

Report to:

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Relevant Officer:

Laura Chadwick, Head of Transformation/Principal Social Worker

Date of meeting:

21 September 2023

FAMILY SAFEGUARDING MODEL

1.0 Purpose of the report

1.1 To provide an overview to the Scrutiny Board around the proposals for developing multi agency teams within Children's Services. The DfE have awarded Blackpool £764,610 pounds in order to develop multi agency teams, where practitioners work with families to address their needs and to enable more children to remain within their family networks.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 To consider the work to develop Multi agency teams starting with the Strengthening and Supporting Families Team.

2.2 To review the work to date to build upon the Blackpool Families Rock Approach by utilising and adopting the Family Safeguarding Model which is proven to work in terms of reducing the number of children in our care system. The model focuses on a multi-disciplinary approach to families, offering the right support to parents/carers promptly and addressing the needs which impact upon their parenting.

3.0 Reason for recommendation(s)

3.1 To ensure robust scrutiny of Children's Services.

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

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

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered

4.1 None.

5.0 Council priority

5.1 The relevant Council priority is:

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience

6.0 Background and key information

- 6.1 Children's Social Care was rated 'Inadequate' in 2018, after four monitoring visits and an ILACS inspection in December 2022 Ofsted rated Blackpool Children's Social Care Services overall as 'Requires Improvement' with 'Good' for children in care and care leavers. There are four recommendations within the report which are:
- The multi-agency response to children suffering domestic abuse or long-term neglect, and to those children with complex needs.
 - Work with partners to strengthen their contribution to early help and neglect.
 - Sufficient placements to meet children's assessed needs.
 - The timeliness of meeting children's dental and emotional needs.
- 6.2 There are two significant areas for consideration from the Ofsted report additionally relevant to this model:
1. The practice model needs to be *strengthened* in order to better support families where domestic abuse, neglect and mental health issues are present.
 2. The practice model needs to clarify the expectations and role of partners with a shared narrative.
- 6.3 Blackpool has the highest rate of children in care in the country at 188 per 10,000 (down from 210 per 10,000 just over 1 year ago), this has been the case for the best part of a decade and there are a range of factors that contribute to this. Considerable work has been undertaken during the last two years particularly to change the direction of travel and the foundations are well laid to implement family safeguarding . A key strength noted by Ofsted and other inspectorate bodies working with Blackpool has been the emerging collaborative approach evident from 'Blackpool Families Rock'. Working alongside families, parents, children and young people has revolutionised how we work to identify the need for, and support change in families to make the environment safer for children. Blackpool Families Rock will remain as our overarching set of principles and values co-produced with families, Family safeguarding will enable a solid offer to families within this framework.
- 6.4 Blackpool is in a strong position to implement work with the whole family, with adult practitioners embedded in the work of Children's Social Care and Early Help. Our workforce is stable with under 15% agency (as a proportion of qualified Social Workers across Children's Social Care, August 2023). Our Leadership Team is established and we have just successfully recruited a Head of Transformation/Principal Social Worker who was a Senior Manager within Family Safeguarding in a neighbouring authority. Ofsted commented that "*core foundations are now in place, and this is supporting sustainable improvements.*"
- 6.5 Our values, vision and beliefs align strongly with a whole family approach. Blackpool

Families Rock is our co-designed approach to practice which we developed in 2019 with children, families, carers and partner agencies. At its core it is a social pedagogical and restorative approach – it is trauma informed using motivational interviewing. The DCS and other practice leaders within Blackpool have already implemented Family Safeguarding in a neighbouring authority and understand, and passionately promote the core values and practice approach.

6.6 What does success look like?

Working with partners to develop a whole family, multi-disciplinary approach to safeguarding children has been proven to achieve better outcomes for children and their families. The impact of implementation of whole family working will be significant. It will:

- Transform the support offer provided to families in Blackpool particularly in relation to neglect and domestic abuse.
- Drive culture change and further improve social work practice to reduce the long-standing challenges with numbers of children being placed on child protection plans and becoming Looked After.
- Support the next phase of our improvement journey to ‘Outstanding’.

