

Strategic Lead Update

4th June 2010

Children, Young People and Families

Children's Board

Following on from the unannounced inspection last November, Ofsted will be conducting their announced inspection within the coming months. Ofsted will give 10 days notice before an inspection. The purpose of the inspection is to evaluate the contribution made by different services, in the local area, to the effective safeguarding of children and to determine the quality of service provision for looked after children and care leavers. The upcoming inspection will have a sharper focus on evaluating outcomes for children and young people and the impact that practices and services have on improving outcomes.

Given that the inspectors can literally follow any lead they may well visit organisations from the voluntary, community and faith sector (VCFS) and the inspection will definitely include some engagement with the VCFS. To this end MACC will be compiling some information and messages for the VCFS that will be on our website in the next couple of weeks.

Safeguarding Board

A major piece of work that has been undertaken by the safeguarding board recently has been to conduct an audit of contacts to the contact centre. This follows a recommendation arising from the unannounced inspection by Ofsted covering 'contacts, referrals, and assessments' undertaken in Manchester last November.

Themes from the audit include:

- The majority of contacts were deemed to be appropriate with a legitimate concern
- The referral paperwork does not seem fit for purpose and makes it harder for people to articulate their concerns or the nature of the request
- There are issues of clarity on the referral form for what the First Response Team/children's services are being asked to do
- Domestic abuse contacts are a large percentage of the overall number and are, to some extent, swamping the system. A relatively low number of initial DV referrals result in initial assessment (i.e. visits by a social worker) and a fresh look at the whole way in which these cases are being processed/addressed would appear to be indicated.
- Contacts regarding teenagers show an inconsistent response, particularly where safeguarding concerns are being raised.

Some agreed actions that have come from this audit include:

- The contact forms need substantial revision, and this will be overseen by Manchester Safeguarding Children's Board (MSCB) as a matter of priority.
- Reminders will be sent from MSCB to all agencies to ensure that potential contacts concerning safeguarding matters are being

appropriately discussed within agencies, prior to the contact being made.

- MSCB and the Children's Board needs to jointly request member agencies to address the issues relating to quality, quantity of information and the legibility of contact forms.
- The multi-agency audit which has informed this work should be completed on a periodic basis to compliment the regular scrutiny and oversight of the First Response Team by Children's Services.
- Further analysis of the progress and outcome of cases which proceed to initial assessment and beyond, ongoing and will be completed by the MSCB.

The effective operation of the system of making contacts with Children's Services is absolutely vital, as it indicates the degree to which there is a commonly agreed and understood set of thresholds, by which children's and young people's needs can be properly assessed and responded to in the city. This is therefore an area which both the Children's Board and MSCB should keep under regular review. As a member of the MSCB MACC have been involved in the audit and discussing the learning from this and how it can be communicated within our sectors. To this end MACC will be providing guidance to the VCFS in the coming weeks.

Children's Services Blueprint

Although the blueprint, as discussed in the last strategic lead update, is still only a high level document things have progressed.

What we know is there are now 3 pilots in Manchester, one based in Ardwick which is part of the city regeneration pilot and the other 2 which relate more to the blueprint design are based in Newall Green and Moss Side where schools are starting to develop their potential for partnership working and how they may commission locally.

Concerns for the blueprint and how this will impact on the VCFS have been expressed in the child and family support forum and in the district representatives meetings have been raised with the lead for business change within children's services.

The high level plan is due to go to children's board on 7th June for final sign off and workstreams will be developed from this.

Commissioning

The new commissioning framework is being developed at a rapid pace.

As a member of the commissioning project MACC have attended a design workshop and a risk planning workshop as well as the project board.

Following on from the agreement to use "Return to Tender" as an input document there have been several encouraging signs that the next round of commissioning will not be like the last one. Including as a start an acknowledgement that things have been done badly in the past and that cannot be repeated.

There has been round table agreement that VCFS should be involved in all aspects of commissioning down to the design of the specifications. There has also been agreement that the commissioning priorities need to be communicated to the VCFS in advance. There has been a lot of discussion

around communication and this is the one area that all partner agencies agree needs to be given a top priority

There has been a prioritisation of market and workforce development, led by workforce planning and skills. This will include delivering skills and knowledge sessions, provider and commission ready workshops and developing tools to support commissioners. MACC and Voluntary Youth Manchester will be hosting a day for the VCFS around commissioning on the 19th August 2010, more information will follow.

MACC has built a very positive relationship with the commissioning project manager and we will continue to work hard to ensure that the commissioning process is improved next time and we are encouraged by what we have been involved in so far.

Children and Young Peoples Plan

Following the public consultation period for the draft Children & Young People's Plan (CYPP), the Plan was approved and signed off by CSSMT (Children's Services Senior Management Team) and the Children's Trust Board in March, following which an Executive Summary was produced. Both documents have now been published on the Manchester City Council internet/intranet at:

http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/500002/council_policies_and_strategies/1360/manchesters_children_and_young_peoples_strategic_plan

Under new legislative changes the children's trust board is now responsible for the delivery of the CYPP whereas previously this was held within children's services.

This CYPP will form the grounding for all work carried out within Manchester with children and young people and the objectives in the plan will be used to inform commissioning.

The CYPP is a working document and progression on the plan will be reported back to the Children's Trust Board.

Formal response to the third sector strategy and return to tender

As you will be aware, we have discussed the Third Sector Strategy and the Return to Tender documents as key tools to measure how the local authority are engaging with us around the children and families agenda.

The following points have been agreed in response to the Third Sector Strategy and the Return to Tender document.

1. There will be active involvement in the development of the Children's Trust Blueprint
2. Consideration of appropriate third sector engagement through the review of the governance arrangements associated with the development of the blueprint
3. Active involvement in the Children's Trust Commissioning Project
4. "Return to Tender" to be fully considered by the Commissioning Project in a way that takes forward the development of the commissioning framework and approach

5. Prioritisation of market development including work with the third sector as a key strand of the commissioning project

We are pleased with the agreed points and will be using these to measure effectiveness. These will be regularly reviewed between ourselves and the lead for Business Change.