

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

13 JUNE 2013

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Children and Young People – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Mrs McCoy

OFSTED INSPECTION OF CHILD PROTECTION

1. Summary

Ofsted undertook an unannounced child protection inspection in January 2013, which was the first inspection in the North East region under the new framework. The overall judgement was adequate.

A number of areas for further development were identified, particularly in relation to the Referral and Assessment Team, which reflected our self assessment of the service at the time.

An action plan has now been developed to respond to the recommendations arising from the inspection Work and this has been approved by Stockton-on-Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board (SLSCB).

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Endorse the Action Plan set out in Appendix 1.
2. Agree that Children and Young People Select Committee receive regular reports and updates so that progress can be monitored.
3. Consider the additional staffing resources set out in Sections 13 - 33.
4. Approve the proposed format for future children's social care activity and performance reports to Cabinet as outlined in Appendix 2.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

The recent Ofsted child protection inspection has resulted in a number of recommendations which Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council is required to respond to.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members) should consider whether they have a personal interest in any item, as defined in paragraphs 9 and 11 of the Council's code of conduct and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with and/or taking account of paragraphs 12 - 17 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest, as described in paragraph 16 of the code, in any business of the Council he/she must then, in accordance with paragraph 18 of the code, consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest and the business:-

- affects the members financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code, or
- relates to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to the member or any person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code.

A Member with a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, may attend the meeting but must not take part in the consideration and voting upon the relevant item of business. However, a member with such an interest may make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to that business before the business is considered or voted on, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under a statutory right or otherwise (**paragraph 19** of the code)

Members may participate in any discussion and vote on a matter in which they have an interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, where that interest relates to functions of the Council detailed in **paragraph 20** of the code.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

It is a criminal offence for a member to participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which he/she has a disclosable pecuniary interest (and where an appropriate dispensation has not been granted) **paragraph 21** of the code.

Members are required to comply with any procedural rule adopted by the Council which requires a member to leave the meeting room whilst the meeting is discussing a matter in which that member has a disclosable pecuniary interest (**paragraph 22** of the code).

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OFSTED INSPECTION OF CHILD PROTECTION

SUMMARY

Ofsted undertook an unannounced child protection inspection in January 2013, which was the first inspection under the new framework in the North East region. The overall judgement was adequate.

A number of areas for further development were identified, particularly in relation to the Referral and Assessment Team, which reflected our self assessment of the service at the time.

An action plan has now been developed to respond to the recommendations arising from the inspection and this has been approved by Stockton-on-Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board (SLSCB).

The recommendations arising from the inspection and increasing workload pressures also have implications for the current staffing levels within the children's social care service which require consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Endorse the Action Plan set out in Appendix 1.
2. Agree that Children and Young People Select Committee receive regular reports and updates so that progress can be monitored.
3. Consider the additional staffing resources set out in Sections 13 - 33.
4. Approve the proposed format for future children's social care activity and performance reports to Cabinet as outlined in Appendix 2.

DETAIL

Inspection Overview

1. As previously reported to Cabinet, Ofsted undertook the unannounced child protection inspection between 7 and 16 January 2013. This was the first inspection in the North East region under the new framework, which is generally acknowledged to be a harder test.
2. In the course of the inspection the inspectors looked at over 100 cases and were satisfied that appropriate action had been taken to protect all children at risk of immediate harm. There were a number of areas for further development identified, particularly in relation to the Referral and Assessment Team (RAT), which reflected our self assessment of the service at the time. The overall judgement was adequate.
3. The report, which was published on the Ofsted website on 15 February 2013, contains a number of recommendations, divided into three categories; those to be completed immediately, within 3 months and within 6 months.
4. Children Education and Social Care (CESC) and partner agencies have developed an Action Plan (Appendix 1) which has now been approved by Stockton-on-Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board (SLSCB).
5. As of 23 April 2013, 40 Local Authorities had received an unannounced child protection inspection. The outcomes of these inspections are as follows:
 - 4 Good (10%)
 - 23 Adequate (57.5%)
 - 13 Inadequate (32.5%)

