in more detail in section 6 of the report):
 - Delivery of the social care service
 - Management structure
 - Recruitment and retention of qualified staff
- 1.10 The project team have therefore proposed a number of recommendations which are considered crucial in order to ensure the service is able to cope with increasing workload pressures, is provided in the most cost effective manner and achieves the best possible outcomes for children.

2. Background

- 2.1 The provision of children's social care services is a statutory duty placed upon local authorities, primarily by the children act 1989, children act 2004 and children (leaving care) act 2000.
- 2.2 The strict legislative and policy framework within which these services are provided means that there is relatively little scope for genuine transformation or radically different models of service delivery.
- 2.3 Although the majority of the services covered by the review are located within children and young people's operational services, there are also elements of the service in both the business support & improvement and children, schools and complex needs service areas. The full range of services covered within the review are listed in the scoping document (appendix 1).
- 2.4 The overall cost of the children's social care service for 2011-12 is calculated to be £19.5m, although it should be noted that within this there are some elements of the service which have been addressed as part of previous EIT reviews, notably the EIT review of child placements.
- 2.5 There are well documented workload pressures in children's social care nationally, with the majority of local authorities reporting a significant upsurge in referrals following the tragic death of Peter Connolly in Haringey. It is also considered likely that the economic climate is at least partially responsible for this rise, as financial hardship puts families under increased pressure and stress.
- 2.6 This trend has been mirrored locally with a marked rise in numbers of referrals which has translated into significant workload pressures throughout the social care system. These issues have been the subject of regular reports to Cabinet on a quarterly basis since July 2009. To illustrate this trend, in March 2009 there were 212 children subject to a child protection plan and 239 looked after children. By December 2011, this had risen to 301 and 336 respectively.
- 2.7 This has resulted in significant budget pressures, notably the independent fostering agency budget which is set at £3.265m for 2011/12 and projected to overspend by £86k, the children's homes agency placements budget which is set at £2.536m for 2011-12 and projected to overspend by £982k and finally the social work staffing budget which is set at £3.107m for 2011/12 and projected to overspend by £265k (all projections based on the position at 31 December 2011).
- 2.8 The key recommendations arising from the EIT review of child placements included the creation of a marketing officer post, development of a kinship (family and friends) care policy and exploration of the viability of developing additional local authority residential provision for looked after children. All of these recommendations have been fully implemented.
- 2.9 The recommendations to create a marketing officer post and explore the viability of developing additional residential provision were both made on an 'invest to save' principle and are likely to have a significant positive impact on the independent fostering agency and children's homes agency placements budgets in 2012/13 and beyond.
- 2.10 It was accepted at the outset of this review that cashable savings were unlikely due to the statutory duty to provide children's social care services and the ongoing workload pressures outlined above. Notwithstanding this, greater efficiencies in service provision could potentially result in both improved outcomes for children and non cashable efficiencies in service delivery.

2.11 Some key principles were identified in order to guide the review – these were as follows:

- The focus of the review should be on service delivery and improving outcomes for children
- More effective early intervention with families results in improved outcomes for children thereby reducing the need for high cost external placements
- The review methodology should seek to engage and involve staff as far as possible
- Any changes to the service should be designed 'bottom up', not 'top down'
- Any changes to the service should be introduced on the basis of minimum disruption

