

Report to:	RESILIENT COMMUNITIES AND CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Diane Booth, Director of Childrens Services
Date of Meeting	19 October 2017

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW REPORT

1.1 To inform Scrutiny Committee of the work undertaken by Children's Services on a day to day basis and to update on the progress and implementation of developments.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1
- To note the contents of the report and to ensure that current work continues to meet statutory obligations and that work to prepare for external inspections continues.
 - To identify any further information and actions required.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 For Members of the Scrutiny Committee to be fully informed as to the day to day work of the Children's Services Directorate and have assurance that Blackpool is continuing to meet its statutory obligations for future inspection requirements.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

Other alternative options considered: None

3.3 Services are subject to national and statutory frameworks.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is 'Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.'

5.0 Children's Social Care

- 5.1 **Self-View Pilot:** Following the Ofsted Conversation in Early August the Council has been asked to participate in the Self-view Pilot. The self-view will be ready for signing off by the Lead Member and Corporate Leadership Team on Friday 27 October 2017. The next Ofsted Annual Conversation will take place in November and receive feedback on the 23 November 2017. Following that the Council will partake in a Sector Led Peer Review and is requesting that the area of review is the front door. The Front Door has been identified so that the Council can be confident that the work undertaken to date, is effective in ensuring that children, young people and family services are providing the right support at the right time to the right people. Changes have been based upon:
- Learning from the Journey of the Child and work with Dartington Research
 - Implementation of Threshold Document and New Early Help Assessment
 - Work completed with the Police and Partners around the MASH
 - Improvement Board
 - Demand Management Plan
- 5.2 The demand upon the Children's Social Care Service is still greater than hoped for, but is moving in the right direction. Current figures as of 2 October 2017:
- Children in Care – 530
 - Children Subject to a Child Protection Plan - 383
 - Children open to a Child in Need Plan or Assessment - 1036
- 5.3 The Council has implemented the first part of the plan to discharge children from care safely, and is now seeing children exiting from care. The process is slow due to the nature of the work that needs to be undertaken to complete this, progress is however being made within current resources. More children are being supported at home, which is reducing the number of children that need to enter the care system.
- 5.4 **The Blackpool Young People's Service** (previously known as the Vulnerable Adolescent Hub): phase 1 has now been implemented and the service is in operation with phase 2 scheduled for implementation in January 2018. In Phase 2 partner agencies will come on board and a true 'no wrong door' ethos of working with young people will be put in practice. The Link (former Argosy) is also now in full operation and working with young people who are on the Edge of Care. Further work will be undertaken with the Early Help Service, Children Social Care and the Link to build upon current work and create stronger links and a seamless service.
- 5.5 The Council is now working on part 2 of the discharge plan and hopes to implement this in early November. The work will incorporate work with colleagues in Housing to develop pathways to services and prevent the need for young people who are aged 16 + needing to become Looked After unnecessarily. The Council is also working towards a dispersed model of care where support will be provided in partnership with Blackpool Housing for

our older children in their own homes. This will enable some control to be achieved over the external market, return our young people to Blackpool and help them to achieve better outcomes.

- 5.6 **Improvement Board:** the last Children’s Improvement Board was held on the 15 September 2017.
- 5.7 The Board is having a significant impact in driving practice forward and holding partners to account to help meet demand, intervene at an earlier point and prevent escalation into statutory intervention. As part of the journey to improve, focus is being placed upon compliance and the quality of the work undertaken. The workforce is embracing this clear methodology. The implementation of the Risk Sensible Model being rolled out from October 2017 will also support practitioners in changing practice to improve better outcomes for children and families. This model of managing risk embraces the Resilient Therapy model of HeadStart.
- 5.8 **Staffing:** the Head of Safeguarding and Principal Social Worker post has been appointed to and Louise Storey will join the Council on the 22 November 2017. Capacity within the Service Manager Function and role of Auditing has also been increased. Workforce stability has been secured and there are less vacant posts (one manager and three social worker posts). Agency staff are also being replaced with permanent posts and it is envisaged that only three agency social workers will remain in post by January 2018. This in turn is supporting a reduction in social work caseloads.
- 5.9 **Partnership working - White Ribbon Accreditation:** The Police and Crime Commissioner has supported a countywide accreditation and is delighted to see Lancashire become the first White Ribbon county. Part of the campaign is the national White Ribbon Day which will be held annually to coincide with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November 2017; this is followed by 16 days of activity against gender based violence. Blackpool Council, along with Partners marked the celebration with the signing of the White Ribbon pledge and the displaying of a plaque in the Winter Gardens.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 **List of Appendices:**

None

8.0 **Legal considerations:**

8.1 None

9.0 Human Resources considerations:

9.1 None

10.0 Equalities considerations:

10.1 None

11.0 Financial considerations:

11.1 None

12.0 Risk management considerations:

12.1 None

13.0 Ethical considerations:

13.1 None

14.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

14.1 None

15.0 Background papers:

15.1 None