Service Improvement

6. Whilst there was a range of recommendations for children's social care services and partner agencies to consider, the inspectors were very clear that the primary area of concern related to the functioning of RAT.
7. Temporary arrangements have been put in place to address the recommendations requiring immediate action, whilst discussions have taken place regarding longer term options. A management development day involving the Corporate Director CESC, Head of Children and Young People's Services and key Service/Team Managers took place on 1 February 2013. Proposals arising from the day were subsequently shared with all children's social care staff for comment and debate. The proposals contained within this report are the result of these discussions.
8. The current substantive staffing complement within RAT is as follows:
 - 1 x full time equivalent (FTE) Team Manager
 - 1 x FTE Deputy Manager
 - 10 x FTE Social Workers
 - 1 x FTE Family Worker
9. In order to respond to the workload pressures which have been reported to Cabinet on a regular basis, additional temporary agency staff have been agreed by Corporate Director as follows:
 - 1 x FTE Deputy Manager
 - 5 x FTE Social Workers

10. At any given time, RAT may also have Student Social Workers on placement with them. There are 3 at the time of writing.
11. Prior to the inspection, a number of concerns about the functioning of RAT had been identified through internal management and quality assurance systems and these were in the process of being addressed.
12. Every initial and core assessment has to be quality assured and agreed by a manager. This involves reading all of the documentation and making a decision as to the most appropriate way forward for the child concerned. This task has to be completed within a timely fashion as assessments are not regarded as being completed until the manager has made this decision and signed the necessary paperwork. The Team Manager or Deputy Manager would also be required to chair a range of meetings such as planning meetings and strategy meetings in respect of individual children. In addition, the Team Manager is responsible for all aspects of the team's functions including work allocation, supervision of staff, workload review and performance management.
13. In the light of this, the team is not considered to be viable at its current size and so it is proposed to divide RAT into two separate teams, nominally divided on a geographical basis. This has the benefit of retaining a discrete focus on referral and assessment work, whilst ensuring the teams are maintained at a manageable size and aligning the teams more closely with Fieldwork teams.
14. Based on current workloads, the make up of the two teams would be as follows:
 - 1 x FTE Team Manager
 - 1 x FTE Deputy Manager
 - 7 x FTE Social Workers
 - 1 x FTE Family Worker
15. Whilst Ofsted commented favourably on the functioning of First Contact, it is also intended to review the current remit and parameters of the team. As part of this, it is proposed to pilot an enhanced social work presence within the team which could potentially prevent some inappropriate referrals entering the system and also reduce the need for some of the lower priority work to proceed to RAT, which would then allow RAT to focus on the higher priority children in need and child protection cases.
16. The remit of First Contact is also currently being considered as part of the Access to Services review.
17. In order to strengthen the working arrangements between First Contact and the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) Team and Family Support Team, these two teams will be moved into a newly reconfigured First Response service area. This also has the added benefit of helping to retain balanced service manager portfolios.

Wider Service Pressures

18. On 3 September 2012, at the launch of the new structure arising from the Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation (EIT) Review of Children's Social Care, there were 1194 children active to the Fieldwork service. This includes Child Protection, Public Law Outline (PLO) [pre Care Proceedings]/Care Proceedings, Looked After Children (LAC) and Children in Need. There were no unallocated cases at this point.

19. In terms of average Social Worker caseloads across the 6 teams, this equates to the following:

North 1 - 19.9 children
North 2 - 31.1 children
North 3 - 31.1 children

South 1 - 26.3 children
South 2 - 29.3 children
South 3 - 23.1 children
20. As of 20 February 2013, the overall number of children active to the Fieldwork service had increased by a further 176 children to 1370. Of these, 76 children were unallocated.
21. In terms of average Social Worker caseloads across the 6 teams, this equates to the following:

North 1 - 24.9 children
North 2 - 33.2 children
North 3 - 33.2 children

South 1 - 35.7 children
South 2 - 33.6 children
South 3 - 32.3 children
22. According to Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's caseload management system, the optimum caseload for an experienced social worker would be in the region of 25 children.
23. The average caseloads across the North East region range from 21 to 32, with Stockton-on-Tees currently having the highest caseloads and approximately half of the authorities having caseloads under 25.
24. The current situation is not sustainable and is placing social workers and managers under extreme pressure. It is also having a significant impact on key performance indicators as evidenced by the recent inspection and our own internal performance monitoring information. It will be extremely difficult to respond positively to the wider service issues raised by Ofsted in this climate. Notwithstanding this, staff morale remains reasonably strong and the workforce continues to display a high level of goodwill.
25. It is calculated that an additional 6 experienced Social Workers would be required in order to return caseloads to post EIT levels. This would result in average caseloads of approximately 25.
26. This would result in Team Managers in the Fieldwork service typically having responsibility for 8 Social Workers, a Senior Family Worker and a Family Worker ie 10 staff in total. Given the range of tasks outlined in section 11, this is considered to be the maximum safe span of control for Team Managers in this service area.
27. Whilst we continue to be able to recruit Social Workers, the overwhelming majority of applications received are from newly qualified practitioners. In order to be able to recruit more experienced Social Workers and retain a more balanced workforce profile, we would propose to reintroduce a 'golden hello' payment but restrict this to practitioners with significant post qualifying experience.

