

19 October 2015**Agenda Item: 05**

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

PROPOSED OPERATIONAL MODEL FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF SINGLE ASSESSMENT

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the proposed operational model to support the implementation of single assessment within Children's Social Care.

Information and Advice

Single Assessment

2. Children's Services has a statutory requirement to implement the single assessment framework in Children's Social Care in line with the recommendations of Eileen Munro in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2013). In order to deliver this framework changes will need to be made to the current structure of Children's Social Care. This paper outlines the various options that have been considered and the option which is felt will enable the Council to deliver best outcomes for children, young people and families.
3. A project delivery team was set up to develop proposals for a new operational structure which would incorporate both child protection and assessment teams. The following design principles were agreed:
 - the importance of striking an appropriate balance between 'thoroughness and depth' and 'timeliness and proportionality' of assessments
 - ensure that a child's journey is improved and is better supported
 - focus on timeliness
 - provide more scope to be more sensitive to the child and families' routines
 - management of resource and services must provide the flexibility to meet demand on a locality basis.
 - in line with the Family Services Operating Model, wherever possible services will be delivered as part of a distinct locality service. The localities are defined as:
 - South (Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe)
 - North (Bassetlaw, Newark and Sherwood) and
 - Central (Mansfield and Ashfield).

- it is planned that each locality will have the following in common:
 - a common operating model including methodology, duty points, timescale and quality standards
 - a common electronic case recording system also used to gather key pieces of data to support service planning and performance monitoring.
4. Following consideration within the project delivery group, three structure options were shortlisted to replace the current Assessment and District Child Protection Teams (DCPTs):
- Option 1:** Assessment and Protection teams in existing district locations, carrying out single assessment, child in need (CIN) work and Child Protection work before handing cases to Through Care teams (Court team, Permanency team, Looked After Children team) or the Family Service. This option would mean that the Assessment Teams would move from their current North and South team structure into a district structure, but would have little structural impact on DCPTs.
- Option 2:** 12-week Assessment & Intervention (A&I) teams based alongside realigned Child Protection teams. The A&I teams would complete single assessments and provide short term intervention within a 12-week time-frame, increasing the percentage of closures and step-down to other services and reducing numbers of cases passed to Child Protection and Through Care teams. Child Protection teams would continue CIN and Child Protection work for cases which are not resolved within the 12-week window. A&I and Child Protection teams would be based in localities: North, Central and South.
- Option 3:** As option 2, but with the addition of an Immediate Response Team located within the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) before handing cases to Through Care teams or the Family Service.
5. Option 2 was recommended and agreed by Children's Social Care Divisional Leadership Team (CSC DLT) for the following reasons:
- whilst this option does not obviously reduce the social worker transfer points, it provides more of an opportunity for A&I social workers to do direct work with families, reducing the need to transfer cases to Child Protection social workers.
 - this option increases opportunities for development of seamless working with the Family Service and other partners.
 - there is proven record of the Assessment Service's ability to provide an immediate response when required, negating the requirement for a separate Immediate Response team.
6. There are no plans to reduce the current Assessment and DCPT establishment. Following guidance from Human Resources, existing social workers and team managers will be asked to state a locality and role preference and a process will be followed to enable staff into the proposed locality structure (North, Central and South) taking preferences into

account wherever possible but following enabling criteria of least disturbance to location and role. The current level of agency staffing will give a degree of flexibility and assist in meeting staff preferences. Careful consideration will be given to the skills and experience mix both between teams and between localities.

7. Following CSC DLT approval, a consultation paper detailing the proposals was sent to all stakeholders, which included all Children's Services colleagues as well as colleagues from the Nottinghamshire Children's Safeguarding Board. Formal consultation took place for 30 days from Monday 27th July 2015. There was a 25% response rate and significant support (88%) for the preferred model.
8. The proposed launch date for the new structure is 29th February 2016.

Risks

9. Given the newly-constituted teams will contain a variety of skills and experience it will be necessary to ensure each of the teams has the requisite skills-mix to be able to carry out the required roles. A skills assessment will be carried out to identify and address any gaps.
10. Whilst every effort will be made to ensure that each locality staff structure has the right number of staff to fulfil demand, it is possible that the model will need to be fine-tuned once the single assessment process is in place and the impact can be fully understood. Flexibility will be built into the model by allocating existing agency workers across the locality teams; this approach will allow for adjustments to be made as necessary.

Other Options Considered

11. The report is for noting only.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

12. The report is for noting only.

Statutory and Policy Implications

13. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

14. There may be training costs associated with this project (which will be confirmed once a skills assessment has taken place), and possible disturbance costs (which will be confirmed when enabling has taken place). Project management costs will be no more than £12,000; however this is not an additional cost to the project, this is the value of the resources supplied by the Programmes & Project Team.

HR Implications

15. Advice has and continues to be sought from the HR Service in respect of this restructure. Trades Unions and staff have and will continue to be consulted. As discussed under paragraph 6, the County Council agreed enabling procedure will be used to fill posts within the new structure, and it is not anticipated that there will be any redundancies.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the proposed operational model to support the implementation of single assessment within Children's Social Care be noted.

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Constitutional Comments

16. As this report is for noting only, no Constitutional Comments are required.

Financial Comments (SS 25/09/15)

17. The financial implications of this report are contained within paragraph 14 above.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Single Assessment Operational Model Consultation Paper

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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