

Response to Whistleblowing Investigation - Position Statement: October 2020

Recommendation	Action	Lead Owner (s)	Start date / Completion date	Update
Recommendation One: Develop across the council a compelling and ambitious vision which aspires to deliver the best possible outcomes for all children in the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an ambitious vision for children and young people in Southampton which mobilises all council services and partner agencies to improve outcomes for all children in the City; 	Robert Henderson	Start: Sept 20 Completed by: December 20	Vision statements have been drafted and consultation with staff reference group underway. Wider circulation to service and key stakeholders scheduled for wc 2 nd November. Upon completion and agreement of vision, this will be used in practice framework workshops in November 2020
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed outcomes to improve services for children and young people into all SCC departmental business plans; 	Sandy Hopkins	Build into 21/22 business planning cycle	Ongoing work in progress – will be enshrined by Child friendly city, greener and fairer Southampton and city of Culture – young people are central.
Recommendation Two: Promote an inclusive culture, which connects senior management with practice and ensures that staff concerns are swiftly addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-design an effective communication strategy with managers, front line staff and partners which incorporates both internal and external communication; 	Robert Henderson	Start: Sept 20 Completed by: Mar 21	The service is allocated a named communications lead and development of strategy is underway. Service has received robust support for vision activity and recent virtual; staff conferences.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly safeguarding assurance visit to one service by Executive Director for Children & Learning Services and the Lead Councillor to review performance and listen to the experiences of front-line staff; 	Robert Henderson / Cllr Paffey	Visits for 20/21 to be diarised by 30 th September 20	Monthly safeguarding assurance visits are set. EDSCS has visited MASH and assessment. Leader has them in diary. Will need to monitor progress in light of social distancing.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bi-annual safeguarding assurance meeting to take place between the Chief Executive, the Leader, Lead Councillor and the Executive Director for Children & Learning Services to discuss successes, challenges, pressures and concerns; 	Sandy Hopkins / Robert Henderson	Meetings to be diarised by 30 th Sept 20	Bi-annual safeguarding assurance meeting (Sandy Hopkins, Robert Henderson and Cllr Hammond) – booked for 12/11/2020 and 12/05/2021
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a Practitioners' Improvement Board to support the delivery of the improvement plan and provide a front-line "sense check" on its effectiveness; 	Robert Henderson	Practitioners Improvement Board to be established by 30 th Sept 20	First meeting of 'Better Together' took place in October 2020. Lead representatives established and these will be contributed to Improvement Board.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A representative of the Practitioner's Improvement Board to be included as a member of the Children's Services Improvement Board; 	John Harrison	Representative to be in place by 31 st Oct 20	Improvement Board is being reconstituted and practitioner representatives are being invited
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review the improvement plan and ensure that actions to achieve the cultural shift needed are included; 	Robert Henderson	By 30 th September 20	Improvement plan was reviewed by EDSCS and submitted to Ofsted on 8 th October 2020.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that restorative practice is championed across the service; modelled by senior leaders and managers and supported by a clear development and implementation plan; 	Robert Henderson	By 31 st Dec 20	EDC attended restorative practice management training in October 2020 and has publicised training in the staff bulletin. >50 managers and > 200 staff have attended training in October. Further sessions are set and include 'trainer the trainer' course so we can embed the training model.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A quarterly meeting to be established between the Chief Executive and the Principal Social Worker to ensure a direct connection with front line practitioners; • Executive Management Board meeting every six months to review whole council approach to embedding outcomes for children & young people in the city; • Relaunch regular staff conference to be co-designed and co-ordinated between managers and front-line practitioners; • Review the service offer and approach provided by all council support functions to ensure that they are responsive and supportive, minimising the administrative burden on managers and officers; 	<p>Sandy Hopkins</p> <p>Sandy Hopkins</p> <p>Robert Henderson</p> <p>Robert Henderson / Mike Harris</p>	<p>Meetings to be diarised by 30th Sept 20</p> <p>Meetings to be diarised by 30th Sept 20</p> <p>By 30th Dec 20</p> <p>Start: 1st Oct 20 Completed by: 31st Mar 21</p>	<p>A quarterly meeting (Sandy Hopkins and Stuart Webb.) – booked for 24/11/2020; 23/02/2021; 25/05/2021; 24/08/2021</p> <p>Six-monthly agenda item request has been sent for Mid-October 2020 and May 2021.</p> <p>Staff conferences ran virtually in October 2020 and new chair of conference planning group appointed.</p> <p>Service support is factored into destination and design document that EDCS is coordinating.</p>
<p>Recommendation Three: Invest in managers and staff to deliver high quality services for children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the learning and development offer for managers and front-line officers to ensure that it meets their development needs including leadership development; • Ensure regular appraisals are undertaken and that development needs are identified and met; • Review current supervision arrangements to ensure that they are high quality, supportive, challenging and monitored; • Ensure that managers and front-line staff have sufficient capacity to take part in high quality supervision and support; • Review current practice standards to ensure that they follow best practice in improving outcomes for children and young people and that they are understood by managers and front-line officers; • Progress the revision of the quality assurance framework and systems following the recent independent review; • Review the performance management framework and reporting to ensure that it monitors compliance, volumes and timeliness and the effectiveness of outcomes; 	<p>Robert Henderson / Janet King</p> <p>Robert Henderson</p> <p>Robert Henderson</p> <p>Robert Henderson</p> <p>Robert Henderson</p> <p>Robert Henderson</p> <p>Robert Henderson</p>	<p>By 31st December 20</p> <p>By 31st Mar 21</p> <p>By 31st Mar 21</p> <p>By 31st Mar 21</p> <p>By 31st Dec 20</p> <p>By 30th Nov 20</p> <p>By 31st Dec 20</p>	<p>QA Unit Manager (Principal Social Worker) and Workforce Development Manager are leading on the development of a new Workforce Academy; with proposed launch date of April 2021.</p> <p>EDCS has instigated service review of appraisal completion with feedback to DMT scheduled for November 2020.</p> <p>Supervision guidance has been reviewed and management training started. DMT discussion regarding consistent reflective supervision offer scheduled for November 2020.</p> <p>Factored into destination and design document that EDCS is coordinating; scheduled for presentation to EMT and lead members in November 2020.</p> <p>To be undertaken as part of practice framework development. Workshops scheduled for November 2020.</p> <p>Quality assurance framework has been updated after review by Hampshire Children's Services (Partner in Practice).</p> <p>DCS has provided instruction regarding the reporting format to Improvement Board. Revised data requests have been submitted to the data team. Revised reporting due to begin in November 2020.</p>