Future Pressures

28. In the medium to long term, the development of, and investment in, a successful Early Help Strategy is seen as crucial in ultimately reducing the number of children and young people requiring intensive, and expensive, social care intervention.
29. As part of this overall strategy, one option will be to increase investment in family support services with a view to preventing some children moving across the continuum of need or 'windscreen' and therefore requiring specialist intervention.
30. An expansion of the newly created Family Support Team would be one possible way of achieving this. Given the number of staff in the team currently, this would require the creation of two teams working in parallel; either on a functional or geographical basis.
31. The existing Deputy Manager post could be converted to a Team Manager post and the creation of 4 additional Family Worker posts would result in two teams of 7 workers which would significantly enhance current capacity.
32. Whilst it is important to stress that this would not be a panacea for the current workload pressures it would strengthen our resources for those families who are already in the CAF arena and at risk of moving into the child protection or looked after systems. This could be initially considered as a time limited investment in order to test out whether this is likely to be an effective longer term strategic option.

Future Workload Pressures Reporting to Cabinet

33. In light of the inspection it has been decided to review the content and format of future children's social care workload pressures reports to Cabinet
34. In addition to a range of measures to illustrate the pressures experienced by the service, a number of performance indicators will also be included so that Cabinet can more closely monitor the impact of these pressures on performance and outcomes for children.
35. A suggested template is included at Appendix 2. This revised format uses a 'process model' as a way of illustrating:
 - the flow of business into children's social care (inputs)
 - the efficiency and effectiveness of the service in managing the business (processes)
 - the impact that these processes have on the children and young people involved (outputs)
36. Given the importance and profile of these issues it is proposed that the new activity and performance reports are brought to Cabinet on a bi monthly basis ie every alternate Cabinet meeting.
37. A decision has recently been made to commission an external research study in order to gain a deeper understanding of the reasons behind these ongoing workload pressures. Discussions are currently taking place with the Institute of Local Governance (ILG) in order to agree the focus of this research and any significant outcomes emerging from this be included in future reports to Cabinet.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

38. The current substantive staffing complement within RAT, calculated on the basis of workloads at 31 December 2011 as part of the EIT review of children's social care, is costed at £519, 551 per annum.
39. In order to respond to the current level of workload pressures, the additional agency staff employed would cost £276,410 per annum based on a full year projection.
40. The arrangements proposed in sections 13 and 14 would cost an estimated £831,195 per annum ie a budget pressure of £311,644 per annum.
41. When this is compared with actual expenditure, taking into account the agency staff currently employed, the difference between actual and estimated expenditure is £35,234 per annum based on a full year projection.
42. The additional Social Workers outlined in section 25 would represent a further budget pressure of £244,906 per annum. At any given time there are supernumerary agency staff in post (there are currently 3), so the difference between estimated and actual expenditure would be significantly less than this figure.
43. The creation of an additional Family Support Team as outlined in section 32 would be a further budget pressure of £92,749 per annum.
44. Should these proposals be agreed, the additional resources required would be funded from managed surplus in the medium term. This is referred to in the update on the medium term financial plan (MTFP) report which is also on the agenda for this Cabinet meeting.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

45. As outlined in previous reports to Cabinet, these workload pressures have resulted in a corresponding increase in the numbers of children subject to care proceedings. This in turn has placed a significant additional burden on Legal Services. Additional resources have been agreed previously in order to respond to this, although this will continue to be monitored closely.
46. The recently published information by the Child and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) suggested that during 2012/13, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council were second only to Blackpool in the numbers of care applications (care proceedings) issued. This illustrates the scale of the children's social care workload pressures which have been reported to Cabinet on a regular basis.

