

Executive Director's Children & Young People's Services Overview Report of Matters of Interest to Devon Children's Trust

Recommendations: that the Board receives at its next meeting

- (i) a Programme Plan arising from the IDeA Safeguarding Peer Review and Audit for decision;
- (ii) a report on Building Schools for the Future setting out the ambitions, expectations and timelines to ensure our readiness to deliver;
- (iii) a report on the progress of preparation for the 14-19 transition and LSC transfer of functions;
- (iv) a briefing setting out the requirements and implications for the new Inspection regime;
- (v) a report on the post-Beacon work on Strategic Commissioning.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Since the Executive Director's overview report of 11 March 2009, the Safeguarding Peer Review has been the most significant piece of work engaged in by the Trust (further details in the body of the report).
- 1.2 The Executive of the Authority has made available £500k to support the preparation for readiness to deliver and entry into the Building Schools for the Future programme. As reported at the last Board, the potential opportunities of this programme for integrated working is significant and the Children's Trust's ambition is part of the readiness to deliver criteria.
- 1.3 Further details have been received by Devon for the national transfer of functions from the Learning & Skills Council to LAs.
- 1.4 Details of the new Inspection regime for Children's Services across the partnership and for the LA are still awaited. However, an update is included in the body of this report.

2.0 PEER REVIEW

- 2.1 The IDeA and Peer colleagues spent the week of 30 March in Devon piloting the programme '*Signposts - a peer challenge safeguarding children and young people*'. This is a model being tested nationally by the sector and for the sector. In essence providing a 'mirror' for the Authority and partners to judge strengths and weaknesses and benchmark what good/outstanding looks like in safeguarding.
- 2.2 Whilst recognising the vagaries associated with pilots, the general consensus of view across the Authority and our partners was positive, productive and well worth the effort. The approach gives us the added benefit now of key

contacts with other LAs and agencies who want to work with us in the interests of learning and improvement.

- 2.3 Whilst there was low completion rate of the questionnaires (18), the interviews, visits and feedback workshop were well attended.
- 2.4 The overarching messages:
 - Devon is well placed to take forward
 - Leadership and vision strong across the system
 - Theme for all partners is 'how do we ensure reality on the ground?'
- 2.5 Feedback was received on each of the six signpost areas covering
 - Legislation / policy
 - Resources / accountability
 - Leadership and learning
 - Effective practice
 - Performance, evaluation and monitoring
 - Local Safeguarding Board and Working Together
- 2.6 The 'feedback' was then translated into six priority areas by the workshop participants. These are set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.7 Each priority area is now being converted into programme priorities for action. This work involves ensuring cross referencing all our own partnership work on safeguarding and ensuring synergy in the action planning. An example of this is attached as Appendix 2.
- 2.8 We await the 'case-notes' from IDeA which is our record and not for publication.
- 2.9 The programme priorities are being prepared for sign off and implementation through the Devon Safeguarding Children Board and Children's Trust Board.
- 3.0 **PREPARATION FOR UNNANNOUNCED AND ANNOUNCED INSPECTION: IMPLICATIONS FOR CYPS AND PARTNERS**
- 3.1 The new framework represents a step - change in the expectation of the individual and collective contribution of all partners in the delivery of Every Child Matters and transformational change. An extension to the regulation of services (new inspection regime of children's centres, new duty of schools to promote well being) and an intensive probe in the delivery of safeguarding and children in care services.
- 3.2 This will demand inspection readiness at all times, and a significant shift in workforce culture, systems and processes which support quality improvement and development. In some ways it will bring more complexity and potential conflicting demands on our finite capacity and thus represents a 'system challenge'.
- 3.3 With effect from June 1 for all Local Authorities - an annual inspection of frontline 'contact and assessment centres' for children's social care. The

letter of finding to be published on the Ofsted website within ten working days. ADCS and Ofsted are still in negotiation on the fine detail.

3.4 Work is underway to prepare for the full (multi-agency) inspection of safeguarding and children in care services. This inspection carries a two week notice period and is scheduled on a three yearly cycle. Devon could expect to be an early recipient given its three years since the JAR.

3.5 A schedule of briefings to the Devon Safeguarding Children Board, the Children's Trust and internally through CYPS is in hand.

4.0 ON THE NEAR HORIZON

4.1 Ofsted Pilot Inspection of Children's Centres 2009 will progress this year through the testing of a framework. There will be 60 pilots between April and November 2009 and a full programme of inspections will follow from April 2010.

4.2 The purpose of the inspection will be to include a report on the effectiveness of Children's Centres.

5.0 BEACON, STRATEGIC COMMISSIONING AND REDUCING INEQUALITIES

5.1 Devon LA is pursuing a partnership with Cornwall and Cumbria around links to strategic commissioning and addressing child poverty. Initial conversations with the DPCT are also underway.

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