

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 49

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Children and Families Social Work Improvement Plan		
Date of Meeting:	10th December 2010		
Report of:	Strategic Director, People		
Contact Officer:	Name: James Dougan	Tel: 01273 295511	
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Key Decision:	No		
Wards Affected:			

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

1.1 Summary

1.1.1 This report presents to the Cabinet Member Meeting the Areas for Development Plan which is one element of the Improvement Plan from the Children's Social Work Service. The wider Improvement Plan has 4 elements:

- i. The Areas for Development Plan (the subject of this report)
- ii. The management and delivery structure
- iii. Quality Assurance Framework
- iv. Workforce Development

These 4 elements link with the Value for Money Programme.

1.1.2 The aims of the Improvement Programme are to:

- i. Promote an effective management culture throughout Brighton & Hove Children & Families Children's Social Work Service
- ii. Focus on performance and delivery of high quality services
- iii. Develop the talents and skills of the workforce and fully engage staff in the strategic development and operational work of the service
- iv. Ensure VfM by effective control and the most efficient use of the funding and resources
- v. Take account of national developments in social work

1.1.3 The Improvement Programme is a result of the work undertaken following the unannounced two day Ofsted inspection to initiate a significant step change in quality of social work services provided to children, parents and carers in Brighton & Hove.

- 1.1.4 Social workers have a unique and pivotal role alongside their professional colleagues in the Police and Health Visiting, in the task of protecting the most vulnerable in our society.
- 1.1.5 Whilst systems and procedures play an important role in the protection of children, the protection of children fundamentally relies on sound professional practice by social workers equipped with skills in assessing risk, skills in working directly with families and most importantly in a spirit of respectful scepticism, with these skills and confidence in these skills to make inherently difficult judgements. To do this difficult task social workers need to be supported with the necessary resources alongside professional supervision, training, management and leadership.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To inform Cabinet Member of the Children and Families Social Work Improvement Plan
- 2.2 The Cabinet Member to note and agree the Areas for Development Plan

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 A report was presented to the Children & Young People's Trust Board on 1st November 2010 which informed the Board about the outcome of the unannounced inspection which was carried out on 7th and 8th July 2010 and is part of the new arrangements Ofsted introduced in 2009/10. This is the first time this type of inspection has been carried out in Brighton & Hove. It involved three on-site inspectors undertaking case auditing and interviewing of social workers and managers. The inspectors examined a number of children's cases in detail and their conclusions reflect this investigation.
- 3.2 The Ofsted letter was presented to the Board at the same meeting, a copy of which is attached as Appendix 2. The letter details in Brighton & Hove the areas of strength, satisfactory practice and areas of development.
- 3.3 In Brighton & Hove we did not receive any area of priority action.
- 3.4 The Areas for Development and overall improvement plan are the outcome of the Ofsted Unannounced Inspection. The plan has a wider remit than the scope of the inspection as it covers all of the areas of children's social work rather than just the front door. Appendix 1 is the Confidential Areas for Development Plan.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 None

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Financial Implications:

There are a number of activities outlined in the report. As these develop and detailed proposals become available specific costings will need to be calculated in order to understand the full financial implications of the proposals.

Finance Officer Consulted: David Ellis Date: 10th November 2010

5.2 Legal Implications:

The actions outlined in the Development Plan directly address core statutory functions of the Local Authority in relation to child protection and therefore form an important and integral part of meeting the legal duties imposed by statute. By definition the Human Rights [as enshrined in the Human Rights Act 1998] of children and families affected by the exercise (or not) of these statutory duties must be taken into account by the Local Authority.

Lawyer Consulted: Sandra O'Brien Date: 1 December 2010

Equalities Implications:

5.3 None

Sustainability Implications:

None

Crime & Disorder Implications:

5.5 None

Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

5.6 None

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

5.7 None

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

6.1 None

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To comply with the Areas for Development as outlined in the Annual unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements within Brighton and Hove children's services

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Letter of outcome of Annual unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements within Brighton and Hove children's services

2. Areas for Development Plan (Confidential paper)
It is necessary for the Areas for Development report to be confidential as to allow for discussion by members potentially of individual cases, to illustrate the changes suggested.

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. None