3. Methodology

- 3.1 Given the breadth of services covered by the review and the fact that some aspects had recently been considered either as part of previous overlapping EIT or other service reviews, it was decided to identify a number of key questions at the outset as in order to target the issues of greatest significance and potential impact.
- 3.2 Following discussion, these were agreed as follows:
- 3.2.1 The current organisational structure for children and young people's (CYP) operational services is based on a separation between targeted and specialist social work. How successful has this been in responding to the needs of our service users on a 'right first time' principle and is there a more effective way of structuring the service in the future?
- 3.2.2 As a result of the early intervention grant (EIG) EIT review, it is proposed that management responsibility for the home visiting service will transfer to CYP operational services. Given there are already a number of staff within the service area engaged in very similar activities, how should this service be structured in the future in order to maximise the impact for our service users?
- 3.2.3 The proposed direction of travel for the EIG EIT review also means that there will be a loss of one service manager post from CYP operational services. How should the service manager portfolios be arranged in future in order to take account of this?
- 3.2.4 Given the current budget pressures within children's social care, are there any services currently being provided which need to be reviewed, provided from elsewhere within the council or ceased altogether?
- 3.2.5 A number of temporary arrangements have been established across children's social care in order to address current workload pressures. Which of these have been effective in responding to the needs of our service users and should therefore be continued (budget permitting) and which need to be reviewed or ceased altogether?
- 3.2.6 There have been ongoing difficulties in recruiting to some children's social care posts and as a result a range of different financial incentives have been offered eg golden hellos, recruitment and retention payments etc. How successful have these been in attracting and retaining high quality staff in an increasingly competitive market and do they need to be continued in the future or are there more effective ways of achieving this goal?
- 3.3 The review was led by a project team consisting of:
- Head of children and young people's operational services
 - Service manager, referral and assessment
 - Service manager, fieldwork
 - Service manager, looked after children
 - Service manager, family support x 2

3.4 In order to ensure there was an opportunity for a wider cross section of children's social care staff to contribute to the review, a development day was held on 18 November 2011 involving the following participants:

- Corporate director, children education and social care
- Head of children and young people's operational services
- Service manager, referral and assessment
- Service manager, fieldwork
- Service manager, looked after children
- Service manager, family support x 2
- Team manager, referral and assessment team (RAT)
- Specialist team manager x 2
- Targeted team manager x 2
- Team manager representing looked after children (LAC) service
- Social workers x 8 (1 RAT, 2 specialist, 2 targeted, 2 LAC service, 1 complex needs)
- Family support worker x 1
- Personal adviser x 1
- Home visitor x 1
- Policy and procedure development manager
- Manager representing complex needs social work team
- Manager representing IRO service

3.5 The view of the project team, which was confirmed by the feedback received, was that this was a worthwhile and productive session which provided a clear direction of travel for children's social care services in relation to the majority of the agreed key questions.

3.6 This formed the basis of a discussion paper which was sent out to all children's social care staff. Responses were invited from all teams:

3.6.1 Permanence Team

There was a unanimous view on the day that there should be a dedicated team to focus on the needs of children living away from birth families.

a do you agree with this?

b if not, why not?

c if so, what do you think the precise remit for the team should be? eg point of transfer, age range, LAC only or all children etc

3.6.2 Family Support

A clear majority of those present on the day believed that there should be a dedicated team to focus on the needs of children and families requiring non social work support.

a do you agree with this?

b if not, why not?

c if so, what do you think the precise remit for the team should be? eg above or below social care threshold, case holding or providing support to social workers on open cases

There was a view held by a number of participants that some unqualified resources should remain attached to social work teams.

d do you agree with this?

e if not, why not?

f if so, what tasks would be best carried out by these staff?

3.6.3 Specialist/Targeted Social Work Teams

A slim majority of those present on the day believed that the distinction between specialist and targeted social work should be removed.

a do you agree with this?

b if not, why not?

c if so, on what basis should the remaining teams be organised eg geographical, age range or no distinction between teams?

3.6.4 Referral and Assessment

It was suggested by a number of participants that the interface between the referral and assessment team and the receiving teams should be reviewed, in terms of the point at which cases are transferred.

a do you agree with this?

b if not, why not?

c if so, at what point do you believe cases should be transferred from the referral and assessment team to receiving teams?

3.6.5 Other Issues

Is there anything else you would wish to be addressed as part of the review which is not covered above?

- 3.7 The project team held further development days on 5 January 2012 to consider responses received and make decisions on the way forward. Following this, recommendations were then presented to the corporate director, children, education and social care for approval.