<p>Recommendation Four: Introduce a compelling workforce strategy that ensures Southampton is the destination of choice for experienced and capable social workers and managers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a workforce strategy for Southampton's Children & Learning service that is ambitious in its offer to attract and retain good social workers; 	Robert Henderson / Janet King	By 31 st Mar 21	EDCS will take on chair of Recruitment and Retention group in November 2020.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the recruitment and retention of social workers identified within the workforce strategy is built into the communication strategy for the service (relevant expertise secured); 	Robert Henderson	By 31 st Mar 21	See above and recommendation 1. – communications team support.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To commit to reducing the caseloads for front-line workers, being explicit about caseload numbers for each service and when this is expected to be achieved by; 	Robert Henderson / Sandy Hopkins	Start: 14 th Sept 20 Completed by 31 st Mar 21	Factored into destination and design document that EDCS is coordinating; scheduled for presentation to EMT and lead members in November 2020.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review the ICT equipment currently available to all officers in the service and prioritise the service in the roll out of new technology; 	Robert Henderson / Mike Harris	By 31 st Dec 20	<p>The capacity of the original remote access solutions has been tripled since the start of lockdown so the contention for users is much reduced. By the end of September 2020, Business Operations and Digital will have moved everyone over to a replacement remote access technology (called AOVPN) which is more robust, and importantly routes a lot of the traffic away from the council network completely. (Anything Microsoft related will go direct to Microsoft rather than into the council and back out again if colleagues are working from home).</p> <p>Changes were made to the Citrix environment to reduce things like screen colour depth and other factors which did improve performance. Business Operations and Digital have provided a significant amount of equipment including laptops and smartphones to the service as well as getting everyone migrated to Office365 so some of the e-mail / office (non-case management system) issues will also have been eased.</p> <p>There can still be performance challenges, it is one of the reasons that we are still pushing on with the client case management system project as this is a more modern architecture, and there are further improvements still being added such as updated servers in the Citrix estate to help with the speed. There has been definite progress and we expect to see much less, if any, issues similar to the first lockdown but there are on-going projects to improve things further.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that front line officers are actively involved in the design of the new case management system; 	Robert Henderson/Mike Harris	Completed by: 31 st Mar 21	CCM project team are coordinating list of staff who have expressed an interest in being involved. Wider engagement is being coordinated with the help of comm's team.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review service offer from business support to minimise administrative burdens from front line officers and managers ensuring that they have more time to support children, young people and families; Review accommodation requirements for all services to ensure that all officers have appropriate accommodation to meet the needs of their service and young people. 	Robert Henderson / Mike Harris	By 31 st Dec 20	Factored into destination and design document that EDCS is coordinating; scheduled for presentation to EMT and lead members in November 2020.
		Robert Henderson / Mike Harris	By 31 st Dec 20	Factored into destination and design document that EDCS is coordinating; scheduled for presentation to EMT and lead members in November 2020.
Recommendation Five: Ensure the council has a regular independent assessment of the effectiveness of its children's social care services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advance plans to expand the membership of the Children's Services Improvement Board to include key partners; 	John Harrison	By 30 th Sept 20	Improvement Board Terms of Reference and Membership have been updated. New Board is scheduled to meet on 16 th November 2020. Membership has been extended to local safeguarding partners, advisory bodies and staff representatives.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the improvement plan in line with feedback from the independent review of the plan and associated documents; 	Robert Henderson	By 30 th Sept 20	Improvement plan was reviewed by EDCS and submitted to Ofsted on 8 th October 2020.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To undertake broad engagement and communication activity with officers and partners on the content and key areas of the improvement plan; 	Robert Henderson	By 30 th Nov 20	Plan was discussed with SSCP chair and MOTAS management team. It will be developed with partners through revised board arrangements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission a quarterly independent assessment of the quality of practice and associated report, which will be presented to the improvement board and cabinet members. 	Robert Henderson	By 30 th Nov 20	EDCS has updated that he will liaise with Hampshire as our Partner in Practice and will request that they undertake 'deep dive' activity in critical areas.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the independent expert support offer in partnership with Ofsted and DfE; 	Robert Henderson	Start: June 20 Completed by 30 th Sept 20	Hampshire Children's Services undertook a further review of the service improvement plan in September 2020. The DfE have been invited to contribute to the Improvement Board

Lead Owners:

Sandy Hopkins: Chief Executive Officer, Southampton City Council
 Robert Henderson: Executive Director (Wellbeing) – Children & Learning Services, Southampton City Council
 Councillor Paffey: Cabinet Member for Children & Learning Services, Southampton City Council
 Janet King: Service Director – Human Resources and Organisational Development, Southampton City Council
 Mike Harris: Executive Director Business Services / Deputy Chief Executive, Southampton City Council
 John Harrison: Executive Director Finance & Commercialism, Southampton City Council