

## **Leeds Safeguarding Children Board**

### **Summary of Key Messages**

#### **The Munro Review of Child Protection**

#### **Interim Report: The Child's Journey**

##### Introduction

This short summary sets out a briefing on the second report of the Munro Review for the LSCB partners, with a commentary on the implications for Leeds children and young people, for the LSCB, and for the transformation programme.

##### Key Points:

- The review is of the child protection system, not of the wider safeguarding responsibilities of the public sector
- The review is based on the principles of systems thinking
- It sets out the characteristics of an effective child protection system providing a standard for LSCB's with their partners to measure themselves against
- The review is set in the context of wider Government reforms and reviews of children's services, draws on their findings and is working with other major reform programmes that affect the child protection system, in particular the Social Work Reform Board and the Family Justice Review
- The review recognises the financial constraints that exist and does not propose major structural, or legal change to the current system but identifies the barriers that restrict or prevent effective practice
- 5 Authorities will trial some of the proposals and ideas in the review in order to test their applicability and effectiveness, particularly in relation to timescales and assessment models
- It recognises the role of Inspection but suggests that the current regime needs to change to become more child focussed and to reduce the bureaucratic burden. Work by the review with OSTED to address this is ongoing
- It is recommending announced inspections should cease, and unannounced inspections broadened to provide a remit across all f children's services
- The review is considering the best way to adjust the SCR process so that it better identifies and explains the factors that contributed to poor practice. It is considering adopting a root cause analysis model – a systems approach used in health

- The review recommends that the OFSTED evaluation of SCR's should cease, and the overall inspection process should give greater emphasis to the quality of learning arising from SCR's.
- The review is considering how best to create shorter statutory guidance to replace the extremely large and burdensome current Working Together
- The review is minded to strengthen the role of LSCBs in monitoring the impact of learning, training and workforce development on the 'child's journey' as well as on identifying and addressing emerging problems in 'the system'
- The review endorses the need for good data to underpin the system. In the light of the proposed new single centrally required data set that will replace the National Indicator Set, the review is considering introducing a minimum data set for child protection made up of a twin core of centrally required data plus recommended standardised local data
- The review strongly endorses Lord Laming's recommendation there is a strong central spine of accountability with responsibility located in the Local Authority as currently established. It endorses the role of the DCS, considers it important that the role continues to be the key point of professional accountability for the child protection system and is not diluted or weakened.
- The review endorses the need to maintain and develop effective local early intervention services (sure start and the health visitor service)
- It strongly endorses the current common assessment process to minimise dependency and empower families whilst leveraging in multi-agency support designed to effectively help
- It notes that maltreatment is not always safely identified and responded to because social work expertise is not readily available to other families. This leads to unnecessarily high levels of referral to social work to alleviate anxiety and minimise perceived risk. It will explore for the final report those areas where multi-agency teams including social workers are located in the community alongside universal services to establish whether this assists in more accurately identifying those children who are in need of protection.
- The review is considering whether reforms are needed to the current assessment system, thus avoiding sequential 'new assessments' being required when a child enters the child protection system
- The review is also exploring how best to ensure both timeliness and assessments of good quality are both achieved as well as how the child's journey through court can be improved.
- The review is also considering how best to improve management styles to reduce the emphasis on bureaucratic aspects of the work and increase the emphasis on cognitive and emotional understanding, continuing professional

development and access to research to help practitioners perform at a high level. It is examining the impact of those management models in social work which provide high quality professional/clinical supervision as well as task focussed management

- It is accordingly long at developing better more user centred tools to aid professional reasoning, in particular for ICS.
- The review also strongly emphasises the need for effective supervision which includes time for critical reflection and the application of research based informed thinking, especially for social workers, in order to ensure better more accurate assessments and to differentiate damaging parenting from poor parenting. It is also examining the best tools to use to help identify risk and support active challenge and rigorous intervention to protect children.
- It reinforces the need for evidence based practice in social work in order to help families change, through the use of effective working relationships and of methods used within those relationship to promote change.
- The review is exploring in depth how best to help the public gain a better understanding of the complexity, uncertainty and emotional challenge inherent in social work, and how to ensure social workers in particular give a clearer account of their professional practice.
- The review is considering whether an expert panel should be set up to advise the government and all those professions involved in child protection work on how the different parts of the system are interacting and whether problems are emerging.
- Recommendations will be made to the Government in the final report in April 2011