

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)	Date of Meeting:	Tuesday 27 September 2022
Subject:	Children's Services Improvement Programme		
Report of:	Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Children's Social Care		
Is this a Key Decision:	N	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	N		

Summary:

This report updates members of Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) on progress made and presents the Performance Dashboard for consideration.

Recommendation(s):

- (1) Consider the Performance Dashboard at Annex A
- (2) Note the progress made and the priorities for the next quarter

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

For members of the Committee to consider progress made to date and associated Performance Dashboard.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

NA

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

There are no direct revenue implications with this report. Members will be aware that there is significant financial pressure in the service within the current year in respect of agency costs and accommodation costs. Remedial action plans have been presented and approved by Cabinet and Council. Work will continue during the current year on budget monitoring within

the service and any additional financial pressure or additional expenditure will need to be met from savings elsewhere within the Council.

The Council's next three year Medium Term Financial Plan will take account of this Improvement Programme and the resources required to support it; this will be informed by the Director of Children's Services.

(B) Capital Costs

There are no direct capital implications with this report.

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):	
To support the implantation of the Family Valued model the Council has been approved to receive £3m. To date £447k has been received.	
Following a successful bid to the Department for Education a further £300k has been approved to support the implementation of the Social Work Academy.	
Legal Implications:	
Equality Implications:	
There are no equality implications associated with this report.	
Climate Emergency Implications:	
The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	N
Have a neutral impact	Y
Have a negative impact	N
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Y

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: The Improvement Programme seeks to deliver change across Children's Services whose activity protects and supports those children and young people who have complex care needs
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Children's Services work with partners to support families in need of support and improve resilience.
Commission, broker and provide core services: Activity within the Improvement Programme considers the Children's Commissioned activity.

Place – leadership and influencer: The Council will take a lead role in work with partners to deliver change in Children’s Services.
Drivers of change and reform: The Council will work with partners to deliver change in Children’s Services.
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: NA
Greater income for social investment: NA
Cleaner Greener NA

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD6965) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD5165) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

The Executive Director Children’s Service and Education and his leadership team engage with partners across Sefton with regard to the Improvement Programme.

The voice of children, young people and their families will be integral to delivering change.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

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Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

Performance Dashboard

Background Papers:

1. Introduction

1.1 The Children's Improvement Programme comprises of four themes;

- Quality - Ensuring the right staff are in the right place at the right time to deliver a consistent standard of good quality safeguarding services to children and families.
- Improving Implementation of Learning - Using what we know and learn to continuously improve and enhance the services we deliver for children and families.
- Improving Tools - Ensuring we have the right tools to enable the workforce to deliver good quality services for children and families.
- Improving Strategic Partnerships - Effective partnership working to enable the delivery of common goals and a high quality multi-agency response for children and families.

1.2 A phased approach is being taken to delivering change and this report updates on progress made and presents the Performance Dashboard for consideration.

2. Progress

2.1 A key priority has been ensuring a stable and experienced leadership team is in place to lead the change and develop a consistent standard of good quality services to children and families. Significant progress has been made in recruiting a permanent Leadership team and Service Managers. The table below details the current Leadership team position;

Post	Employment Status
Executive Director - Children's Social Care & Education	Permanent
Assistant Director Cared for Children Social Care	Permanent
Assistant Director Education Excellence	Permanent
Assistant Director for Quality Assurance, Safeguarding, Performance & Governance CSC	Permanent
Interim Assistant Director – Help and Protection	Agency

2.2 At the time of writing this report the recruitment for the permanent Assistant Director – Help and Protection is ongoing with the Employment Procedures Committee scheduled. Also of the eleven Service Manager positions eight permanent staff are in post and recruitment activity is ongoing for the remaining three.

Wider recruitment of a permanent workforce remains challenging across Liverpool City Region and nationally.

- 2.3 Over recent months Children's Services have been collocated into Magdalen House and this will be key in delivering the required cultural change as it means that the senior leadership team is more visible, engaging with and listening to the workforce and increases the collaboration between Children's Social Care and Education.
- 2.4 Developing a new Quality Assurance Framework and creating a performance management culture are another key priority. Over recent months significant progress has been made in the development of a Performance Dashboard through the creation of a Data Warehouse and the implementation of Power BI. A phased approach has been taken towards this development and interim reports were in place by the end of July 2022 – these were created using extraction processes covering 146 data tables with over 7 million rows of data using over 15,500 lines of SQL code, but in simple terms this means that the reports are now automated and data refresh takes seconds opposed to hours/days.

This provides the Executive Director, Assistant Directors, Service Managers and Team Managers with an accurate and systematically updated understanding of effectiveness and the team are beginning to use this to drive improvement and to develop a culture of performance management and accountability - supported by developments in performance management systems and new Practice Standards. The Practice Standards provide a clear measure of what good practice looks like and enables leaders to hold practitioners to account.

Members of the Committee are asked to consider the Performance Dashboard at Annex A.

- 2.5 Creating a learning and reflective environment that enables good practice to grow and innovation to flourish. The Leadership Team want Practitioners to feel supported and part of the improvement journey. A new Quality Assurance Framework is in development and this will ensure that the Management team have a clear understanding of the framework for understanding the effectiveness of practice, learning and improvement.

Themed audits have commenced and this has put in place routine and robust oversight of casework, in order to develop an accurate understanding of the quality of practice and identify training needs. The views of families are being gathered and informing change.

The first Annual Staff Survey has commenced and this will provide a baseline for improvement.

- 2.6 The Family Valued Model has been launched and so there is a clear approach in place for cultural change and driving innovation. Family Valued was the strategy used in Leeds to improve services and outcomes for children and families. Its development was supported by funding from Phase One of the Department for Education Innovation Programme. The evaluation of Family Valued highlighted that it had a number of benefits, including reducing statutory interventions and entry to care, strengthened practice, and improved recruitment and retention. The workforce and

partners have a shared understanding of the model following successful launch events.

2.7 Funding has been secured for a Social Work Academy in which the learning and development of all staff, including those staff the ASYE programme is held. The Academy will launch in October 2022.

3. Priorities for the Next Quarter

3.1 Over the next few months the priorities are

- Continued recruitment of permanent workforce
- Considering staff survey feedback and developing an action plan
- Embedding new Practice Standards
- Development of Data Warehouse
- Rollout of Power BI
- Review of Business Support
- Review of In house Fostering and care experienced offer.

3.2 Members of the Committee are asked to note the progress made and the priorities for the next quarter.