4. Service Evaluation

4.1 The children's social care service is subject to a regular inspection by Ofsted. Although this is subject to review and will change in 2012/13, the current regime comprises six key elements as follows:

- Contact, referral and assessment
- Safeguarding and looked after children
- Adoption
- Fostering
- Private fostering
- Children's homes

4.2 With the exception of the unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment services, all Ofsted judgements are graded using the following criteria:

Outstanding (Grade 1)	A service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements
Good (Grade 2)	A service that exceeds minimum requirements
Adequate (Grade 3)	A service that only meets minimum requirements
Inadequate (Grade 4)	A service that does not meet minimum requirements

4.3 The most recent inspection outcomes in each of the above categories are summarised below:

4.3.1 Unannounced Inspection of Contact, Referral and Assessment Services (UICRAS)

This two day inspection takes place on an annual basis and Stockton-on-Tees has received two of these inspections to date. The first inspection in January 2010 identified two areas for priority action and a number of areas for further development. The second inspection in May 2011 confirmed that all of the areas for priority action highlighted at the previous inspection had been satisfactorily addressed with the inspectors commenting that 'assessments were commenced promptly and risk was suitably addressed'. A number of areas for further development were identified.

4.3.2 Safeguarding and Looked After Children (SLAC) Inspection

The SLAC inspection is an announced inspection which takes place over a two week period on a three yearly cycle. Services in Stockton-on-Tees were inspected in September 2010 and assessed as being 'adequate' (safeguarding) and 'good' (looked after children). The inspectors noted the 'improvements in the quality and effectiveness of practice since January 2010'.

4.3.3 Adoption Inspection

Local authority adoption services are inspected on a five yearly cycle and the last inspection of the service in Stockton-on-Tees borough council took place in June 2011. The service was judged to be 'outstanding'. The inspectors noted the 'excellent' outcomes for individual children and commented that 'the service is very well managed both strategically and operationally and has improved practice since the last inspection'.

4.3.4 Fostering Inspection

Local authority fostering services are also inspected on a five yearly cycle and the last inspection of the service in Stockton-on-Tees borough council took place in May 2007. The service was assessed as being 'good'. The inspectors noted the improvements that had been made since the previous inspection and commented that 'the service is well organised and there are effective management structures and procedures in place'.

4.3.5 Private Fostering Inspection

The inspection of private fostering arrangements (children living away from their families but not looked after by the local authority) takes place on a three yearly cycle. The last inspection of services in Stockton-on-Tees took place in July 2008 and services were deemed to be 'good'. Inspectors commented that 'the authority responds well to notifications of private fostering'.

4.3.6 Children's Homes Inspections

Stockton-on-Tees borough council operates four children's homes currently, with a further two scheduled to open during 2011/12. All homes are inspected on an unannounced annual basis. All homes are currently judged to be either 'good' or 'outstanding'.

4.4 Complaints

- 4.4.1 Relatively high levels of complaints are typical in children's social care, as interventions of staff are frequently against the service user's wishes, for example child protection investigations and care proceedings.
- 4.4.2 All complaints are fully investigated according to the statutory children's social care complaints procedure and detailed written responses provided to the complainants. All such responses are monitored by both Head of Service and Corporate Director. In addition, an annual report is presented to Children's Trust Management Team (CTMT) to consider overall complaints activity, trends and any themes emerging
- 4.4.3 Two issues which have featured prominently in complaints from service users are delay and frequent changes of social worker, so any changes proposed must take into account these two important factors.

5. Findings

5.1 The findings are grouped under the following three thematic headings:

- Delivery of the social care service (incorporating key questions 1, 2, 4 and 5)
- Management structure (incorporating key question 3)
- Recruitment and retention of qualified staff (incorporating key question 6)

5.2 Delivery of the Social Care Service

5.2.1 A clear majority were in favour of the removal of the separation of specialist and targeted social work teams, although it should be noted that within some of the targeted social work teams there was an expressed preference for this separation to remain.

5.2.2 Those in support of change argued that the existing structure had resulted in an inconsistent service to families, had impacted negatively on the professional development of newly qualified staff and had given rise to a sense of 'elitism' amongst some staff.

5.2.3 Those in support of status quo believed that the targeted teams had not been given sufficient time to demonstrate a positive impact and also feared that preventative work could be devalued if located within the same team as statutory work.