RISK ASSESSMENT

47. There are three risks relating to this area of activity which have been already been identified and included in the service group risk register. These are listed below with their current risk score.
 - Demographic changes and demand for services (CESC02)
Current score: 16
 - Finance & resource availability in all CESC Services (CESC07)
Current score: 12
 - Serious injury or death leading to a Serious Case Review (CESC14)
Current score: 15

48. These risks will continue to be monitored at Children and Young People's Management Team (CYPMT) and the risk scores amended as appropriate. Any resulting changes will be fed into the corporate risk register and highlighted to Cabinet.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

49. The safeguarding of children is a key component of the children and young people theme in the Sustainable Community Strategy. Improving outcomes for children by effective service delivery will also impact on their potential quality of life in adulthood.
50. The effective safeguarding of children and young people will also have a significant impact on the community safety agenda.

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

51. This report has not been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment because it is not seeking approval for a new policy, strategy or fundamental change in the delivery of a service.

CORPORATE PARENTING

52. For those children who are looked after, the Council has a responsibility as Corporate Parent to ensure that their needs are appropriately met.
53. As service pressures and workload increases, this could potentially impact on the Council's ability to effectively fulfil its responsibilities as Corporate Parent.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

54. No consultation has taken place in relation to this issue at this stage.

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Background Papers

Inspection of Local Authority Arrangements for the Protection of Children in Stockton-on-Tees
Ofsted 2013

Continuum of Need and Services
Stockton-on-Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board 2013

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors

Not applicable.

Property

There are no implications for Council property.

Appendix 1

Action Plan in response to the recommendations of the January 2013 Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority arrangements for the protection of children – final version signed off 17 May 2013

Recommendation No. 1 - for immediate improvement

Strengthen management oversight, in the referral and assessment team, including regular audit of cases, to ensure that the system for risk assessment is embedded and effective.

Outcome: what difference will these actions make?

- Children's needs will be identified and assessed in a more timely manner.

... and how will we know?

- The quality of social work intervention and management oversight will be monitored through monthly case file audits.

What we will do

1. Interim Manager to be put in place, pending fuller review of workloads and staffing levels across Referral & Assessment, Fieldwork and Family Support Teams.
2. Introduce a robust risk assessment.
3. Undertake a review of the Referral & Assessment Team (RAT).
4. Implement the review of the RAT structure.
5. Report to CMT and Cabinet on wider service pressures, including future implications of the Early Help Strategy, and associated staffing requirements.
6. DCS and HoS to undertake monthly audits of RAT cases (in addition to existing monthly audit programme).
7. Peer Review of RAT to take place, as part of regional sector led improvement programme.

Appendix 1

Action Plan in response to the recommendations of the January 2013 Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority arrangements for the protection of children – final version signed off 17 May 2013

Recommendation No. 2 - for immediate improvement

Ensure that performance on the timely completion of initial and core assessments is subject to a robust review and action taken to drive improvements in performance.

Outcome: what difference will these actions make?

- Assessments will be completed to a higher standard and in a timely fashion.

... and how will we know?

- Case file audits will evidence improved quality of assessments.
- Timeliness of assessments will improve in line with a target to be confirmed when arrangements for a single assessment process are confirmed, in line with new Working Together guidance.

What we will do

1. Review current format for reporting of timeliness of assessments.
2. Introduce revised weekly, monthly and quarterly reporting.
3. Monitor and challenge performance through the CYP Social Care monthly Performance Clinic.
4. Independent internal scrutiny of the revised monitoring arrangements to be put in place via Resources Service Grouping on behalf of the Chief Executive.

Appendix 1

Action Plan in response to the recommendations of the January 2013 Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority arrangements for the protection of children – final version signed off 17 May 2013

Recommendation No. 3 - for immediate improvement

Ensure that children and young people are always seen as part of an assessment of their needs.

Outcome: what difference will these actions make?

- The quality of assessments will be improved because the needs of the child / young person have been taken into account.

... and how will we know?

- Quarterly case file audit monitoring reports to CYPMT will highlight any instances where a child / young person has not been seen as part of the assessment. The cases where this arises will be expected to be zero for any assessment commenced after 1st April 2013.

