

BRIEFING PAPER

SUBJECT: Quality Assurance Unit Service Plan 2017 - 20

DATE: 22nd June 2017

RECIPIENT: Children and Families Scrutiny Panel

THIS IS NOT A DECISION PAPER

SUMMARY:

This paper provides an overview of the Quality Assurance Unit Business Plan 2017 – 2020; outlining the purpose and structure of the Unit; and how the plan supports the Children and Families Service improvement journey.

BACKGROUND and BRIEFING DETAILS:

1. The Quality Assurance Unit supports the Children and Families Vision and Strategy by championing practice excellence across the service; supporting both Education and Early Help and Children's Social Care. The Unit also ensures service compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements. It is comprised of: The Child Protection Conference Team, Children's Workforce Development and the Principal Social Worker. There are close alignments with the Local Children and Adult Safeguarding Boards. The Independent Reviewing Officers for looked after children sit within the Unit.

2. In 2014, when the service was assessed to be requiring improvement by Ofsted, the inspection team recommended that Southampton should, '*develop performance management arrangements to provide analysis of the quality of work being undertaken and drive improvements in service quality*'. The Unit supports the continuous improvement journey through a set of overriding priorities:

- Achieving better outcomes for children, families and vulnerable adults by championing practice excellence; supporting a stable, highly skilled workforce and ensuring that the unit is 'fit for the future'.
- Evidencing service compliance with statutory requirements, national standards and local performance objectives.
- Supporting services in Southampton to participate in inspections robustly and to develop clear responses to the recommendations arising from learning activity.
- Ensuring that stakeholder engagement is central to the development of the unit; so that we can effectively meet the needs of service users, the teams that we support and customers.

3. In addition to ensuring a structured approach to service improvement and review; the plan is also a tool for engagement with key stakeholders: staff, partners, members and Her Majesty's Inspectorates.

4. The Plan on a Page format has provided us with the opportunity to consider the successes in 2016/17 (when the Unit was in its formative stages, after phase two re-design); the challenges that it faces; the action plan we will implement and key partners. Staff were engaged over a number of briefing events and Southampton's Youth Council participated through a workshop facilitated by the Service Manager and Children and Young People's Participation Officer.

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OPTIONS and TIMESCALES:

The plan will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Children and Families Senior Leadership Team.

Appendices/Supporting Information:

- Quality Assurance Unit Plan 2017 – 20

Further Information Available From:

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