5.2.4 A more generic team was the preferred option, although there was some expressed concern that this could lead to a marginalising or de-prioritising of preventative social work.

5.2.5 In addition to the unanimous view from the development day, there was an overwhelming level of support amongst all staff for the creation of a permanence team. There was however some slightly differing views about the precise focus of this team, ranging from a narrow focus solely on looked after children to a broader remit of children living away from their birth families on a long term basis.

5.2.6 There was a range of views received regarding family support, with a strong desire from the majority of social work teams to retain these resources within teams in order to most flexibly support social workers in responding to children's needs. Conversely the home visiting teams expressed a clear preference for some resources to be located within a discrete team in order to maintain an effective focus on early intervention.

5.2.7 One consistently expressed view was that this service needed to be available when families in receipt of such services tend to be in greatest need of such support ie early mornings, evenings and weekends.

5.2.8 There was some support for a review of the role of RAT, although this did not appear to be a priority for the majority of staff.

5.2.9 There was a view that family and friend carer assessments should ideally be undertaken by the child placement team, in terms of expertise and independence, although it was acknowledged that there may not be sufficient capacity at present.

5.2.10 Following discussion, the project team identified a small number of posts as being in need of review, on the basis that it may be possible to provide these functions more effectively or efficiently elsewhere.

5.2.11 A number of the existing temporary arrangements were identified by the project team as being necessary to continue, budget permitting.

5.3 Management Structure

- 5.3.1 The loss of a service manager post in children and young people's operational services as a result of the EIG EIT review means that there has to be some change in the management structure and portfolios in this service area.
- 5.3.2 A variety of different structural options were generated on the development day on 18 November 2011.
- 5.3.3 In line with the principle of designing the service from the 'bottom up', at the further development day on 5 January 2012 the project team considered the issues relating to front line service delivery before utilising the twin criteria of synergy between services and equity of workload to determine the most appropriate structural arrangements.

5.4 Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Staff

- 5.4.1 As a result of a well documented national and local shortage of qualified social workers, the existing recruitment and retention scheme was launched in April 2010 in order to recruit and retain specific qualified social work posts designated as 'hard to fill' by corporate director, CESC in conjunction with the head of HR. This scheme expires on 31 March 2012.
- 5.4.2 In addition 'golden hellos' have been attached to posts at the discretion of the corporate director and head of service where there has been an established difficulty in attracting suitably qualified and experienced candidates.
- 5.4.3 Over the duration of the scheme, there has been a noticeable shift in the recruitment market as far as qualified social workers is concerned, with increased numbers of applications being received and the service managing to recruit to near full capacity. It is worth noting however that the majority of applications received continue to be from newly qualified or relatively inexperienced workers which has an impact in terms of workforce capacity.
- 5.4.4 In contrast, there have been continuing difficulties in recruiting to team manager posts, with one specialist post remaining unfilled at the present time after numerous external advertisements.

6. Options

6.1 Delivery of the Social Care Service

6.1.1 Following further discussion by the project team, the preferred option was to remove the distinction between specialist and targeted social work teams and establish six fieldwork teams, nominally geographically based, responsible for the following areas of work:

- Children in need
- Child protection
- Public law outline/care proceedings
- Private law (section 7/37 reports)
- Short/medium term LAC
- Section 47 investigations on active cases

6.1.2 The view of the project team was that this would share the workload more evenly, facilitate a more efficient transfer of work between teams and reduce the number of changes of social worker, thereby alleviating some of the difficulties which have previously impacted negatively on service delivery as evidenced by service user complaints.

6.1.3 Whilst it was agreed at the outset of the review that any disruption to the service should be kept to a minimum, it was believed strongly that in order to ensure an equitable standard of service delivery and to more effectively promote professional development, there should be a range of experience within each team. In order to achieve this, the project team would propose that ideally all fieldwork teams should have at least one level M social worker/principal practitioner.