6.7 Our main aim is to deliver better, sustainable outcomes for children and families, but we also expect (in times of high intervention and placement costs) that it will have a significant impact on cost avoidance. In terms of successful delivery of the model, Blackpool Children’s Services in partnership with the Centre for Family Safeguarding Practice plan to deliver the following key work between September 2023 and April 2024:

- Recruitment for the multi-disciplinary teams (launch once 75% of Adult Specialist Workers have been recruited).
- We have already delivered Trauma Informed and Motivational Interviewing training across the service, however we would need to deliver targeted Motivational Interviewing as well as change workshops (launch once 75% of Strengthening and Supporting Families team members have attended targeted workshops).
- Set up of the FS Workbook (Workbook is an assessment tool for multi-disciplinary practitioners).
- Adopt the FS group supervision method. (Involving all practitioners as opposed to Childrens Staff alone)
- Ensure clear governance and accountability is set up across the new teams.

6.8 In terms of successful adoption and benefit realisation, the following outcomes, outputs, and measurable objectives have been identified and will form the basis of monitoring what success will look like as part of FS adoption for Blackpool.

6.9 FS Team Structures:

One of the key elements of the Family Safeguarding Model is having a whole family

approach to working with children and families, by creating and using a multi-agency specialists. The team itself will consist of:

Team Manager – responsible for the management of the FS team and holds responsibility for the decision making for the families they support.

Senior Social workers – responsible for a small caseload, whilst also overseeing the Adult Workers within the team.

Child and Family Social Workers – Their key role is to coordinate the progress of the child's multi-disciplinary plan. They will complete the family programme with the family and will utilize Motivational Interviewing tools to create change for children.

Child and family practitioner – they will work collaboratively with the social worker and will undertake direct work with children and families.

Recovery workers – working directly with parents who are experiencing challenges with drugs and/or alcohol. They are focused on undertaking direct work, consultations and assessments with the parents in order to motivate parents to change their behaviours.

Domestic abuse practitioners- their role is to support parents to break the cycle of abusive relationships. They undertake direct work with the victims of domestic abuse and deliver training which will encourage self-esteem and consider. This can be in the form of group work or one to one sessions.

Domestic abuse officers – their role is to undertake an assessment of the person who may pose a risk to their partner, or their family as a whole. They can undertake direct work whether that be in a group setting or in a one to one session in order to support the individual to devise strategies to help them reduce stress, anxiety and any other factors which impact upon their behaviors.

Mental Health Practitioners – providing timely support to parents/carers who are suffering from mental ill-health. They will also provide evidence based assessments, interventions in order to reduce the issues associated with the mental ill-health.

Business support officer – they will provide effective and timely support and overall business administration for the team. Key to their role will be capturing the reflective discussions which take place within group supervisions where key decisions are made by the team manager having explored the family situation with all the adult specialists and the social workers. They will significantly contribute to data management alongside the team manager.

- 6.10 Key features of Family Safeguarding are that all staff should be trained in Motivational Interviewing, within Blackpool a significant percentage of the workforce have been trained in this, however there are to be a further three cohorts commencing the training

in October through to December. Further to this, Practice Development Leaders will continue to revisit the use of MI in everyday practice in order to embed and develop the workforce.

Expected Outputs	Expected Outcomes
<p>Recruitment to adult specialist roles.</p> <p>Delivery of Motivational Interviewing and change training to Strengthening and Supporting Families teams that set the values and practice standards and expectations for staff. Delivery of other targeting training and embedded/alongside development work to support practice development.</p> <p>Establishment of multi-disciplinary teams, including adult specialist roles, to create whole family plans of protection, help, and support.</p> <p>Development work, culture and practice workshops with partner agencies to support them to be a positive part of a whole system approach. This will include clear partnership agreements to set expectations around support and commitment to whole system ways of working with families from Early Help through to children who are Looked After.</p> <p>Consistent use of the FS group supervision model.</p> <p>Individual and group work programmes to support parents and carers who are struggling poor mental health, substance use, and relationship problems.</p> <p>Multi-disciplinary working with families to secure a holistic whole family approach.</p> <p>Family based direct work, recording, analysis, and evidence-based decision-making.</p> <p>Delivery of Motivational Interviewing and change training to wider teams to support culture change across the organisation.</p>	<p>Cohesive, positive multi-agency teams that share values, approach and support each other in a whole family approach that meaningfully combines Blackpool Families Rock and Family Safeguarding.</p> <p>Group supervision that supports deeper analyses that better identify the root causes for families issues and lead to more impactful plans that better address those root causes for families difficulties.</p> <p>Families receive the right help at the right time and are not subjected to inappropriate statutory intervention, with Children’s Social Care and partner agencies applying statutory thresholds in an accurate way.</p> <p>More families receive the help they need to safely care for their children, leading to fewer children needing to become the subject of a Child Protection Plan or to come into care.</p> <p>A whole system of support for children and their families across Blackpool with a shared vision of keeping families together where it is safe to do so.</p> <p>Empowering parents, children, and young people to make sustainable changes through a restorative strengths based approach that uses MI skills.</p> <p>Measurable reduction on levels of domestic abuse, substance and alcohol use and mental health episodes for the families we have worked with in multi-agency teams.</p> <p>Improved wellbeing and retention of staff across Blackpool Children’s Services.</p>

