

**18<sup>th</sup> March 2019****Agenda Item: 14****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND SOCIAL  
WORK****YOUTH, FAMILIES AND SOCIAL WORK FRAMEWORK FOR PRACTICE****Purpose of the Report**

1. This report requests approval of the proposed new framework for practice for Youth, Families and Social Work and the plans for its launch.

**Information**

2. On 18<sup>th</sup> June 2018, the Committee approved funding to support improvements in the quality of social work practice.
3. On 17<sup>th</sup> December 2018, an update was provided to the Committee on the establishment of a programme of work entitled 'Remodelling Practice'. The purpose of the Remodelling Practice programme is to create a sustainable delivery model for services for vulnerable children and families which is high quality and financially sustainable. The programme aims to develop a positive working environment and provide teams with the tools and support to do their jobs in the most effective and efficient way, enabling the improvement of outcomes for children and families.
4. A key strand of the Remodelling Practice programme is the development of a new framework for practice for Youth, Families and Social Work. The aim is to develop a consistent framework for practice for work with children and families, including identifying a model for addressing drift in case work, which complements practice in Nottinghamshire.
5. The need for a framework for practice has been recognised by the current Ofsted National Director for Social Care, Yvette Stanley, who has said that having a well implemented, whole system 'values-based' practice model, is one of the key building blocks for success.
6. The impact of having a clear framework for practice is evidenced through case studies such as Essex County Council, whose strengths based practice model was cited in their 2018 Ofsted Inspection report in which they were graded as 'Outstanding'.
7. In December 2018, the Committee requested an update regarding the proposed framework for practice of the Youth, Families and Social Work division, as provided in this report.

## Model, Vision and Principles

8. The Youth, Families and Social Work division propose the implementation of a strengths-based approach to practice, entitled 'Nottinghamshire Children 1<sup>st</sup>'. Strengths based practice is centred on working with colleagues, partners and children, rather than 'doing to', to assess, plan and manage cases.
9. Through strengths based practice, workers will:
  - identify the strengths as well as needs and difficulties
  - build relationships
  - hear the voice of the child and let that voice have an influence
  - focus on the whole family
  - embrace principles of restorative practice of high challenge and high support, moving away from a deficit and compliance culture towards a restorative model where there is:
    - a shared vision
    - collaboration
    - respect
    - power is shared (discussed and challenged)
    - clarity of process/ expectations.
10. This framework brings together the vision and core principles that guide practice; it identifies the theories which are used to help practitioners to understand what is happening in a child and their family's life; and has models of practice to help social workers to plan how to consistently intervene and influence change.
11. The foundations of the framework for practice will be its vision and principles, which have been developed with frontline staff. The vision and principles will underpin every element of work and decision-making within the Youth, Families and Social Work division including our work with families, partners and each other.
12. The vision is:

*To work with children and young people, together with families and our partners, to give the consistent support and protection they need to be safe, happy and secure, and have opportunities to achieve.*
13. The vision is supported by the following principles:
  - 1) We will put positive outcomes for children and young people at the heart of what we do
  - 2) We will support children and young people's emotional wellbeing and listen to what they say makes them happy
  - 3) We will focus on strengths within relationships and celebrate achievements
  - 4) We will promote a reflective learning culture which balances high support and high challenge

- 5) We will empower the workforce to be creative and drive innovative and evidence based practice
  - 6) We will work effectively with partner agencies to provide coordinated planning and support
  - 7) We will keep children at home with families wherever possible or when needed provide a placement where their needs are met and they feel safe
  - 8) We will recognise and support individual needs, challenge inequality and celebrate diversity and inclusion
  - 9) We will seek to make best use of the resources available to us.
14. As part of the development of the model, a pilot is being undertaken in the Bassetlaw Child Protection Team to introduce reflective group supervision. The focus of the sessions are cases where there is potential drift and delay. This is in response to the findings from the Newton Europe diagnostic review of Children's Services which identified an increase in child protection plan duration. The pilot will be evaluated in April 2019 and if it is successful, it will be adopted by all safeguarding teams as part of the implementation of framework for practice.

### **Implementing the framework for practice**

15. In order to implement the proposed framework for practice, a task and finish group consisting of Youth, Families and Social Work managers, Social Work Practice Consultants and the project team will work with frontline staff to consider each process and point of interaction to identify how these can be aligned with the framework for practice and how the required changes can be embedded within the service. Developments produced by the task and finish group will be presented to Social Work Practice Consultants and the Youth, Families and Social Work Staff Forum who will act as reference groups.
16. Young people will also be involved in the development of the framework for practice in accordance with principle two 'We will support children and young people's emotional wellbeing and listen to what they say makes them happy'.
17. Communication about the new framework for practice is critical to ensure that staff and partners are aware of the new model and how the service will operate moving forwards. The communication plan includes:
  - briefings to Children's Safeguarding teams, the Fostering Service, the Family Service and the Independent Chair Service to: introduce the concept of strengths based practice; understand the priority areas of practice the teams would like to focus on aligning with strengths based practice; and identify individuals to contribute to the task and finish group to develop specific areas of practice. Themes of the task and finish groups will be: working with families, working with partners and working with each other

- four events for frontline staff and managers in May 2019. The events will provide further detail about strengths based practice and introduce developments produced by the task and finish groups for implementation
  - a training plan for staff to equip them for changes arising from the implementation of the framework for practice
  - updates to partner agencies via existing board structures
  - further consolidation and new starter events to be held periodically
  - monthly newsletters for staff and managers.
18. External publicity will also be considered as part of the communication plan including:
- press releases
  - social media updates.
19. To support the embedding of the framework for practice, the following will be produced:
- a design which symbolises Nottinghamshire Children 1<sup>st</sup> and can be used in promotional materials
  - promotional materials such as posters and booklets
  - new intranet pages.
20. The high level timeline for implementing the framework for practice is as follows:
- March to April 2019:
- briefings to Children's Safeguarding teams, the Fostering Service, the Family Service and the Independent Chair Service as detailed in **paragraph 17**
- May 2019:
- four events for frontline staff and managers as detailed in **paragraph 17**
- begin in May 2019 with incremental implementation until May 2020:
- task and finish group to develop practice in line with the framework for practice

## Evaluation

21. The implementation of the new framework for practice will be monitored and evaluated using the following measures:
- improved outcomes for children and families
  - improved quality of practice
  - a stable workforce
  - reduced pressure on workers
  - improved morale of workers
  - engagement at events, training and with new tools.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

22. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment 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**

23. It is anticipated that there will be costs associated with the implementation of the new framework for practice but the activities have not been defined or quantified yet. Where ever possible existing channels of communication will be used and the cost of any publicity materials met from the Youth, Families and Social Work Service Improvement budget.

## **Implications for Service Users**

24. Implementation of the framework for practice will improve the quality of service to vulnerable children and young people in need of safeguarding.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1) That the Committee approves the proposed new framework for practice for Youth, Families and Social Work and the plans for its launch.

**Steve Edwards**

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**Constitutional Comments (AK 18/02/19)**

25. The recommendation falls within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee under their terms of reference.

## **Financial Comments (SAS 28/02/19)**

26. The financial implications of the report are contained within paragraph 23 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.

Supporting improvement in Children's Social Care – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 18 June 2018.

Update on supporting improvements in Children's Social Care – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 17 December 2018.

**Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All.

C1223