What we will do

1. All Managers to be briefed about the importance of seeing the child or young person when undertaking assessments.
2. Review Supervision guidance / checklist to ensure that this issue is covered.
3. Ensure that this practice is monitored via the programme of monthly case file audits, and is reported to CYPMT on a quarterly basis.
4. Implement new item in national Children's Safeguarding Performance Information framework, regarding proportion of cases where the lead social worker has seen the child in accordance with the timescales specified in the CP plan.

Appendix 1

Action Plan in response to the recommendations of the January 2013 Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority arrangements for the protection of children – final version signed off 17 May 2013

Recommendation No. 4 - for improvement within 3 months

Review the screening of domestic abuse referrals to children's social care to ensure that there is effective risk assessment to reduce the number of inappropriate referrals.

Outcomes: what difference will these actions make?

- There will be improved targeting of social care assessment and support for children at risk from domestic violence.

... and how will we know?

- Reduction in domestic abuse referrals to Children's Social Care which result in 'no further action required'.

What we will do

1. Review current risk assessment procedures with the Police, including screening arrangements.
2. Recommend revised approach to SLSCB.

Appendix 1

Action Plan in response to the recommendations of the January 2013 Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority arrangements for the protection of children – final version signed off 17 May 2013

Recommendation No. 5 - for improvement within 3 months

Ensure that:

- a. all assessments of children, including the common assessment framework (CAF), give effective consideration to a child or young person's ethnicity, culture and religion, in order to inform planning and interventions; and
- b. children's views inform assessments and planning.

Outcomes: what difference will these actions make?

- The quality of assessments will be improved because the views of the child / young person have been taken into account.
- Planned interventions for children will be more effective as they will reflect any particular needs arising from their ethnicity, culture and religion.

... and how will we know?

- Through quarterly case file audit monitoring reports to CYPMT.
- Feedback from CAF quality assurance reports.

What we will do (5a)

1. Review current procedures for assessments, including CAF, to identify any revision required, or to reaffirm and re-launch relevant aspects.
2. Review training needs and current training available.
3. Use best practice in other services (e.g. Schools; SACRE; Complex Needs Team) to inform learning and development in social care.

What we will do (5b)

4. Review current procedures regarding the seeking of children's views, and update if required.
5. Undertake a thematic case file audit 3 months following the review of procedures, to assess impact of revised approach.

Appendix 1

Action Plan in response to the recommendations of the January 2013 Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority arrangements for the protection of children – final version signed off 17 May 2013

Recommendation No. 6 - for improvement within 3 months

Ensure the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) effectively challenges the council and partner agencies and addresses issues identified about the performance of services.

Outcomes: what difference will these actions make?

- There will be a culture of greater openness and challenge at Board & Executive Group meetings.

... and how will we know?

- Observation of meetings, feedback from Board and Executive Group members, and minutes of meetings, will indicate greater levels of challenge and subsequent impact on practice.

What we will do

1. Each agency represented on the Executive Group to identify the 'top 6' issues which impact on effective partnership working.
2. Future Executive Group meetings to include consideration of the above issues as a standing agenda item.
3. Through the above process, single key themes to be identified for subsequent in-depth investigation and problem solving by the Board.
4. Management of Board and Executive Group agendas and meetings will ensure that opportunity is provided for full participation and robust challenge by all agencies.

Appendix 1

Action Plan in response to the recommendations of the January 2013 Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority arrangements for the protection of children – final version signed off 17 May 2013

Recommendation No. 7 - for improvement within 3 months

Improve the quality, timeliness and recording of supervision to ensure consistent standards of practice across all teams in accordance with the authority's policy.

Outcomes: what difference will these actions make?

- Supervision will be more consistent, leading to improved practice standards.

... and how will we know?

- Feedback from staff survey.
- Through results of the thematic audit in Q3 2013~14.

What we will do

1. Review current supervision arrangements with the Children's Social Care Management Team.
2. Commission any training required to meet needs identified from the above review.
3. Service Managers to monitor supervision practice as a regular supervision item with Team Managers.
4. Consider if any changes to procedures/documents are required (including frequency of supervision)
5. Undertake a thematic audit of this area of practice.

Appendix 1

Action Plan in response to the recommendations of the January 2013 Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority arrangements for the protection of children – final version signed off 17 May 2013

Recommendation No. 8 - for improvement within 6 months

- a. Improve the quality of case recording; and
- b. Ensure that chronologies are present on all cases.

Outcomes: what difference will these actions make?

- The quality of case recording, including chronologies, will improve.

