

Gloucestershire County Council

Children & Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee

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13th July 2017

Aims

- Share the outcomes of the ISOS research – what drives continued, sustainable improvement in children's services
 - Framing the focus for scrutiny – Ofsted Improvement Plan – the children's system
 - The LGA's offer of support
 - Questions?
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Three key steps when embarking on an improvement journey

	What?	Why?	How?
1	Establishing a baseline	To know for yourself the capacity, competence and quality of practice within the organisation	Get into the performance data and “granularity of practice” to form judgements about current performance & practice
2	Stabilising the organisation	You need allies within the organisation to scaffold and model effective frontline practice	Give clarity and confidence by providing visible leadership, engaging widely with staff, using this to develop a vision & strategy
3	Getting partners on board	Truly effective children’s services improvement will require all partners working to the same agenda	Engage key partners personally and use effective governance to foster joint responsibility and mutual accountability

Defining characteristics at each stage of the improvement journey

The three phases

Defining characteristics

Poor-to-fair

1. Getting the basics right – driven by leadership
2. Building the ethos and culture – & engaging the workforce

Fair-to-good

1. Capacity for robust self-assessment, vigilance
2. Locus of leadership shifts and becomes more broad
3. From “mission-critical” aspects to whole-service view

Good-to-great

1. Improvement no longer a discrete project – it is the norm
2. Disciplined innovation embedded within delivery
3. Openness to others – challenge & system leadership role

Two years from the frank recognition and acceptance of the service's weaknesses to running a safe, effective core service

Three years to develop a safe, effective core service into a consistently high-quality, innovative service

Poor-to-fair

Fair-to-good

Good-to-great

4-6 months
thorough process to diagnose extent of weakness & develop robust plan

6 months
strengthen core systems, clear backlogs, secure thresholds, "stabilise" the service


1 year focus on iterative implementation, quality assurance & problem-solving

Pursuit of quality in practice

Normalising improvement routines

Disciplined innovation

System leadership

All the while engaging the workforce and working with partners

Key questions

- Quality and stability of leadership & workforce
 - Line of sight to front line practice
 - Managing demand – are the right C&YP in the right part of the children's services system
 - Caseloads – quality of practice
 - Timeliness
 - Statutory compliance
 - Building the culture and climate for improvement
 - Core data and intelligence
 - The voice of C&YP and workers – what is their experience
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The LGA offer

- Support to the improvement process
 - LGA External diagnostics
 - Bespoke funded support to operational delivery
 - Support to senior strategic leaders
 - Support to political leaders in key roles
 - Support to Scrutiny
 - Support to the Corporate Parenting Board
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Useful references

Safeguarding children: A practical guide for overview and scrutiny councillors - <http://www.cfps.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Safeguarding-Children-1.pdf>

10 Questions to ask if you are scrutinising services for LAC - <http://www.cfps.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/10-questions.pdf>

LGA 'Must Knows' for children's services - <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/our-improvement-offer/childrens-services-improvement/must-knows-lead-members-childrens>

LGA/ISOS Research <http://www.isospartnership.com/action-research-into-the-enablers-of-improvement-in-children-s-services.html>
