

Title: Update Report – Children’s Services

Wards Affected: All Wards

To: Health and Wellbeing Board **On:** 12th February 2014

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1. Achievements since the last meeting

- 1.1** Following the previous HWBB Children's Services was subject to a full service review by the DfE. As a consequence of the review Children's Services has now been formally removed from the status of intervention. At the time of writing the formal letter from the Minister is awaited.
- 1.2** The formal letter will include reference to the Adoption Service that still remains in intervention. This has been challenged by the Council as the rationale for the judgement is based on data that is 12 months old and references averages over the past three years. The improvements made in the last year cannot therefore be considered (over 20 children adopted, all within the recommended timescales). This has been recognised by the Dfe but as yet no resolution found.
- 1.3** The consequence of no longer being in intervention and having achieved an adequate judgement from Ofsted in the spring of 2013 is that the infrastructure of a 'failing' authority can be dismantled and replaced with one fit for an 'improving' authority. This may seem a play on words but it will bring about a fundamental cultural shift both internally in the day to day management of safeguarding and externally in how partners perceive and work with the service.
- 1.4** In preparation for this Children's Services has been restructured to consolidate the operational delivery of the service and to develop a new commissioning team (jointly with Adults) that will shape future direction and form new partnerships/opportunities. The HR stages of this process have now been completed and full delivery under the new structures will be in place for April 1st 2014. Unfortunately due to the budget reduction process this has been

accomplished with a loss of 10% of the workforce, although the statutory safeguarding service has been protected.

- 1.5 In parallel with the positive developments in Children's Safeguarding the Schools side of the service continues to face an ongoing and fast moving change agenda. This provides the challenge of maintaining high quality learning and achievement alongside new governance arrangements with the growth of academies, new SEN legislation, increasing behavioural issues in schools and rising expectations from both parents and the regulator. The next report to the HWBB will focus on these developments amongst others that impact on the future education of children and young people.

2 Challenges for the next three months

- 2.1 The inspection framework for children's safeguarding is constantly changing and we have already started the preparation for the next inspection that **will** occur in the next two years. It is an unannounced inspection and will last for four weeks, the details of this are contained in appendix 1, including the results of the first round of inspections under the new framework. This framework does provide the key elements of a good service and the preparation is therefore based upon what should be delivered and is not wasted or misdirected effort.
- 2.2 Unfortunately the inspection will largely focus on the LA. However effective safeguarding is a partnership process and Torbay still has a journey to take to secure this (a new inspection process will be in operation from 2015 that will be partnership focused). The newly shaped TSCB will be a driving force to secure this with the newly formed TSCB Executive taking the lead and within Children's Services we will create the capacity at a senior management level to support this work. The success of this should not be judged on the outcome of an inspection but consistently good outcomes for children and young people.
- 2.3 Stepping down from the statutory arena there is a number of services and processes that on occasions create confusion for clients and duplication for agencies. The component parts of a good preventative framework and an effective early help approach are still in existence despite the budget reductions that have taken place. However the landscape is very different with many of the services previously provided by the LA now being withdrawn. As with all negatives there is a positive that can be found through a little creative and lateral thinking. The advent of the Troubled Families initiative has a number of largely unhelpful elements but the basic premise of more effective working through partnership is at its heart, and this is essentially the essence of a preventative and early help framework. To move this forward at the pace required a new "Torbay Partnership for Families" will be formed with the first meeting in mid February. At the core of the discussion will be Troubled Families but within a context of a broader prevention and early help framework.

- 2.4** To drive the partnership changes that are referred to in the previous two paragraphs the TSCB has requested that a short term task and finish group at senior management level is set up, reporting to the Executive and subsequently through the minutes to the HWWB. One of the key tasks of this group will be to remove the organisational and individual agency barriers that prevent effective partnership working. The DCS will set this group up and invites will be sent out in the near future. It will be important that this work informs and does not duplicate the broader concepts of integration that are being discussed.
- 2.5** Children and Young People are at the centre of the work of the work of children's services and there is a plethora of consultations and processes in place to gain their views. However there needs to be a clearer pathway developed that draws the information together, a mechanism that feeds it into the decision making forums and a feedback mechanism to the children and young people themselves. In consultation with Healthwatch and the wider CDT this will be set up for the beginning of April. It is proposed to produce the first annual report at this point but this will be determined through discussions.
- 2.6** The budget in Children's Services continues to provide an ongoing challenge with demand running beyond the available resources. A project has been developed to provide a new business plan for the service, based upon a shift in emphasis to in-house targeted provision. In practice this will lead to parenting assessments being completed in- house, therapeutic support being based alongside in- house foster carers, targeted work with children under 5, intensive work with young people with behavioural issues, offending or leaving care to provide a few examples. The implications for children and young people will be to improve outcomes; the implications for the LA budget will be to reduce costs but also with a potential parallel impact on the wider public purse. As with the previous developments in this report progress and success will be most likely with the real involvement of all partners.