6.1.4 In line with the overwhelming level of support for the creation of a permanence team, the project team were unanimously of the view that such a team should be established for children aged 0 - 13, with the proposed remit being as follows:

- Long term LAC post final hearing (including family finding)
- Children accommodated subject to section 20, children act 1989. post LAC review endorsing plan of permanence
- Not adoption
- Special guardianship orders where ongoing support required post final hearing (not referrals on closed cases)
- Residence orders where ongoing support required post final hearing (not referrals on closed cases)
- Supervision orders
- Private fostering not included, unless it is clear that this is a permanent placement and ongoing involvement is required

6.1.5 The project team believed that a dedicated team focused solely on the needs of children living away from their birth families would enable a more consistent and higher quality service to be provided, which would in turn militate against the risk of placement breakdown for these children.

6.1.6 It was acknowledged by the project team that such changes would also have an impact on the remit of the existing young people's LAC team so it was proposed to broaden this to become a permanence team for young people aged 14 - 18. In addition to the current responsibilities, the team would assume responsibility for:

- All referrals on young people aged 16/17 (to be transferred direct from first contact)
- Longer term support to young people aged 14+ subject to residence orders/supervision orders/special guardianship orders

- 6.1.7 The possibility of combining these two teams to form a single permanence team for children and young people aged 0 – 18 was considered and had some merit but this was ultimately rejected by the project team due to the number of staff involved. In order to avoid unnecessary changes in social worker, it is therefore proposed that children aged 14+ are only transferred between teams when it is in their interests rather than this being a rigid demarcation between the two teams.
- 6.1.8 In terms of family support, there was a range of views regarding future arrangements. Although there was a number of staff who believed that all such resources should remain attached to social work teams, the project team concluded that due to number of staff involved (30+), this was not a viable option.
- 6.1.9 In the light of this, discussions focused on the following questions:
- What should the precise role and function of a family support team be?
 - What would the make up of the team need to be to perform this function?
 - Where would this team best fit in the structure?
 - What resources, if any, should remain attached to teams?
 - What tasks would be performed by these staff?
- 6.1.10 Following discussion it was agreed tasks should be divided as follows:
- Family support team:
 - acting as lead worker on parenting assessments
 - performing lead professional role for children and families at level 2/3 on continuum of need (below social care threshold)
 - leading on group work eg delivery of parenting programmes
 - carrying out discrete pieces of work on cases held by social workers eg longer term outreach/support, contributing to life story work, participating in parenting assessments etc
 - providing welfare support to families entitled to early learning for disadvantaged two year olds
 - commissioning/coordination of externally provided parenting programmes
 - Workers attached to fieldwork teams:
 - acting as key worker for children in need cases (above social care threshold)
 - undertaking emergency outreach/welfare visits
 - transporting children
 - supervising emergency contact sessions
- 6.1.11 This option would give the benefit of some resources continuing to be readily available to support the work of fieldwork teams in a responsive and flexible manner according to the needs of children. Equally, the project team considered that the creation of a dedicated family support team alongside this was crucial in order to ensure that such services are targeted at children under the social care threshold who are most at risk of escalation across the Stockton-on-Tees continuum of needs and services. Such early intervention services are vital not only to ensure that children's needs are met at as early a stage as possible, but also to reduce the need for more costly interventions at a later date.
- 6.1.12 Whilst the work of the family support team will be predominantly under the social care threshold, the view of the project team was that the team manager should be social work qualified in order to ensure work is effectively and consistently risk managed in line with the Stockton-on-Tees continuum of needs and services.
- 6.1.13 In order to ensure that these services are available at times when families are in need of such support, it is proposed that the core hours for these services are designated as 7.30am – 8.00pm, Mon - Fri and 9.00am – 5.00pm, Sat - Sun.