KPI’s:

Objective	Measurable by
<p>Families remain together at home where it is safe to do so.</p>	<p>Reduction in number of children moving into care proceedings (Public Health Indicator)</p>
	<p>Reduced number of looked after children</p>
	<p>Reduced amount of time children and young people spend in care</p>
	<p>Increase in number of children who have been returned home to live with parents or relatives</p>

Families receive the right level of support, when they need it, for the right amount of time.	Reduction in the number of children and young people re-referred to Children’s Social Care
	Reduction in time taken for a child or young person to receive statutory services when it is right for them
	Reduced time taken for families to receive specialist interventions and assessments when it is right for them
Fewer families experience issues relating to vulnerabilities and receive better support (Domestic Violence, Mental Health, Substance Misuse).	Reduced numbers of CiN
	Reduced numbers of CiN showing abuse or neglect as the primary case of need
	Reduced number of children negatively affected by substance and alcohol misuse
	Reduced number of children negatively affected by parental mental health issues
	Reduced number of absent parents
Children have been effectively protected and supported within the system at the right level	Reduced re-referral rates to Early Help
	Reduced referrals and assessments that lead to no further action
	Increased recording of consent in audited cases
	Reduced rate of section 47 enquiries and strategy meetings
Compliance on need for statutory partners to be involved in strategy discussions/decisions	Increased % of strategy meeting where all 3 statutory partners are involved in discussions and decision-making
	Increased number/percentage Workbooks opened in relevant teams
Effective support from professionals and staff retention	Reduced number of changes of allocated Social Worker for children
	Reduced % of practitioner turnover and vacancy levels
	Reduced rate of practitioner sickness absence
	Increase in positive outcomes in staff surveys
Partnership working	Increase in positive outcomes in staff surveys
	Increase in positive outcomes in staff surveys
	Increase in positive outcomes in staff surveys
	Increase in positive outcomes in staff surveys
	Increase in positive outcomes in staff surveys
	Increase in positive outcomes in staff surveys
Education, employment, and training for FS cohort	Increased education attendance for children and young people open to Children’s Social Care
	Increased parental employment or training

- 6.11 A bid was submitted to the DfE for the implementation of the Family safeguarding model to support key elements of the improvement plan within Children’s Social Care, £764,000 was awarded with a view to an anticipated “go live” date of April 2024. Family Safeguarding is a whole family approach to working with children and families that supports parents to create sustained change for themselves and for their family.
- 6.12 This approach is entirely congruent with the Blackpool Families Rock approach and sits within the funding agreement and the terms and conditions of the Grant Letter agreed with the DfE. This model will form part of the Blackpool Children’s Services’

Transformation work that includes delivery of Family Hubs and a revised Early Help system. The purpose of this work is to help address the long-standing high levels of demand for statutory services within Blackpool by embedding domestic abuse, substance and alcohol misuse, and mental health specialists within children's social work teams to work with adults, stimulating better frontline practice and cultural change. Blackpool Council view embedding the Family Safeguarding Model (FSM) within Blackpool Children's Social Care as a key element of the continuous improvement journey we are on. Embedding Family Safeguarding will not only contribute to the outcomes of children, young people, and families in Blackpool, it will also contribute to the council becoming a more resilient and sustainable going forward.

6.13 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of appendices

7.1 None.

8.0 Financial considerations

8.1 Funding has been received from the DfE.

9.0 Legal considerations

9.1 None associated with this report.

10.0 Risk management considerations

10.1 None associated with this report.

11.0 Equalities considerations and the impact of this decision for our children and young people

11.1 Impact on children and young people detailed within the report.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations

12.1 None associated with this report.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken

13.1 None associated with this report.

14.0 Background papers

14.1 None.