3 Action Required by Partners

The active engagement of all partners in the developments noted within this report.

4 Appendices

Appendix 1: Ofsted's new inspection regime

Framework and evaluation schedule for the inspections of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers
And Review of Local Safeguarding Children Boards

What it covers?

The new inspection looks at the support and help provided to all children across the whole child's journey i.e. it will take in everything from early help through to children in care and care leavers. This framework will be the most comprehensive inspection of children services ever undertaken by Ofsted. The inspection will include looking for evidence across nearly 100 separate criteria and closely review the practice on over 100+ cases and the operation of our Fostering and Adoption agencies. All authorities will be inspected under this framework over the next 3 years.

The outcome of the inspection will be assessed via what is:

- recorded on our systems,
- reported by workers
- said by children, parents and carers
- observed by inspectors

Apart from members of the safeguarding board little time will be given to set piece meetings with senior staff. Leadership and governance will be looked at but mainly through the evidence trail of documents and reports linked to the Corporate Parenting Group, Health and Wellbeing board etc. Leadership grip and impact will also be assessed through the feedback from staff during the inspectors many discussions with them.

The Judgement

Ofsted has raised the bar (the early outcomes from the first 5 inspections evidence this). All authorities and the local Safeguarding Board will be assessed against a definition of 'good'. Local Authorities, in line with schools, will now be judged as –

- outstanding
- good
- requires improvement
- inadequate

What happens if you are not judged as 'good'?

Anything less than a 'good' will trigger ongoing input from Ofsted. An inadequate judgement will result in

- Monthly monitoring by the DFE intervention team and Ofsted. In a change from the past Ofsted will remain engaged with authorities post inspection and will audit cases alongside the authority and scrutinise their improvement progress.
- An automatic re-inspection within 12- 18 months. This timescale should be potentially treated as the maximum time given to turn around performance.

A 'requires improvement' judgement will put the authority on the Ofsted radar and the authority will be required to engage in seminars and receive support from the regional Ofsted team. The full extent of this support and interaction has yet to be fully fleshed out, but like schools, being a 'requires improvement' authority may mean visits from the inspectors to monitor progress.

The inspection process

- The inspection will be unannounced - we find out on a Tuesday morning.
- The inspection will last a total of 4 weeks.
- It will look at over 100 open cases or 10%+ of active cases.
- The inspection will be delivered by at least 7 inspectors.
- The authority will have to produce a formal inspection action plan in response to any Ofsted recommendations

When does it start?

- The first 5 authorities have already been inspected and the next 6 have started. The unpublished outcomes from the first 5 are 1 Good, 3 Requires improvement, 1 Inadequate

Inadequate

1 authority that was previously judged as inadequate in 2011

Requires improvement

1 authority that was previously judged as Good in 2009

1 authority that was previously judged as Adequate 2010

1 authority that was previously judged as Good in 2010

Good

1 authority that was previously judged as Good in 2011

This pattern generally fits with the profile of authority judgements established in the framework that Torbay was inspected under. The previous regime was focused on the bottom third authorities but this clearly established a higher bar for good.

Previous framework outcomes:-

	Overall Effectiveness
Outstanding	0
Good	4
Adequate (requires improvement)	29
Inadequate	17

Total 50

Partners

The impact and effectiveness of Partnership will be examined throughout the inspection and will be thoroughly explored in the TSCB review part of the framework. Any concerns or significant issues found by Ofsted concerning partners will be passed on to the relevant inspection agencies for them to take these forward.

This is not the only inspection

The new inspection framework is not the only inspection. Children Services will also be subject to the following other inspections:

- Inspection of the local authority's school improvement functions
- Children Centre inspections
- Themed inspections by other inspectorates i.e. HMI inspection of Youth Justice.