- 6.1.14 Although there had been some suggestions that there should be a more fundamental review of the current role of RAT, the view of the project team was that this should be limited to an amendment to the existing protocol for handover of cases at initial child protection conference. The view was that if cases were handed over at the first core group meeting, this would avoid the issues currently being experienced at initial child protection conferences which had been the cause of some criticism from service users and other professionals.
- 6.1.15 The project team supported the proposal that family and friend foster carer assessments should be undertaken by the child placement team, in order to provide a degree of independence and ensure consistency with other foster carer assessments. It was acknowledged that the team would require additional resources in order to be able to respond to such requests in a timely manner.
- 6.1.16 It was also acknowledged that there is an imbalance between RAT and other social work teams currently, in terms of the experience profile of social workers. It is therefore proposed by the project team that level M workers should be more evenly distributed across the service. This would ensure that there is an equitable standard of service delivery across the service and also more effectively promote professional development which is considered crucial in terms of recruitment and retention of high quality social work staff.
- 6.1.17 The project team identified a small number of existing posts as being in need of review, on the basis that these functions were no longer necessary or that it may be possible to provide these functions more effectively or efficiently elsewhere.
- 6.1.18 The project team believed that a number of the existing temporary arrangements had been instrumental in the overall progress made by the children's social care service and therefore should be continued, budget permitting.

6.2 Management Structure

- 6.2.1 It was acknowledged that both of the options proposed for consideration had associated pros and cons.
- 6.2.2 Although option A (appendix 2) was based on four clear and logical management portfolios, it was acknowledged that there was a significant inequity in the distribution of workload pressures.
- 6.2.3 Conversely, option B (appendix 3) resulted in a far more equitable distribution of workload pressures although was based on a split of the fieldwork teams into two separate management portfolios, which gave rise to some concern about potential inconsistency in service delivery.
- 6.2.4 On balance, the project team therefore had a clear preference for option B.

6.3 Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Staff

- 6.3.1 Due to the significant changes in the external recruitment market over the last two years, it is not proposed to extend the existing recruitment and retention scheme when it ceases on 31 March 2012.
- 6.3.2 Should any recruitment and retention issues continue, these will be looked at on a case by case basis by the corporate director, CESC in conjunction with the head of HR.

6.3.3 In the course of discussions within the project team, it became apparent that there is a degree of confusion currently regarding the level M grade. At present this grade is only available to a limited number of staff within predefined teams. Given the need to retain high quality staff across the whole service, the consensus within the project team was that this grade should be available for all social workers to aspire to, subject to a rigorous assessment of their performance.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 This EIT review has been a timely opportunity to review the existing children's social care service and ensure that this provides the best possible outcomes for children and families in Stockton-on-Tees within the available resources.
- 7.2 There has been a high level of interest and engagement from staff in the review and the proposed recommendations are heavily influenced by staff and indeed service user feedback.
- 7.3 In general terms, the children's social care service provides positive outcomes for children in Stockton-on-Tees, as evidenced by a range of external inspections and internal quality assurance mechanisms.
- 7.4 Although a range of alternative models of service delivery were considered as part of the review, based on practice in other local authorities nationally, the project team did not consider a fundamental review of structures or processes to be necessary, or indeed desirable. In addition, some areas of the service had recently been subject to individual service reviews. In the interests of continuous improvement a number of areas were identified where further evolutionary change, as opposed to transformation, was deemed to be required.
- 7.5 The proposed recommendations are designed to achieve three key aims:
- To make the service more responsive and flexible to the needs of service users, by aiming to reduce the number of unnecessary changes of social worker and team required for any children and families in receipt of social care services.
 - To ensure the service is better able to cope with increasing workload pressures, by sharing the workload more evenly across social work teams and enhancing the professional development of staff.
 - To enable the service to be provided in the most efficient and cost effective manner by reducing the current reliance on temporary arrangements and costly agency staff.
- 7.6 It is important to stress that should the current workload pressures begin to reduce over time the proposed structure will enable the level of service provision to be scaled back according to need.
- 7.7 Taken together, these recommendations are considered crucial in order to ensure the service continues to move forward in a positive direction and is able to achieve the best possible outcomes for children in Stockton-on-Tees within the available resources.

