

**Report To:** HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

**Date:** 9 March 2017

**Reporting Officer:** Stephanie Butterworth – Executive Director (People)

**Subject:** TAMESIDE CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PLAN

**Report Summary:** This report outlines the approach that has been taken to produce the draft Tameside Children's Services Improvement plan and sets out a summary of the consultation responses received which have been considered in drafting the plan. The report also sets out the timeline for further engagement activity prior to final submission to Ofsted on 20 March 2017.

The draft Improvement Plan is attached at **Appendix 1** for the purposes of consideration and further feedback.

**Recommendations:** Members of Health & Wellbeing Board consider the attached draft Improvement Plan and provide additional feedback on content.

**Risk Management:** The attached report sets out the process for finalising the Tameside Children's Service Improvement Plan. Failure to finalise the plan prior to the statutory deadline of 20 March 2017 will result in considerable risk to Tameside Council and partners.

**Access to Information:** The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting James Smith, Policy & Communications, Governance, Resources and Pensions, Tameside Council.



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## **1. TAMESIDE CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

- 1.1 Following the inspection of Children's Services and Tameside Safeguarding Children Board in Autumn 2016 Ofsted published the report into its findings on 9 December 2016 rating the overall effectiveness of Children's Services as 'inadequate' and the Tameside Safeguarding Children Board as 'requiring improvement'.
- 1.2 In response to the concerns raised by Ofsted the Tameside Children's Services Improvement Plan has been drafted setting out how Tameside Council and partners across the borough are addressing the recommendations made by Ofsted to deliver sustainable improvement.
- 1.3 The draft Improvement Plan attached at **Appendix 1** includes a range of actions to be delivered by partners and staff at all levels with a focus on improving outcomes and supporting successful lives for children and their families in Tameside.
- 1.4 The following key steps have been undertaken to engage stakeholders as a part of the process for production of the draft Improvement Plan.
- Detailed analysis of Ofsted recommendations and associated actions.
  - 2x Tameside Council workforce engagement sessions to determine staff views and priorities for improvement – 22 November 2016 and 26 January 2017.
  - Elected members engagement session – 19 January 2017.
  - Discussion by Tameside Primary Schools Head Teachers – 2 February 2017.
  - Engagement with 2BeUs (Children in Care Council) – 7 February 2017.
  - Email survey to engage stakeholders in shaping the development of the Improvement Plan – 2-15 February 2017.
  - 2x half day drop-in engagement sessions with Tameside Director of Children's Services and Assistant Executive Director Children's Services – 10 and 14 February 2017.
  - Wider discussions between partners and the Director for Children's Services and stakeholder regarding priority areas (such as domestic abuse notifications).
  - Tameside Children's Service Management Team improvement planning sessions – Monthly.
- 1.5 Following the closing date for submission of written responses from partners on 15 February 2017, feedback from stakeholders has been collated and used to shape the draft Improvement Plan which has been circulated with meeting papers as a part of this report.

## **2. NEXT STEPS**

- 2.1 The following process will be undertaken to ensure that Improvement Board members have the opportunity to further comment on and shape the content of the Improvement plan:
- The draft Improvement Plan has been shared with the Improvement Board on 23 February 2017 for review in readiness to provide feedback at the Improvement Board meeting on 2 March 2017.
  - The draft Improvement Plan has also been shared with Executive Cabinet, Scrutiny Chair's, and both the Performance Clinic and Practitioner's Group as staff representatives for comment by 2 March 2017.
  - Feedback on the draft Improvement Plan will be gathered during the 2 March meeting of Tameside Children's Services Improvement Board.
  - Feedback will be used to shape a second draft which will be circulated to Board members for further comment between 8-10 March.

- During this period the second draft will also be shared with colleagues from Ofsted for comment and feedback.
- Following feedback a third draft will be produced which will be circulated for electronic sign off by Improvement Board members between 15-17 March.
- The final improvement plan will be submitted to Ofsted on 20 March.
- Executive Cabinet of Tameside Council on 22 March following publication.

2.2 The next steps activity described above will also include work to ensure all the actions outlined in the draft Improvement Plan are SMART.

2.3 Following submission to Ofsted a final version of the Improvement Plan will go through a design process prior to final publication on Tameside Council's website.

2.4 The purpose of the design process is to ensure that the finalised document is fully accessible and presented in a manner which is engaging. This process will involve the engagement of stakeholder to provide statements which demonstrate the supportive challenge which is being offered by partner organisations throughout Tameside and in the Greater Manchester region.

