

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Corporate Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 5 February 2013

Report of: Lorraine Butcher, Strategic Director Children, Families & Adults

Subject/Title: Outcomes of Safeguarding Children Peer Review

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Rachel Bailey

1.0 Recommendations, decisions or actions required by Scrutiny Committee

- a) Note the key findings of the Peer Review at Appendix 1 and the Peer Review Action Plan at Appendix 2
- b) To request that Health Scrutiny consider the findings particularly with reference to health
- c) To consider how Scrutiny receive progress on the implementation of the Plan

2.0 Summary and Context

Cheshire East's Safeguarding Children Peer Review took place between 3rd and 7th December 2012. The Peer Review Team was made up of experienced professionals from Health, Local Authorities and the Voluntary Sector outside of Cheshire East. The fundamental aim of the sector led review was to help the Council and its partners to reflect on and improve safeguarding services for children and young people in Cheshire East.

The review focussed on a number of key themes, including vision, strategy and leadership; effective practice, service delivery and the voice of the child; outcomes, impact and performance management; working together; capacity and managing resources; the effectiveness of multi-agency early help offer in working together to protect children; quality of practice and transition.

Informed by the contributions made from over 300 frontline practitioners, operational and strategic managers from a range of organisations, the review included Council Members and staff, health, the police, education and the voluntary sector. Through the completion of questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, a case mapping exercise and an analysis of a significant number of documents and data sources, the Review Team were able to make

conclusions about how best to target resources in Cheshire East to maximise our improvement journey.

The final letter from the Peer Review Team is attached at Appendix 1. This outlines the strengths and areas for consideration identified by the Review.

3.0 Peer Review Key Findings

The review team concluded that Cheshire East's key strengths are:

- A strong commitment at every level to improve outcomes for children;
- Good multi-agency working and partnerships;
- Strong leadership and management;
- A dedicated workforce; and
- The political will to implement change.

However, the Review identified that we need to work together to ensure that:

- Council staff and partners are clear about Cheshire East's vision for children and young people;
- Frontline staff have a good understanding of outcomes and how they are measured in practice;
- Partners, in particular Health, commit to change;
- The multi-agency delivery of Early Help is more effective;
- Staff in all agencies have a clear understanding of thresholds into Social Care and how they should be applied;
- The voice of the child is fully embedded in practice;
- Front line social work practice is consistently good; and
- Experienced and skilled Social Workers commit longer term to Cheshire East as a place to work.

4.0 Key Actions

A draft action plan to address the priorities arising from the Peer Review is attached at Appendix 2.

A comprehensive communication and change plan is underway to increase awareness and understanding at all levels of the Council and partner agencies. This includes:

- Multi-agency workshops
- A booklet of key information
- A Manager's presentation
- One minute guides
- Improved website information
- Briefings
- Posters
- Newsletters

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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