

16 July 2012

Agenda Item: **6****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE****CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME -  
INTRODUCTION****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an introduction to the Children's Social Care Transformation Programme, including progress to date across the range of projects within the Programme portfolio

**Information and Advice**

2. The Children's Social Care Transformation Programme was initiated in May 2011 with the aim of developing and implementing an operating model for Children's Social Care (CSC) which is both financially sustainable and provides the best possible outcomes for the most vulnerable children, young people and their families in Nottinghamshire. The programme builds on the 'business as usual' improvements made by the service and recognised in the recent letter from Tim Loughton, Children and Families Minister, which is available as a background paper.
3. The programme aims to deliver a service which is continuously improving and achieves the vision:

"To provide the most vulnerable children and young people in Nottinghamshire with the support and protection that they need to be safe, secure and happy, and to achieve their full potential".
4. The vision is underpinned by principles including the following:
  - The principal focus of Children's Social Care is to protect and support the most vulnerable children and young people in Nottinghamshire
  - Our aim is to keep children at home in their families wherever possible and where it is safe to do so
  - We believe that children should exit the care system by returning to their family or into alternative permanent placements, such as adoption, as quickly as possible.
5. These principles are driving the projects within the Transformation Programme.

6. The Programme is governed by a Board which is chaired by the Chief Executive, with membership comprising the Chairman (Children and Young People's Committee), Corporate Directors (Children, Families and Cultural Services and Adult Social Care, Health and Public Protection), Service Directors (Children's Social Care and Youth, Families and Culture), Group Managers (Finance and HR – CFCS) and Programme Manager (Improvement Programme).

## **Projects within the Programme**

7. There are nine projects within the programme's portfolio and a brief summary of each project is outlined below.

- a. Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Partners have been working together since December 2011 to establish a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), with an anticipated 'go live' date of November 2012. The aim of the MASH is to significantly improve the sharing of information between agencies, helping to protect the most vulnerable children and adults from harm, neglect and abuse. The MASH will act as the first point of contact for Children's Social Care and for safeguarding concerns about adults. It will involve representatives from Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, Police and Health working together in the Customer Services Centre at Mercury House. Virtual links will exist to other services and agencies such as the Probation Trust, housing and mental health.

The MASH team will receive safeguarding concerns from professionals such as teachers and GPs as well as members of the public and family members. For those concerns that meet the threshold for Adult or Children's Social Care involvement the MASH team will collate information from their respective sources to build up a holistic picture of the circumstances of the case and the associated risks to the child or adult. As a result, decision making will be better informed and speedier. Better co-ordination between agencies will lead to an improved service for children, adults and families.

The MASH will also provide advice and guidance for professionals with concerns about a child or adult. This will help enforce the application of need thresholds, improve the quality of information provided and ensure that the appropriate level of support is offered. For those concerns that do not meet the threshold for Adult or Children's Social Care involvement, the MASH will ensure that cases are passed to early intervention or other services as and when this is appropriate.

Progress has been made within the project in relation to the design of business processes, the organisational structure, the information sharing agreement and performance analysis. There are challenges associated with the timelines to implement accommodation and ICT requirements, however, Ways of Working and property colleagues are actively engaged in the project to minimise the risk of a delayed 'go live' date.

b. Organisational Structure

The proposed organisational structure for Children's Social Care builds on the development of the MASH, by establishing district child protection teams to deal with assessments, child in need and child protection work, and a dedicated through care service, providing services to looked after children so that they do not experience drift within the system. The through care service will provide dedicated support through the following teams: permanence (adoption), looked after children (long term fostering), court work and leaving care. The proposed organisational structure will be supported by an increase in the numbers of Advanced Social Work Practitioners, who will be renamed Practice Consultants, in line with the nomenclature used in the Munro Review of Child Protection, and an increase in the numbers of Family Resource Workers, as part of the strategy to ensure that only children who need to come into care do so and that children are supported to return home as quickly as possible when it is safe to do so. The structure was approved by Children and Young People's Committee on 18 June 2012 and will be implemented in the coming months.

c. Looked After Children Project

The Looked After Children project has been established to ensure that children only come in to care when it is in their best interests to do so, and are able to move from care to a permanent solution as soon as it is appropriate. The aims of the project are in line with the looked after children strategy which is subject to Policy Committee approval on 18 July 2012. The project is being delivered through four work streams; *Edge of Care* which will pilot new panel arrangements to act as the single gateway for all children and young people entering care under Section 20; *Kinship Care* which will increase the uptake of kinship care arrangements and provide better support for kinship carers; *Moving on from care* which will improve care planning to identify permanence solutions in a more timely manner; and *Options for permanency* which will process map the routes and options available for looked after children.

