

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE CABINET</b>
<b>Date:</b>	22 March 2017
<b>Executive Member / Reporting Officer:</b>	Councillor Peter Robinson – Executive Members (Children and Families)  Stephanie Butterworth – Executive Director (People Services) /Director of Children’s Services (DCS)
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>TAMESIDE CHILDREN’S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PLAN</b>
<b>Report Summary:</b>	The report outlines the approach taken to produce the Tameside Children’s Services Improvement plan, including a summary of the consultation responses received which were considered and incorporated in the drafting of the plan. The Tameside Children’s Services Improvement Plan – attached at <b>Appendix 1</b> – will be submitted to Ofsted on 20 March 2017 as per the statutory deadline following inspection, attached is the working draft as at time of publication of Cabinet agenda. Executive Cabinet are asked to adopt the Tameside Children’s Services Improvement Plan as Council policy. It should be noted that further improvements are being received from our partners and will be reflected in the report. Progress against the Tameside Children’s Services Improvement Plan will be monitored by the independently chaired Tameside Children’s Services Improvement Board. Quarterly progress updates will be presented to Executive Cabinet.
<b>Recommendations:</b>	Executive Cabinet are asked to note the content of the report and agree that the Tameside Children’s Services Improvement Plan – as outlined at <b>Appendix 1</b> – is adopted as Tameside Council policy.
<b>Links to Community Strategy:</b>	The Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan outline the priorities for improving the borough of Tameside including the quality of life for children and families, particularly those who are most vulnerable and in need of help. The improvement approach outlined in this report will be the key programme of work supporting the delivery of those priorities.
<b>Financial Implications: (Authorised by the Section 151 Officer)</b>	The Childrens Services Improvement Plan will be supported by additional investment which was included within the 2017/2018 Council Budget Report approved by the Council on 28 February 2017. Recurrent budget provision of £ 6 million is within the service budget from 1 April 2017 to cope with the additional demands on service provision together with investment previously approved by the Executive Cabinet on 14 December 2016. This investment includes the family group conferencing, edge of care and care to success initiatives. .  It is expected that the current demand within the service will decline over the medium term and an additional non-recurrent sum of £ 6 million is also included within the service budget over the medium term to facilitate service improvement initiatives. These improvements include a review of service provision pathways and the associated business processes and system infrastructure together with additional capacity to

improve the development of the service workforce.

Executive Cabinet members should note that investment at these levels is not sustainable in the context of declining Council resources. It is therefore essential that the service identifies how expenditure can be reduced over the medium to longer term.

**Legal Implications:  
(Authorised by the Borough  
Solicitor)**

Failing to develop, adopt and then implement the Tameside Children's Service Improvement Plan would result in considerable risk to children and families of poor outcomes and unsatisfactory quality of life. There is also a considerable risk to Tameside Council and partners. As set out in 'Putting Children First' all local authorities that are rated inadequate by Ofsted for their children's services go into intervention. Failure to respond effectively, e.g. not producing and submitting an improvement plan by the statutory deadline, could lead to escalation of the intervention

**Access to Information :**

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer James Smith:



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## 1. TAMESIDE CHILDRENS 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 developed setting out how Tameside Council and partners across the borough are addressing the recommendations made by Ofsted to deliver sustainable improvement.
- 1.3 The Tameside Children's Services 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 were undertaken to engage stakeholders as a part of the process for production of the Tameside Children's Services 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 at the Tameside Children's Services Improvement Board on 26 January 2016 to identify key themes and structure.
  - Discussion by Tameside Primary Schools Head Teachers – 2 February 2017.
  - Engagement with 2BeUs (Children in Care Council) – 7 February 2017.
  - Electronic survey to engage stakeholders in shaping the development of the Improvement Plan – 2-15 February 2017.
  - 2x half day drop-in engagement sessions with the Tameside Director of Children's Services and the Assistant Executive Director Children's Services – 10 and 14 February 2017.
  - Wider discussions (group and bi-lateral) between partners and the Director of Children's Services and stakeholders regarding priority areas (such as domestic abuse notifications).
  - Tameside Children's Service Management Team improvement planning sessions – monthly between November 2016 and February 2017.
  - Various drafts circulated electronically to members of the Tameside Children's Services Improvement Board for comment and input.
  - 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.
  - Presented to Employee Consultation Group (trade unions) on 28 February 2017 for discussion, comment and input.
  - The draft Improvement Plan shared electronically for comment to Executive Cabinet, Scrutiny Chair's, and other senior elected members.
  - The draft Improvement Plan shared electronically for comment with both the Performance Clinic network and the Practitioner Improvement Group building on the staff input from the whole service engagement sessions.
  - Full group discussion of the draft at the Tameside Children's Services Improvement Board on 2 March 2017.
- 1.5 The Tameside Children's Services Improvement Plan – attached at **Appendix 1** – will be submitted to Ofsted on 20 March 2017 as per the statutory deadline following inspection, attached is the working draft as at time of publication of Cabinet agenda. Executive

Cabinet are asked to adopt the Tameside Children's Services Improvement Plan – as outlined at **Appendix 1** – as Tameside Council policy.

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

- 2.1 As a part of the engagement process feedback was sought, and received, from partners and stakeholders across all sectors in Tameside. That feedback was invaluable in helping to draft a plan that it is both comprehensive in addressing a wide range of improvement areas but also meaningful to all partners, stakeholders and children and families.
- 2.2 **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.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 **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.
- 2.5 **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.
- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 **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.

### **3. NEXT STEPS**

- 3.1 Progress against the Tameside Children's Services Improvement Plan will be monitored by the independently chaired Tameside Children's Services Improvement Board. Quarterly progress updates will be presented to Executive Cabinet.
- 3.2 The Tameside Children's Services 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.
- 3.3 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 both raise concerns and to directly support delivery of the plan, 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)
- 3.4 A more accessible version of the plan will be produced for children and young people.

### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 As stated on the report cover.