

# North Tyneside Council

## Report to Cabinet

### Date: 11 February 2013

#### ITEM 6(j)

Title: Update Report on  
Ofsted SLAC Inspection  
Action Plan

Portfolio(s): Children, Young People and Learning

Cabinet Member(s): Councillor David Lilly

Report from Directorate: Children, Young People and Learning

Report Author: Paul Cook, Head of Preventative and Safeguarding (Tel: 643 7381)

Wards affected: All

#### PART 1

##### 1.1 Purpose:

To inform Cabinet of the progress of the action plan developed as a result of the 2012 Safeguarding and Looked After Children (SLAC) Inspection and to seek Cabinet's authorisation for the continued development of the plan.

##### 1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (1) Acknowledge the good progress that has been made by the Council and its multi-agency partners in pursuing the SLAC action plan and
- (2) Authorise the Head of Preventative and Safeguarding Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning and the Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Learning, to continue to progress the action plan that will embed all necessary operational changes and conclude any outstanding issues.

##### 1.3 Forward plan:

This report is listed on the Forward Plan for the Cabinet meeting on 11 February 2013.

##### 1.4 Council plan and policy framework

This report has no direct link to the Council's Strategic Plan 2012-15.

The report is in line with the Council's Policy Framework for children and young people as outlined in the North Tyneside Children and Young People's Plan Update 2012. In particular:

Theme 1: Supporting families with multiple and complex needs. Preventing families with complex and multiple needs from reaching crisis point and transforming the way support services are delivered, so they are flexible, integrated and responsive to the preferences of families.

Theme 2: Raising aspirations and improving outcomes for vulnerable children and young people. Reducing the gap in attainment between priority groups and their peers and the monitoring and tracking of the progress of vulnerable children and young people.

## 1.5 Information:

The Ofsted inspection of North Tyneside's Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services took place between the 5 -16 March 2012. The subsequent report was placed on the Ofsted web-site on 8 May 2012. The Cabinet report of 9 July 2012 highlighted the key points of the inspection, noting that the inspection provided a very positive outcome.

The Inspectors provided 17 recommendations to improve services in relation to looked after children and those requiring 'in need' and/or safeguarding services. The recommendations have required actions from:

- North Tyneside Council's Children, Young People and Learning (CYPL) Directorate
- Northumbria Police Service
- Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust.

Senior staff from the agencies noted above are the lead officers responsible for the progress made against the development issues and progress is being monitored by:

- The North Tyneside Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)
- The North Tyneside Multi-Agency Looked After Partnership
- The CYPL Directorate Leadership Team
- Senior staff meetings within Northumbria Police and the Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

Very good progress has been made with the action plan. Eleven of the 17 actions (70+%) are rated as 'green'. That is, the necessary action to deal with the matter raised has been fully implemented. Six are rated as amber. That is, good progress has been made to deal with the point highlighted; actions remain to ensure that operational changes are fully embedded.

The 6 areas that require further work are:

1. Recommendation 2 to Northumbria Police: This requires improvements to the effectiveness of arrangements for the risk management of information including sharing domestic violence notifications with health colleagues. Much has been done to improve the effectiveness of police alerts to Children's Services and this is known to be effective. In relation to sharing domestic violence notifications with health colleagues the only outstanding issue is the development by health colleagues of an appropriate IT programme to receive such to distribute to colleagues across the borough. Up until such is in place particular attention is paid to manual methods that ensure health colleagues are aware of the household in which domestic violence is known to be a feature.