d. Transitions Project

The Nottinghamshire Strategic Transitions Management Group are acting as the steering group for this project and they have identified a preferred option for improving the arrangements for young people with disabilities who transfer from the Children with Disabilities Service in Children's Social Care to Adult Social Care and Health. The steering group and the project sponsors (Steve Edwards and Jon Wilson) have agreed that a business case should be developed for the establishment of a co-located 14 – 25 transitions service, using existing resources. This will be developed in the next three months.

e. Legal Project

This project has delivered an assessment of the current working practices and relationship between Children's Social Care (CSC) and Legal Services, with a view to identifying opportunities for driving out efficiencies.

A number of changes have been proposed:

- Revision of the current Service Level Agreement with Legal Services
- Adoption by CSC of the management of Section 7 and 37 reports
- Improving the quality of legal documents produced by CSC through the establishment of the court work team and Practice Consultants taking on a quality assurance role, so as to reduce the need for Legal Services to undertake this role
- Establishing a planning mechanism within CSC to diarise and manage the timeframes and deadlines for report and assessments, court documentation and submission lead times
- Revising the use of Legal Planning Meetings.

An implementation plan for these changes is currently being developed.

f. Performance Project

This project will deliver a revised key performance indicator set for the new operating model for Children's Social Care, which is compliant with the proposed Children's Safeguarding Performance Information Set. The proposed set is currently being developed with the Service Director and Group Managers for Children's Social Care, Senior Executive Officer for CFCS, Team Manager, Data and Systems, and Team Manager, Framework-I, and is provisionally intended to be in place by October 2012.

Performance for Quarter 1 will be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

g. Independent Chairing Service Project

This project will deliver a report with recommendations for improving the quality assurance function provided by the Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Coordinators who form the Independent Chairing Service. The hypothesis is that strengthening this function will prevent case drift. The report will be accompanied by an action plan including baseline information on current performance.

h. Budget and Cost Driver Model

The aim of this project is to deliver a revised budget structure for Children's Social Care for 2013/14 and a cost driver model to enable the service to better forecast the impact of changes on demand, and allow for a more accurate profiling of the impact of transformational activity. Part of the project has involved developing process maps of the child's journey through social care in order to validate the cost drivers and identify any gaps in performance data. The maps also have the potential to identify opportunities for business process reengineering.

i. Provider Services Review

This project intends to deliver value for money reviews of all provider services within Children's Social Care. It will also govern any joint work with the procurement function to drive down the costs of external placements. This project is currently in the scoping phase.

### **Next Steps**

8. The benefits realisation plan for the programme, i.e. the cashable benefits that the programme will deliver and the performance indicators that will be monitored to ensure that the programme is delivering an improved service to children and families is currently under development and will be reported to Committee from October onwards.

### **Other Options Considered**

9. As this is a report for noting, it is not necessary to consider other options.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

10. To support the Committee's ongoing consideration of matters relating to safeguarding arrangements for children and young people in Nottinghamshire.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

11. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

### **Implications for Service Users**

12. The Transformation Programme intends to deliver improved services to the most vulnerable children and families in Nottinghamshire.

### **Equalities Implications**

13. As part of the process of making decisions and changing policy, public authorities are required by law to think about the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics (as defined by equalities legislation) and those who do not.
  - Foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not.

14. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are a means by which a public authority can assess the potential impact that proposed decisions / changes to policy could have on the community and those with protected characteristics. They may also identify potential ways to reduce any impact that a decision / policy change could have. If it is not possible to reduce the impact, the EIA can explain why. Decision makers must understand the potential implications of their decisions on people with protected characteristics.
15. An EIA has been undertaken and is available as a background paper. Decision makers must give due regard to the implications for protected groups when considering this report.

### **Safeguarding of Children Implications**

16. The Transformation Programme intends to improve arrangements to safeguard vulnerable children and young people.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1) That the Committee notes the progress of the Transformation Programme and agrees that quarterly reports on the Programme's progress will be reported to the Committee.

**Steve Edwards**  
**Service Director, Children's Social Care**

### **For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

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### **Constitutional Comments (LM 25/06/12)**

17. The Children and Young People's Committee has delegated authority within the Constitution to approve the recommendations in the report.

### **Financial Comments (NDR 25/06/12)**

18. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

### **Background Papers**

Equality Impact Assessment  
Letter from Tim Loughton, Children and Families Minister, 30 April 2012  
Children & Young People's Committee Report on 18 June 2012: Changes to the staffing structure of the Children's Social Care service

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.

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

All.

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