8. Recommendations

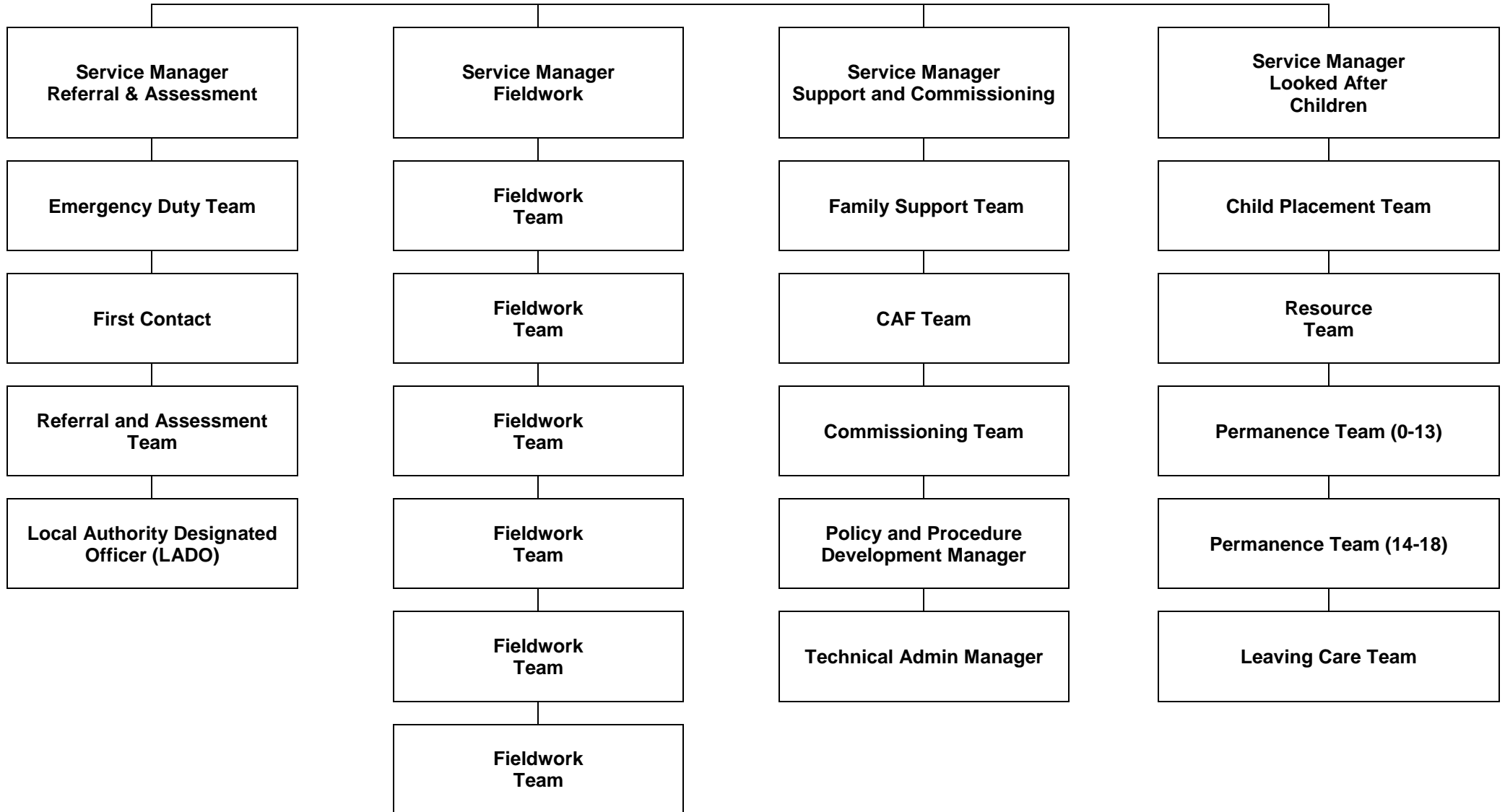
- 8.1 That the existing separation between specialist and targeted social work teams is removed and six fieldwork teams are created as outlined in section 6.1.1.
- 8.2 That a permanence team (0 – 13) is established as outlined in section 6.1.4.
- 8.3 That the remit of the young people's LAC team is reviewed and this team becomes the permanence team (14 – 18) in order to work coherently alongside the permanence team (0 – 13) as outlined in section 6.1.6.
- 8.4 That a family support team is established as outlined in sections 6.1.10 – 6.1.13.
- 8.5 That some family support resources are attached to fieldwork teams as outlined in section 6.1.10.
- 8.6 That the existing protocol for the transfer of work between RAT and the longer term social work teams is reviewed as outlined in section 6.1.14.
- 8.7 That family and friend foster carer assessments are undertaken by the child placement team as outlined in section 6.1.15.
- 8.8 That level M workers are spread evenly across fieldwork teams and that some less experienced workers are moved into the referral and assessment team in order to achieve a more balanced workforce across the children's social care service as outlined in section 6.1.16.
- 8.9 That a small number of posts are formally reviewed to determine whether these functions could be more efficiently or effectively provided from elsewhere in the council as outlined in section 6.1.17.
- 8.10 That a number of the existing temporary arrangements are 'mainstreamed' by establishing substantive posts to perform these functions as outlined in section 6.1.18.
- 8.11 That the proposed new management structure option B (appendix 3) is adopted as outlined in sections 6.2.1 – 6.2.4.
- 8.12 That the recruitment and retention scheme ceases at 31 March 2012 as outlined in section 6.3.1.
- 8.13 That the level M grade is reviewed as outlined in section 6.3.3.