2. Recommendation 3 to North Tyneside Children's Services: This requires consistency in the way in which children's views are gathered and recorded in all assessments and care plans. Appropriate guidance and procedures have been provided to staff on this matter. The outstanding issue is an audit of files for a report to be provided in March 2013 to show how effective the work undertaken to date has been.
3. Recommendation 4 to North Tyneside Children's Services: This requires learning from Serious Case Reviews (SCR) and related quality assurance activities to be improved and to lead to demonstrable improvements to services. Good progress has been made against this recommendation. The Tavistock Clinic in partnership with the NSPCC will commence a programme in 2013, through the LSCB, that will ensure SCR learning has an effective dissemination programme. This will form the basis for the revised Quality Assurance programme.
4. Recommendation 8 to North Tyneside Children's Services: This requires thresholds for children in need services to be made clearer and the Common Assessment Framework to be more effectively used. This recommendation is one of the drivers for the current service re-design that is being pursued within North Tyneside Children's Social Care. Staff, users and partners have been consulted on initial proposals that include a revised open door service for contacts and referrals, an Early Life model and an integrated Youth Offer. The proposals for the new service will be further consulted upon during January to March 2013 for implementation. This will ensure the recommendation for the SLAC inspection is complied with and early intervention and help services are effectively available.
5. Recommendation 10 to Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust: This requires that an explicit pathway for Looked After Children to access Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is in place. A draft pathway is in place and this is to be strengthened through the 2013-14 commissioning process.
6. Recommendation 17 to North Tyneside Children's Services: This requires improvements in the partnership working between the parents of looked after children and the corporate parenting services so that parents are more readily kept up to date of key events in their children's lives. A task and finish group (that includes the parents of looked after children), has been started to take this work forward and is planned to report in March 2013.

## **1.6 Decision options:**

1. To agree the actions being taken to embed the changes required as a result of the SLAC Inspection and that those conclude the action plan requirements.
2. To decline to accept the report and require officers to submit an alternative report.

## **1.7 Reasons for recommended option:**

Cabinet is recommended to agree the recommendation that acknowledges the good progress being made against the SLAC Action Plan and which ensures further action is taken to embed operational changes and bring to a conclusion all the recommendations of the inspection.

## **1.8 Appendices:**

- The North Tyneside Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services Inspection: Action Plan 2012-13

## **1.9 Contact officers:**

Paul Cook, Head of Preventative and Safeguarding - tel: 643 7381  
Anthony Gollings, Financial Business Manager, CYPL – tel: 643 8071

## **1.10 Background information:**

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

- The Report of Ofsted into the Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children in North Tyneside  
[http://october.northtyneside.gov.uk:7778/pls/portal/NTC\\_PSCM.PSCM\\_Web.download?p\\_ID=541460](http://october.northtyneside.gov.uk:7778/pls/portal/NTC_PSCM.PSCM_Web.download?p_ID=541460)
- The Cabinet Report dated 9 July 2012 detailing the outcome to the inspection  
[http://october.northtyneside.gov.uk:7778/pls/portal/NTC\\_PSCM.PSCM\\_Web.download?p\\_ID=541464](http://october.northtyneside.gov.uk:7778/pls/portal/NTC_PSCM.PSCM_Web.download?p_ID=541464)  
[http://october.northtyneside.gov.uk:7778/pls/portal/NTC\\_PSCM.PSCM\\_Web.download?p\\_ID=541465](http://october.northtyneside.gov.uk:7778/pls/portal/NTC_PSCM.PSCM_Web.download?p_ID=541465)

## **PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING**

### **2.1 Finance and other resources**

Safeguarding and looked after children services are appropriately funded by the Council and no additional resources are required as a result of the inspection. The areas for improvement within the action plan can be delivered within existing budgets.

### **2.2 Legal**

The Council's legal duty to discharge safeguarding and looked after children services, as required by the Children Act 1989 and 2004 and related guidance, have been shown to be appropriately discharged.

### **2.3 Consultation/community engagement**

The SLAC inspection was informed by service user engagement. Council safeguarding and looked after children services, foster care, residential care and safeguarding services routinely consult with users to receive their views and deliver services accordingly.

### **2.4 Human rights**

Safeguarding and looked after children services are provided in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and uphold the articles contained; in particular Article 3 that determines that the best interests of the child must be a top priority in all actions concerning children.

## 2.5 Equalities and diversity

Equality and diversity is an area covered in the SLAC inspection. The report of the inspectors notes that actions to promote equality and diversity are good and effective.

## 2.6 Risk management

There are no specific risks directly arising from this report.

## 2.7 Crime and disorder

Safeguarding and looked after children services are undertaken in partnership with a range of partners including Northumbria Police. This partnership works well and contributes to making the borough a safe place to live.

## 2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no environment and sustainability implications directly arising from this report.

### PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Strategic Director(s)
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s)
- Chief Executive
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Strategic Manager Policy and Partnerships

**Report authors: Paul Cook**  
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