2.5 As a part of finalising the public facing Improvement Plan the engagement of children and young people in Tameside will be sought to ensure that information published is available in a manner that is accessible to a broad range of stakeholders.

### **3. FEEDBACK ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

3.1 As a part of the engagement process written feedback has been received from the following groups and organisations:

- 2BeUs (Children in Care Council).
- New Charter Housing Group.
- Greater Manchester Police.
- Buckton Vale Primary School.
- Millbrook Primary School and Lyndhurst Primary Schools.
- Stalybridge cluster group.
- Longendale High School and Astley Sports College.
- Tameside College.
- Legal Services – Tameside Council.
- Access and Inclusion – Tameside Council.
- Tameside Safeguarding Children Board.
- NHS Tameside and Glossop Clinical Commissioning Group and Tameside and Glossop Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust.
- Action Together.

3.2 Feedback has been collated and used to inform the development of the draft Children's Services Improvement Plan. The section below highlights the key themes raised in written responses. A more detailed summary of the suggestions from feedback is available at **Appendix 2** for information.

#### **3.3 Key Themes**

3.4 **Demand and Need** – All respondents raised points which relate directly to the ways in which services assess need and deal with demand. In particular a common theme was the strong need to develop a shared understanding of the way in which thresholds are applied in the safeguarding of children and young people. Further to this point several stakeholders also highlighted the need for there to be an opportunity for respectful challenges to decision

making in appropriate circumstances. This included the provision of feedback post-referral where cases are deemed no to meet threshold that is taken professionally and used constructively to lead improvements.

3.5 It was also suggested that the opportunity to submit written or electronic referrals may be helpful in reducing repeat requests for information when referring into the public service hub.

3.6 **Information Sharing** – A number of respondents raised points relating to the sharing of information between organisations involved in the safeguarding of children and young people. Particular emphasis was given to the following key areas:

- More effective information sharing in relation to: children returning after a period missing from home, children moving across local authority boundaries and when changes in social worker take place.
- Information made available in relation to support available from voluntary and community sector organisations operating in Tameside (i.e. early help community based offers).
- Changes to service delivery and remits, in particular with regard to changes in taking place in the Public Service Hub.

3.7 **Early Intervention and Prevention** – The majority of respondents stressed the need for effective early intervention and prevention to ensure children and young people receive support at the earliest possible opportunity and to achieve long term reduction of underlying demand.

3.8 Additional suggestions included the need for increased linkages between services such as Children’s Social Care, Early Help Teams and the Integrated Neighbourhoods Service and the opportunity to co-locate staff within the Public Service Hub to restore a multi-agency approach to the service entry point.

3.9 **Partnership Working** – A range of opportunities to increase the level and scope of partnership working were suggested by respondents. Primarily these suggestions fell into the following main areas:

- Suggestions relating to increased training opportunities for staff involved in safeguarding and the provision of training that enables effective referrals into the Public Service Hub.
- Increasing opportunities for constructive dialogue at the point of decision making regarding referrals, particularly where different views are evident.
- Increased linkages between partner agencies and joined up working in relation to safeguarding, particularly in cases where domestic abuse is a factor.
- Increased workforce stability to ensure that children and young people are able to build effective relationships with social workers and other professionals.

#### **4. PUBLICATION AND UPDATING OF THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

4.1 The finalised improvement plan will be published on a dedicated webpage hosted on Tameside Council’s website. Updates will be published not less than quarterly and contain information about progress towards the actions set out in the Improvement Plan together with information about other activities that are being taken to achieve improved outcomes for children and young people in Tameside.

4.2 In addition to publication on Tameside’s website, in order to ensure that progress towards improvement is widely discussed and understood and that all stakeholders have the opportunity to raise concerns and engage in delivery, quarterly reports will be discussed at the following key meetings:

- Executive Cabinet of Tameside Council
- Tameside Health and Well Being Board
- Tameside Safeguarding Children's Board
- Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel
- Tameside and Glossop Single Commissioning Board
- 2BeUs (Children in Care Council)

4.3 A communications plan will be produced outlining the mechanisms by which progress towards achieving the actions set out in the Improvement Plan is explained to the public and wider stakeholders. This will be brought forward for discussion at the meeting of the Children's Services Improvement Board scheduled to take place on Thursday 30 March 2017.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1 As set out at the front of this report