

Meeting:	Health and wellbeing board
Meeting date:	26 November 2015
Title of report:	Children's safeguarding update
Report by:	Head of safeguarding and quality

Classification

Open

Key Decision

This is not an executive decision.

Wards Affected

Countywide

Purpose

To consider the progress of the safeguarding children agenda plans, milestones and challenges.

Recommendation(s)

That the health and wellbeing board review progress and identify any further actions necessary.

Alternative options

1. There are no alternative options as this is an opportunity for the health and wellbeing board to comment on the progress made in children's safeguarding.

Reasons for recommendations

2. To provide assurance that planned actions are delivering improvement.

Key considerations

3. In order to drive improvement, the council has a safeguarding improvement plan. Ofsted has confirmed its satisfaction with the improvement plan and recognise that it provides a robust framework covering all the areas for improvement identified from the inspection in

May 2014, and the progress made.

4. Work on the improvement plan is continuous and a presentation highlighting progress and challenges with respect to its implementation is attached at appendix 1. The plan is updated on a quarterly basis and presented to the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children's Board (HSCB) and health and social care overview and scrutiny committee. The health and wellbeing board is receiving this report and presentation for information and to provide assurance.
5. The improvement plan is being revised in order to provide greater clarity about the impact that the work is having on the experiences of children and family and their outcomes.
6. As highlighted in the presentation, it is worth noting:

Positives

- Safeguarding and corporate parenting training has been delivered to all members – including online safeguarding training; further ongoing training will be provided on an annual basis.
- Supervision training is being delivered by advanced practitioners to all new managers and will form part of the first line managers training and development programme which is being developed, along with enhanced induction arrangements.
- A recruitment strategy to increase the number of adopters for children with complex needs and for larger sibling groups is being considered. A marketing and recruitment post has been created in order to raise the profile of the need for more adopters and foster carers for hard to place children, linked to the Herefordshire Intensive Placement Support Service (HIPSS) project.
- Screening processes in the MASH are now embedded with close to 100% of all contacts received being screened and prioritised on the same working day.
- Improved educational performance for looked after children at key stage 4.

7. Not so positive

- Caseloads in the front line child protection teams are still too high. In order to ease this pressure, additional staffing has been agreed which should reduce caseloads. There has been some restructuring, which took effect in October, to deploy social worker resources more equitably, and the relocation of the court hub within the children in need (CIN) teams will reduce the number of changes of social worker, which has been an issue of concern for children, families and partner agencies.
- Performance in safeguarding and family support remains below expectations, as linked to the high caseloads mentioned above. Initial and core assessment timeliness has been well below target over the last quarter, almost entirely related to staffing difficulties. However, children who become subject to child protection plans are reviewed regularly, and performance is improving with respect to social work visits to these children.
- Work on the transformation of Frameworki has now stopped so that priority can be given to the successful implementation of Mosaic in April 2016. Mosaic is the updated version of Frameworki, and the successful migration to the new system is a major priority project in the next two quarters.

- Due to pressures on the safeguarding teams, audit activity is at a minimum level. This is a risk as it means that managers and others have less oversight of the quality and effectiveness of practice. A revised quality assurance framework is being developed to ensure audit activity is appropriately targeted.
- Staff in some teams have raised concerns about the behaviour and culture prevailing in those teams which is not conducive to effective working and practice. These concerns have been thoroughly investigated and a short term task and finish group is implementing some changes to aspects of general management such as induction; case load management and reporting and performance management

Community impact

8. The successful implementation of the improvement plan will bring about further improvement towards achieving the council's priorities of keeping children and young people safe and giving them a great start in life and enabling residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives; improving access to learning opportunities at all levels and improved outcomes for children and young people.

Equality duty

9. Equality impact assessments will be carried out where relevant to ensure that due regard is paid to the public sector equality duty as set out below:
 - "A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -
 - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct ... prohibited by or under this act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Financial implications

10. There are no financial implications as this is an progress report.

Legal implications

11. There are no legal implications.

Risk management

12. Risks associated with the failure to implement the improvement plan are:
 - Failure of the council in its aspiration to be operating at an Ofsted 'Good' standard with respect to its safeguarding arrangements by 2016/17, and whilst it is not possible to predict when a further inspection will take place, there would be significant reputational damage to the council of a poor inspection outcome, with consequent impact on our ability to recruit and retain staff, further high caseloads, and children at potential risk of harm.
 - Improving outcomes for our most vulnerable children relies on the council delivering

against the recommendations contained within the improvement plan, and achieving our stated corporate objective.

Consultees

- None.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Safeguarding update presentation

Background papers

- None identified.