... and how will we know?

- Through quarterly case file audit monitoring reports to CYPMT.

What we will do (8a)

1. Review current case recording arrangements with the Children's Social Care Management Team, taking account of 'What Good Looks Like'.
2. Identify any training and support needs and consider an 'amnesty' approach.
3. Examine feasibility of any further streamlining of documents and case management system (RAISE).

What we will do (8b)

4. Clear guidance on chronologies to be put in place for all staff.
5. Ensure compliance with new guidance through existing case file audit process and quarterly monitoring reports to CYPMT.

Appendix 1

Action Plan in response to the recommendations of the January 2013 Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority arrangements for the protection of children – final version signed off 17 May 2013

Recommendation No. 9 - for improvement within 6 months

Ensure that the format for recording child protection plans is simplified so the key areas of risk are prioritised and parents and carers can understand what needs to happen to ensure that children are protected, and that outcomes and timescales are clearly set out within plans.

Outcomes: what difference will these actions make?

- CP plans will be more effectively targeted on needs.
- There will be more effective monitoring of interventions for children with a CP plan.
- There will be improved information about outcomes of CP plans.

... and how will we know?

- Feedback from Peer Review.
- Through results of case file audits.

What we will do

1. Review CP Plan formats from other LAs and identify best practice, in conjunction with IROs and Social Care Managers.
2. Draft of a revised CP Plan format to be submitted to CYPMT.
3. Consult with a sample of parents / carers.
4. Agree final version of revised format, along with any required guidance or training for implementation.

Appendix 1

Action Plan in response to the recommendations of the January 2013 Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority arrangements for the protection of children – final version signed off 17 May 2013

Recommendation No. 10 - for improvement within 6 months

Improve children and young people's access to advocacy services

Outcomes: what difference will these actions make?

- The voice of the child will be represented more effectively.

... and how will we know?

- Monitoring of service take-up and feedback from children and young people using the service.

What we will do

1. Ensure an Advocacy Service is in place.
2. Make staff aware of the service.
3. Review current procedures to identify any updating required.
4. Monitor take-up of the service through contract monitoring arrangements (both LAC and non-LAC).

Appendix 1

Action Plan in response to the recommendations of the January 2013 Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority arrangements for the protection of children – final version signed off 17 May 2013

Recommendation No.11 - for improvement within 6 months

Support and improve children's attendance at child protection conferences and core groups.

Outcomes: what difference will these actions make?

- The views of the child will be taken into account more effectively in decisions regarding child protection plans.

... and how will we know?

- Through quarterly reports on attendance at CP Conferences / Reviews, to SLSCB P&P Task Group and CYPMT.
- Feedback from Conference Chairs on children's participation in the meetings.

What we will do

1. Clarify guidance regarding age of children invited to CP conferences (all 8yrs+) and support available to them.
2. Review training for Chairs regarding engagement of children in CP conferences.
3. Monitor attendance and participation of children at CP conferences as part of quarterly reports on CP Conferences / Reviews to SLSCB P&P Task Group and CYPMT.
4. Discussion paper to be taken to SLSCB on issues regarding children attending core groups.
5. Seek the views of children subject to a CP plan on this recommendation and advise SLSCB.

Appendix 1

Action Plan in response to the recommendations of the January 2013 Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority arrangements for the protection of children – final version signed off 17 May 2013

Recommendation No. 12 - for improvement within 6 months

Ensure that children and young people's views are sought and responded to in developing strategic plans and service improvements.

Outcomes: what difference will these actions make?

- Strategic developments in Child Protection services will better reflect the needs of children and young people.

... and how will we know?

- Feedback from the group of children and young people themselves.

What we will do

1. Establish a group of children who are / have recently been the subject of a child protection plan, to provide a forum for consultation and advice regarding service developments.
2. Above group to report to SLSCB with recommendations for a sustainable future model of engaging with children subject to CP plans.
3. Work with the CYP Consortium to identify ways in which the VCS can support engagement with vulnerable children.

Appendix 1

Action Plan in response to the recommendations of the January 2013 Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority arrangements for the protection of children – final version signed off 17 May 2013

Recommendation No. 13 - for improvement within 6 months

Ensure a multi-agency early intervention strategy is in place to coordinate preventative services.

Outcomes: what difference will these actions make?

- There will be improved targeting of resources using evidence-based, outcome focused commissioning.

