

## Children and Families Scrutiny Committee

<b>Report Title</b>	Children's Services Improvement Board (CSIB) update
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To inform the Committee of the progress being made by CSIB
<b>Is this for information or decision?</b>	Information
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<b>Key Issues:</b>	
<p>The Children's Services Improvement Board (CSIB) oversees the implementation of the Children's Services Improvement Plan (Building the Best) which sets out the ways in which the Council intends to improve the performance of the service and respond to the Ofsted judgements and recommendations set out initially in the Ofsted Inspection report published on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 2017 and subsequent quarterly monitoring visits.</p>	
<b>Recommendations to the Committee:</b>	
<p>To receive the report and note the work of the CSIB to date.</p>	
<b>Financial/Resource Implications:</b>	
<p>None specifically identified in this report other than to note that the County Council continues to provide additional resources to support the delivery of the CSIP.</p>	

## Report

The Improvement Board is chaired independently by Andrew Ireland since July 18. The Board meets every two months. CSIB is attended by the Leader of the County Council, Chief Executive GCC, Director of Children's Services GCC and other key partners. The Board role is to oversee the implementation of the Improvement Programme.

### 1. "Building the Best" Improvement Programme

1.1. An update on Building the Best was provided to Improvement Board at the end of January. This update has also been seen by DfE and was well received. Building the Best goes beyond Ofsted inspection; it is about the service we would like in the future.

1.2. We have progressed a number of areas of our Improvement Programme, in particular:

- Our recruitment strategy has been revised and our package of employee benefits compares well with neighbouring authorities.
- The Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Service cohorts have been settled for some time and 75% of our Team Managers are now permanent appointments.
- Case loads are manageable (86% of social workers have 20 or fewer children).
- Work to progress the physical location and initial curriculum for the SW Academy is now well advanced.
- We are seeing a sustained increase in the volume of auditing activity and are increasingly secure in our judgements.
- The co-location of partners in MASH is now well established, 93% of contacts are subject to a decision within 48 hours (with the remainder resolved within 4 subsequent days) and the proportion of contacts that lead to No Further Action continues to reduce.
- The timeliness of Strategy meetings has improved (93% held within 5 working days). Agency representation/participation is also improving (health attendance at 88% in November, up from 61% in May).
- The timeliness of assessments has remained broadly stable despite an increase in the volume of open and completed assessments.
- Timeliness of visits has improved with Children in Need visits at 81%, visits to children subject to a Child Protection Plan at 76% and 97.8% of Children in Care with an up to date statutory visit.
- The timeliness of initial child protection conferences following the commencement of Section 47 enquiries has improved, with 76% held within 15 days. The timeliness of review conferences has also continued to improve with 95.3% held within timescales.
- Cabinet has recently approved Our Sufficiency Strategy Right Placement First Time (2018-21) and has agreed to bring in house the management of statutory Social Care and case management for 11-24 Children in Care and Care Leavers.

1.3. Despite these improvements in performance, a number of challenges remain:

- A number of recruitment activities are progressing well. However, the overall vacancy figure remains high (32.7%) and our agency staffing proportion also remains high at 47%.
- The percentage of audits graded as Inadequate has remained stubbornly stable at around 20%. This is a key area of focus.
- The timeliness of visits following contact is a concern with just under half of children having not been seen or not seen in a timely way (November).
- Performance is not consistent across teams, particularly for those most affected by staffing churn.
- The Early Help Module is in use across Families First and Children and Family Centres, however further configuration is required to produce useful performance data. Progress is limited by the capacity within data and performance team and the focus on Ofsted priorities.
- The new Entry to Care process has begun to address shortfalls and enable the gathering of a range of management information to target interventions. More work is needed to embed the process.
- Initial Health Assessments (IHAs) and reviews (RHAs) are not completed within statutory timescale. Actions are in place to improve performance.
- The Performance team is continuing to increase the range and accuracy of the management information available to teams. However a key, senior member of the data team has left in February, and while recruitment is underway, any new appointee is likely to take time to bring up to speed, and in the meantime, this is likely to impact on the delivery of new reports/milestones.

2. Performance Monitoring is a separate paper to the Children & Families Scrutiny Committee, as is the update on Quality Assurance framework.