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| Report to: | Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) | Date of Meeting: | 20 December 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: | No | Included in Forward Plan: | No |
| Exempt / Confidential Report: | No | | |

Summary:

This report updates members of Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) on progress made against the Children's Improvement Plan.

Recommendation(s):

(1) Note the progress made.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

For Members of the Committee to consider progress made to date.

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:

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|--|-----|------------------------|----|-----------------------|-----|------------------------|----|---|-----|
| <p>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): To support the implementation of the Family Valued model the Council has been approved to receive £3m. To date £447k has been received.</p> <p>Following a successful bid to the Department for Education a further £300k has been approved to support the implementation of the Social Work Academy.</p> | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Legal Implications:</p> | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.</p> | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Climate Emergency Implications:</p> <p>The recommendations within this report will</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Have a positive impact</td> <td>No</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Have a neutral impact</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Have a negative impact</td> <td>No</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> </table> | | Have a positive impact | No | Have a neutral impact | Yes | Have a negative impact | No | The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors | Yes |
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| Have a negative impact | No | | | | | | | | |
| The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors | Yes | | | | | | | | |

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

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| <p>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.</p> |
| <p>Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Children's Services work with partners to support families in need of support and improve resilience.</p> |
| <p>Commission, broker and provide core services: Children's Services work with partners to support families in need of support and improve resilience.</p> |
| <p>Place – leadership and influencer: The Council will take a lead role in work with partners to deliver change in Children's Services.</p> |
| <p>Drivers of change and reform: The Council will work with partners to deliver change in Children's Services.</p> |

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| 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 (FD.7061/22) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5261/22) 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:

Improvement Plan

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

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 Members will recall that a phased approach is being taken to delivering change and this report updates on progress made.

1.3 Work on the Improvement Plan activity has continued to progress at pace, with grip being demonstrated at both a service and organisational level. The following section of this report highlights progress made and the Improvement Plan at Appendix A confirms the current status of activity.

1.4 Phase 2 of the Improvement Plan is in development.

2. Progress

Quality

2.1 The Social Work Academy now has twenty eight Newly Qualified Social Workers. Members of the Academy with competitive interviews scheduled for the final two positions. Members of the Academy continue to benefit from protected caseloads.

2.2 Work has continued on rolling out the Family Valued Model and the following sessions have been delivered

- Working with Children and Families to Build a Quality Assessment
- Working Together with Children and Families to Build SMART Plans and Review of Impact Plans
- Restorative Practice Approach to Domestic Violence
- specific safeguarding training for the Children with Disabilities team.

2.3 Further training will include sessions that will support Team Managers in their roles. In the Independent Review of Children's Social Care recommended

“invest in leadership development programmes, ensure leadership is rooted in practice”. The leadership team and Service Managers will over the next 4 months take part in Insights Discovery Training.

- 2.4 Work is continuing on the recruitment of international Social Workers and wider recruitment activity continues. Recruitment remains challenging, the Independent Review of Children’s Social Care recommended

“The government should introduce new national rules on agency usage supported by the development of not-for-profit regional staff banks to reduce costs and increase the stability and quality of relationships children and families receive.”

In November Pay & Grading Committee considered a report that included three elements in respect of payments to employees of the Council. The Committee have recommended a number of changes to Cabinet and this will be considered in January 2023.

- 2.5 New ways of working in the Family Time Team continue to be embedded and the changes made are receiving positive feedback from families. Positive feedback is also being received from families in respect of changes in ways of working made in the Children with Complex Needs Team including Family Support and Foster Carer links.

Improving Implementation of Learning

- 2.6 The feedback from the Annual Pledge Survey is being collated and analysed. Once this activity is completed actions will be progressed.
- 2.7 Care experienced young people have worked with the Communications Team to improve the Care Experienced offer webpages [Our Space – Information for Cared For and Care Experienced young people \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://www.sefton.gov.uk/our-space-information-for-cared-for-and-care-experienced-young-people) and this has been promoted to young people.

Improving Tools

- 2.8 An ICT Development Group has been established and development priorities agreed.
- 2.9 Procedures are now available on the Council website, [Welcome to the Sefton Children's Services Procedures Manual \(antser.com\)](https://www.sefton.gov.uk/welcome-to-the-sefton-childrens-services-procedures-manual)
- 2.10 The gap analysis of business processes and policies is complete and an approach to the next stage of this activity is being agreed.

Improving Strategic Partnerships

- 2.11 Work is ongoing is to ensure that Electronic Personal Education Plans (PEP) are completed both schools and Social Care teams. As this is a new system those completing the plans are being supported by the Virtual School to ensure timelessness and quality. The Virtual School is now quality assuring the PEPs and will report progress to the next Corporate Parenting Board.

2.12 The work to progress the recommissioning of the Sefton Placements Framework remains on track.

2.13 The Commissioning team are continuing with market engagement and development work.

3. **Priorities for the Next Quarter**

3.1 Over the next month Phase 2 of the Improvement Plan will be developed.