... and how will we know?

- Monitoring of the Early Help Strategy by the Health & Wellbeing Board and Partnership, along with contract monitoring results, will indicate positive outcomes from commissioned provision.

What we will do

1. Hold Accelerated Learning Event to engage stakeholders in identifying key issues, challenges and best practice.
2. Prepare draft Early Help Strategy, focused on preventing vulnerable children falling in to the criteria for statutory social care support.

Appendix 1

Action Plan in response to the recommendations of the January 2013 Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority arrangements for the protection of children – final version signed off 17 May 2013

Recommendation No. 14 - for improvement within 6 months

Ensure that strategic plans identify the improvements in outcomes expected to be achieved and the timescales for these to be accomplished.

Outcomes: what difference will these actions make?

- There will be clearer evidence of outcomes, leading to improved commissioning decisions and value for money.

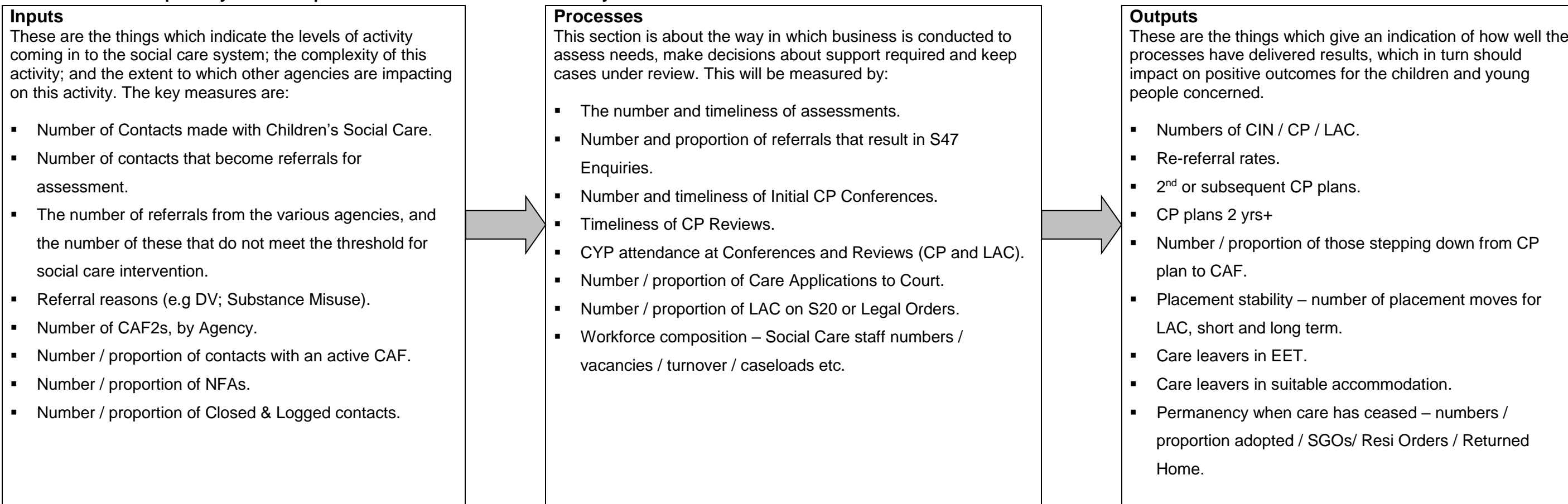
... and how will we know?

- Monitoring of Action Plans and performance will give a clearer picture of the impact of activity.

What we will do

1. Develop a model for outcomes focused planning, taking account of national / regional best practice linked to sector led improvement work.
2. Revise and update the strategic planning framework for children's health and wellbeing (linked to the new CYP HWb Partnership).
3. Use this CP Inspection action plan as a model for developing an outcome focused approach.
4. LGA Peer Review to incorporate a review of this Action Plan.

Appendix 2
Revised format for quarterly Cabinet report on Children's Social Care Activity and Performance



1. It is envisaged that the attached template will be updated quarterly with the relevant data, and a commentary for each element will be provided, giving an interpretation of the data and highlighting areas of practice which may require further investigation, as well as those which are delivering positive results.
2. For the purposes of this initial draft, some elements of data (based on the 2012~13 annual period) have been provided to assist understanding of the model.

