

Meeting date: 8th November 2022

Report to: Health and Wellbeing Board

Report title: Childrens Services Improvement Plan Update

Report from: Pete Campbell – Director of Childrens Services

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Wards affected:

- All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege
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Public/private report: Public

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Health and Wellbeing Board with an update in relation to the Improvement Plan and response to the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI).

2. Decision(s) Recommended

- 1.2 The Board is asked to note the below matters for consideration regarding the Improvement Plan and JTAI Statement of Action, which is attached in Appendix A.

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2. Matters for Consideration

- 2.1 Following the outcome of the criminal proceedings into the tragic murder of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes in June 2020, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) was subject to a [Joint Targeted Area Inspection \(JTAI\)](#) of the multi-agency response to the identification of initial need and risk in Solihull in January 2022, as requested by The Secretaries of State for Education, Health and Social Care, the Home Office and Justice.
- 2.2 The headline findings of the report found children in need of help and protection in Solihull waited too long for their initial need and risk to be assessed; weaknesses in the joint strategic governance of the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) led to the lack of a cohesive approach to structuring and resourcing the MASH; and the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership did not have a clear understanding of the impact of practice from the MASH or the experiences of children and their families that need help and protection in their local area.
- 2.3 As stipulated within the JTAI report, SMBC and safeguarding partners were required to produce a written Statement of Action (SoA), which would provide a series of actions in response to each of the findings from the JTAI and be assigned to the various partner organisations to drive forward improvement.
- 2.4 In addition to creating a JTAI SoA, a service wide Improvement Plan was also devised in March 2022 which focussed on:
- Understanding the lived experience of the child
 - Managing workloads
 - Recording systems and support best practice
 - A system-wide approach to improvement and performance
 - Clearly articulated vision and values
 - Practice using evidence-based methods and tools
 - A strong focus on retention, recruitment, and staff development
 - A culture of reflective thinking, curiosity, challenge, learning and development
 - Stable and visible leadership and management
 - Effective partnership that makes a difference to children and families
- 2.5 The plan comprised of six themes which included:
- Leadership and Governance
 - Partnerships
 - Workforce
 - Quality of Practice
 - Quality Assurance & Performance
 - Record Keeping
- 2.6 Following the submission of the JTAI SoA to Ofsted in May 2022, and the publication of the [National Panel Enquiry](#) into the deaths of two children from Solihull and Bradford in June 2022; the Improving Outcomes for Children in Solihull Board (IOCSB)

unanimously agreed that to further strengthen the partnership governance and accountability over improvement work, it would be necessary to merge these plans with the original improvement plan to form a single plan of action.

- 2.7 A draft merged multi-agency improvement plan was presented to the IOCSB on 30th August 2022 and was well received and accepted by the board.
- 2.8 The new improvement plan still retains the six themes as highlighted in paragraph 2.5, and the existing thematic leads continue to drive the improvement activity in each of the themes.
- 2.9 Highlight reports / exception reports also continue to be produced for each of the six themes which cover key updates/impacts, risks, mitigating actions and achievements; and are submitted to the IOCSB for additional scrutiny.
- 2.10 There are also plans to further develop the improvement plan over the next two months, including identifying priority areas for action as shaped by pending inspection feedback.
- 2.11 In July 2022, the Interim Director for Childrens Services and Skills also received notification from Ofsted, CQC, HMICFRS and HMI Probation that they have reviewed the JTAI SoA and agreed that it demonstrated an accurate understanding of the findings of the joint inspection team.
- 2.12 Nevertheless, the IOCSB agreed that due to the importance of rectifying the issues outlined in the JTAI report, an external review in the form of a 'mock JTAI' should take place to ensure all actions have been implemented and fully embedded. A proposal has since been made to the Local Government Association to undertake this review, with a view to commencing the review in early 2023.
- 2.13 The merged improvement plan has been attached to this report for the board's perusal.

3. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

- 3.1 N/A as this is an update report, outlining the progress of improvement activity undertaken by Childrens Services.

4. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 4.1 N/A as this is an update report, rather than recommending new proposals.

5. Implications and Considerations

- 5.1 State how the proposals in this report contribute to the priorities in the [Council Plan](#):

Priority:	Contribution:
People and Communities: 1. Improving outcomes for children and young people in Solihull.	By taking the robust action as identified within the improvement plan, outcomes for our most vulnerable children, young people and their families will be improved. This will

Priority:	Contribution:
2. Good quality, responsive, and dignified care and support for Adults in Solihull when they need it. 3. Take action to improve life chances and health outcomes in our most disadvantaged communities. 4. Enable communities to thrive.	enable children and families to access a variety of services and provision to ensure they receive the right support in a timely way
Economy: 5. Develop and promote the borough's economy, with a focus on revitalising our town and local centres. 6. Maximising the opportunities of UK Central and HS2. 7. Increase the supply of affordable and social housing that is environmentally sustainable.	The development of our multi agency response to children and families who are at risk/in need across the borough will improve outcomes for those who are vulnerable as well as our wider communities. Investment in families and children will contribute to healthy and thriving communities with effective support structures.
Environment: 8. Enhance our natural environment, improve air quality and reduce net carbon emissions.	NA
9. Promote employee wellbeing	NA

5.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

5.2.1 The Improvement Plan will be monitored through the Improvement Board and regular meetings with the Department for Education. Outcomes will be monitored through the Ofsted inspection framework.

5.3 Financial implications:

5.3.1 The Children's Improvement Plan has required significant expenditure to date and will require significant investment going forward. This position has been reported in Medium Term Financial Strategy updates to the Children and Education Scrutiny Board on 12th September 2022, Resources and Delivering Value Scrutiny on 3rd October 2022, and Cabinet on 6th October 2022. These requirements are being revised and the updated position will be fed into the budget strategy process.

5.4 Legal implications:

5.4.1 In May 2022, we responded to the findings of the JTAI by submitting our Statement of Action to Ofsted.

- 5.5 Risk implications, including Risk Appetite:
 - 5.5.1 Risks identified due to inspection and improvement activity will be reflected within risk registers. These will be revised accordingly and managed within current processes
- 5.6 Equality implications:
 - 5.6.1 The improvement plan will actively seek to reduce inequality and improve outcomes for vulnerable children, young people, and their families within the borough.
- 5.7 Linkages to our work with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), Local Enterprise Partnership or the Birmingham & Solihull Integrated Care System (ICS):
 - 5.7.1 Birmingham & Solihull Integrated Care System (ICS) are a key partner in delivering our services to children, young people, and families.

6. List of appendices referred to

- 6.1 Improvement Plan

7. Background papers used to compile this report

- 7.1 NA

8. List of Other Relevant Documents

- 8.1 NA