

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>
Safeguarding Sub Committee	27 November 2014
<b>Subject:</b> Service Improvement Plan and Youth Offending Inspection	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Community and Children's Services	<b>For Information</b>

### **Summary**

This report will inform Members about the progress that has been made on the actions within the Service Improvement Plan. This plan has been in place since March 2012 and contains actions from previous inspections, reviews and audits within Children's Social Care. A review of this plan in November 2014 identified that 101 actions had successfully been completed out of 133. Currently there are 25 actions outstanding, which are on course to be completed within timescales.

There has also been an inspection of Tower Hamlets Youth Offending Service, which the City of London commissions. It is important to note that there have not been any children or young people from the City requiring youth offending services for the past two years. This inspection took place in September 2014; there was no overall judgement, but the report identified some areas of good practice as well as some recommendations for improvement.

### **Recommendation**

Members are asked to note this report.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. The Service Improvement Plan has evolved since it was developed following the Safeguarding and Looked After Children Ofsted Inspection in March 2012. This plan combines recommendations from previous inspections, reviews and case file audits. The plan supports children's services in maintaining good practice while moving towards outstanding. This plan is monitored through the Improvement Planning Group and the Children's Executive Board. The Service Improvement Plan is updated bi-monthly, and any areas where there are delays can be identified and additional resource acquired to enable progress. There have been some delays in a couple of areas, but these have now been resolved and progress is being made.

## **Current Position**

2. This plan is integral in establishing the progress that has been made in improving services and identifying potential areas of risk. In September 2014 there were 133 actions on the Service Improvement Plan; this has now been significantly reduced to 32 actions, with 7 of the actions having being complete, reducing the number outstanding to 25. The following paragraphs set out some of the actions to be undertaken across several areas in the coming months.
3. The current externally commissioned Independent Reviewing Service arrangements are to be reviewed. A decision was made in October 2014 that, by mutual agreement, the current contract arrangements with the provider, would be terminated. There is no risk to the service or the safety and outcomes of our young people, who, as a result of this decision, are likely to be allocated a new Independent Reviewing Officer.
4. The Grand Committee in October 2014 confirmed that the Adoption Service would be commissioned externally. An update on progress will be made available to the next Safeguarding Sub Committee.
5. Several of our looked-after children and care leavers attended a residential in August 2014 which involved workshops on setting out a plan to develop a City of London Children in Care Council (CiCC). In partnership with City Gateway, the first meeting of the CiCC took place on 4 November 2014. The CiCC confirmed the Pledge that it wants the City of London to sign up to. The Pledge, along with the Corporate Parenting Strategy, is being reported to the Safeguarding Sub Committee separately at this meeting.
6. The Association of London Directors of Children's Services (ALDCS) and the London Safeguarding Children Board wrote to all London local authorities setting out a requirement for authorities to carry out a peer review of their child sexual exploitation safeguarding arrangements. The City of London has been paired with Camden for the purposes of this exercise. This will involve the City of London Children and Families Service, the City of London Police, City Gateway (representing Youth Services) and the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board, carrying out a self-assessment against several areas requested by ALDCS, which will then be reviewed by the same agencies in Camden. The review meeting will be taking place in mid-December, and findings from this and the London-wide review will be available in early 2015.

## **Inspection of Tower Hamlets Youth Offending Service**

7. The City of London commissions youth offending services from Tower Hamlets. For the past two years Children's Social Care has had no children or young people requiring youth offending services. A short quality screening (SQS) inspection of Tower Hamlets and the City of London was held between 8 and 10 September. As there are no City children open to the service, the information within the report pertained only to children and young people in Tower Hamlets.

8. Considerable improvements have also been noted since the 2011 inspection, in particular to safeguarding children and young people and the protection of the public. Improved links were identified as being in place with other agencies, and it was highlighted that there were constructive relationships with children and young people who were involved in offending behaviour, and their families. This means that where parents were aware that their child or children were involved in such activities, they worked with professionals and supported their child or children in addressing their behaviour.
9. The inspection identified that there had been more focus placed on management oversight. This had been effective in ensuring that the quality of work that had taken place in addressing risk of harm to others had improved. It was considered that diversity and other potential barriers to engagement had been assessed, but further development was still required in this area.
10. The inspection noted that the strengths were suggestive of an improvement to practice. This was welcomed by the team, who were presented as being committed to improving services. They also identified that the parenting work completed had enabled staff to broaden their understanding of circumstances in which children and young people live. There were recommendations around the improvement of assessments and planning, and that they should take into account the changes in circumstances of children and young people: their lives can change quickly, and therefore plans need to be reviewed to reduce reoffending.

### **Corporate and Strategic Implications**

11. There are no financial, legal or strategic implications associated with this report.

### **Conclusion**

12. This report has provided members with an update on the progress made against actions set out in the Service Improvement Plan. Significant work has been undertaken to improve processes, systems and interventions since the Safeguarding and Looked After Children Ofsted Inspection 2012 and the subsequent quality assurance and improvement activities, including the Strengths-Based Learning Review and the deep-dive audit of all cases during 2014. The report also highlighted the findings from the recent City and Tower Hamlets Youth Offending Inspection.

### **Appendices:**

#### **Service Improvement Plan**

#### **The YOT Inspection Report**

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