Appendix 2
Revised format for quarterly Cabinet report on Children's Social Care Activity and Performance

Inputs: headline data

- 12.6% increase in Contacts over the period.
- Proportion of contacts being closed and logged remains slightly over 50%.
- Only 62% of referrals progressed to assessment (remainder were closed as not requiring any further action).
- Gradual increase in contacts with an active CAF, but still only 5% of total contacts.

Processes: headline data

- Timeliness of assessments remains below 50%.
- 100% of ICPCs resulted in a CP plan.
- Proportion of ICPCs in 15 days has reduced to 58%.
- High rate of care applications – 24.8 per 10K child population, up from 21.5 in previous year.
- Increase in number of Agency Workers (from 6 up to 10 over the last two quarters)¹.

Outputs: headline data

- Number of new CIN cases up 10% from previous year.
- Number of new CP plans up by 24% from previous year.
- Number of new LAC down by 4% from previous year.
- Re-referral rate of 16% (down from 18% previous year).
- 2nd or subsequent plans at 5.9%, in line with previous year and within target range.
- CP plans 2 years+ at 2.9%, improvement on 4.2% in previous year.
- 50% of children ceasing to be in care returned home (down slightly from 59% in the previous year).
- 100% target for care leavers in suitable accommodation was missed due to 2 young people from cohort of 31.

Commentary

1. Continuing increase in rate of activity coming to social care, although a significant proportion of contacts do not progress to referral and assessment.
2. Slow but steady progress in CAF implementation.
3. Pattern of activity suggests further work needed on understanding of thresholds for social care intervention; and highlights importance of work on an Early Help Strategy.

Commentary

1. High levels of activity impacting adversely on performance in timeliness of assessments.
2. High proportion of referrals progressing to CP plans is significant, with pressures on timeliness of ICPCs.
3. Further work to be undertaken on reasons for this trend regarding CP plans.
4. Significant increase in PLO activity, impacting on social work capacity.

Commentary

1. Low rates of re-referrals, subsequent CP plans, and duration of CP plans indicate sound decision making and effective interventions overall.
2. Proportion of children achieving permanency through routes other than adoption reflects effective consideration of options and focus on returning home.
3. Pressures on finding suitable accommodation for care leavers is a growing area of concern.

¹ This is not actual data – illustrative only.

Data Appendix

Inputs

Activity / Performance Measures	2012/13		2013/14								Source
	Number	%	Q1	*	Q2	*	Q3	*	Q4	*	
Number of contacts made to children's social care	6859	\									2012/13 Referral Workflow
Number of contacts that become referrals for assessment	2336	\									2012/13 Referral Workflow
Number / proportion of contacts with an active CAF	181	5.0%									2012/13 Referral Workflow
Number / proportion of closed & logged contacts	3651	53.2%									2012/13 Referral Workflow

Processes

Activity / Performance Measures	2012/13		2013/14								Source
	Number	%	Q1	*	Q2	*	Q3	*	Q4	*	
Number and timeliness of initial assessments	Numerator	943	42.8%								Mar 2013 QEC
	Denominator	2201									
Number and timeliness of core assessments	Numerator	676	54.2%								Mar 2013 QEC
	Denominator	1247									
Number and timeliness of initial CP conferences	\	58.2%									Local Safeguarding Dataset
Cafcass care applications per 10,000 child population	24.8	\									Cafcass

Outputs

Activity / Performance Measures	2012/13		2013/14								Source
	Number	%	Q1	*	Q2	*	Q3	*	Q4	*	
Number of CIN (excluding CP & LAC)	1617	\									Mar 2013 QEC
Number of CP	359	\									Mar 2013 QEC
Number of LAC	371	\									Mar 2013 QEC
Re-referral rates	Numerator	353	15.1%								2012/13 Referral Workflow
	Denominator	2336									
2nd or subsequent CP Plans	Numerator	24	5.9%								Mar 2013 QEC
	Denominator	404									
CP Plans 2 yrs+	Numerator	9	2.9%								Mar 2013 QEC
	Denominator	306									
Care leavers in suitable accommodation	Numerator	29	93.5%								Mar 2013 QEC
	Denominator	31									
Permanency when care has ceased - numbers / proportion:	Adoption	16	12.4%								Mar 2013 QEC
	Residence Order	28	21.7%								
	Special Guardianship	21	16.3%								
	Returned Home	64	49.6%								

* Direction of travel from previous quarter