Appendix 1
EIT Review of Children's Social Care Scope

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Select Committee: Arts, Leisure and Culture	Type of Review: Gateway
<p>1. What services are included? Children's social care service, excluding child placements (subject to previous EIT review):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First Contact ▪ Referral and Assessment Team ▪ Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) ▪ Specialist Social Work Teams ▪ Targeted Social Work Teams ▪ Common Assessment Framework (CAF) Team ▪ Looked After Children and Leaving Care Teams ▪ Child Placement Team ▪ Resources Team (including oversight of Hartburn Lodge) ▪ Complex Needs Social Work Team ▪ Review Unit ▪ Contact Service ▪ Home Visiting Service 	
<p>2. The Thematic Select Committee's / EIT Project Team overall aim / objectives in doing this work are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To identify options for future strategy / policy / service provision that will deliver efficiency savings and sustain / improve high quality outcomes for Stockton-on Tees Borough Council residents. ▪ To ascertain the optimum structure and line management arrangements to ensure efficient and effective service delivery, based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - feedback from service users, staff and key stakeholders - regional and national best practice. ▪ To ensure that the available resources are maximised in order to effectively respond to the current workload pressures. ▪ To consider how the service can best respond to the recommendations arising from the Munro review of child protection. 	
<p>3. Expected duration of enquiry? What are the key milestones? 6 months (commencing October 2011): Consideration of Scope – ALC Select Committee 26/10/11 Base line challenge – ALC Select Committee 01/12/11 Options appraisal – ALC Select Committee 23/02/12 Final Approval – Cabinet 08/03/12</p>	

<p>4. In addition to analysis and benchmarking costs, performance, assets etc, what other processes are likely to be required to inform the review? (e.g. site visits; observations; face-to-face questioning, telephones survey, written questionnaire, co-option of expert witnesses etc).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff consultation and involvement possibly via questionnaire and/or focus groups. ▪ Legal advice. ▪ Visits to/discussions with other local authorities. ▪ Other evidence of national best practice eg Ofsted Inspections and surveys.
<p>5. How will key partners and/or the public be involved and at what stages?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service user feedback, using existing information/mechanisms where available during base line challenge phase. ▪ Key partners to be involved via existing meetings eg Stockton-on-Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board, Children’s Trust Board where possible during base line challenge and options appraisal.
<p>6. Please give an initial indication how transformation will enable efficiencies and improvements to be delivered by this EIT review</p> <p>The children’s social care service is heavily regulated through legislation, guidance and local procedures so there is relatively limited scope for genuine innovation or transformation. Notwithstanding this it is important that current structures and ways of working are subject to challenge and review in order to determine the most appropriate ways of working going forward.</p>

Appendix 2
Children and Young People's Operational Services
Children's Social Care Structure Option A



**Appendix 3
Children and Young People's Operational Services
Children's Social Care Structure Option B**

