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**Report to:** Housing, Health & Care Committee

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**Date of Meeting:** 23 August 2012

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**Subject:** Long Term Childcare Team, Action Plan and Progress Report

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**Report by:** Head of Social Services

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## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1. An independent review of Clackmannanshire Councils Long Term Childcare Team was completed in late April 2012. The review was commissioned by the Chief Executive following concerns raised in a Sheriff's note during June 2011; the concerns were in relation to an appeal under Section 51 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.
- 1.2. The independent report was presented at a Special Council meeting on 14 June 2012 and a comprehensive draft action plan was tabled. This comprehensive plan is the basis on which the service will drive improvement and is a Background Paper to this report. A high level action plan summarizes the improvement agenda and is attached as **Appendix One**.
- 1.3. This report provides an the finalised action plan, an update on progress and a summary of the improvement requirements.

## **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1. It is recommended that the Committee:
  - a. Notes the progress achieved by the service to date

An improvement action plan has been developed and the High Level Plan will be regularly submitted to the Committee for review. The Care Inspectorate will review progress and monitor outcomes in respect of the detailed operational plan.

Social Services will strive to address the areas for recommendation and work is already well underway. Regular progress reports will be made available to the convenor.

### **3.0 Considerations**

3.1 The report outlines areas for improvement within the long term team. These include the areas of management, the support and quality of front line practice, staff engagement, and accompanying quality assurance measures. To achieve this, a balance is required between cultural, attitudinal, structural and systems changes. In essence the service needs to ensure that improvements are not only made, but that they are fully owned and adopted by staff at all levels.

3.2 To this end improvement work has been focussing on both operational practice and processes to drive lasting change. For the purposes of this report, these areas have been divided into 'Quality Assurance' and 'Operational Practice' and shall be considered first.

### **3.3 Operational Practice**

The greater challenge for the service is that of achieving real change within the operational teams. A successful outcome will involve a change in performance, workforce perception and expectation. Considerable effort has been invested to support this over recent months, but quantifiable evidence of improvement may not be seen for some time. To balance this inevitability, areas of greatest risk and priority were identified and 'quick wins' achieved where possible.

- There has been a notable investment in staffing. A temporary Service Manager will commence on 6 August for six months, an additional Team Leader has been employed for the Long Term team in order that two Long Term teams will be created. Two additional Social Workers have also been recruited. Funding for these posts was agreed through the budget process in February 2012. It should be noted that Clackmannanshire has comparatively a lower percentage of qualified workers per 1,000 population. To understand this better there is an ongoing review of workforce capacity to ensure the service has an appropriate workforce. A report offering further detail and recommendations will be made available. The additional staffing, although not fully in place yet, will give the service the capacity it has needed for some time to respond to the high level of demand in the Child Care Service. It will also assist in improving support and supervision for front line practitioners and will contribute more systematically to both performance management and quality assurance within the service.
- A strengthened Childcare Management Team has been established on the back of Shared Services that will be central to the implementation of the recommendations of the improvement plan.

- Front line staff have had additional communication and information sessions and regular development events to support key areas of practice. Staff meeting schedules have been renewed and Team Leaders now have a forum for regular discussion. Mentoring has also been available for managers in order to support how they deal with the significant pressures due to capacity.
- A room within Lime Tree House is now decorated, furnished and available, providing a space near reception for family contact work. A further two locations have been found within the community to offer greater choice. We are also in the process of fitting out rooms in Alloa Family Centre and Kilncraigs.
- All teams were surveyed (closing date 20 June) to ascertain IT support needs and assist practice. Recommendations will be discussed, as per Council Policy, with the IT department.

The Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) agenda is a framework that has been in place since 2005. One aspect of the GIRFEC framework is a national product, the Integrated Assessment Framework (IAF), that requires to be implemented. The service is on track to adopt this by August 21<sup>st</sup>. This development is supported by a communication strategy, internal training and clear administrative processes

3.4 These developments will provide a systematic approach to both monitor and respond to future performance issues; it will also ensure that there is learning from challenges and successes in the future.

### 3.5 **Quality Assurance**

Efforts to support ongoing improvement commenced in late 2011 when shared social services were established within Stirling. Activity has therefore been underway for the last nine months. This work stream was not considered within the Independent Review, but has since been informed by its findings.

Progress thus far includes:

- The development of a service wide Quality and Performance Framework that offers transparent and meaningful performance data. This includes an audit schedule for key business processes and methods to engage the workforce.
- A Child Protection Quality and Performance Framework, ensuring all activity aligns with national guidance and is subject to ongoing internal audit. This is a multi-agency plan. Reporting is underway on Covalent with sign-off by G5 anticipated in August 12.
- A caseload audit of all 'pending' cases to the long term team took place using the Social Work Inspection Agency audit tool. This ensures that the cases highlighted as a concern within the review have a clear

action and allocation plan, will be dealt with appropriately and have been reviewed against Inspection standards to ensure improvement.

- The establishment of an updated childcare performance and quality assurance forum, reporting to the Social Services performance group. This process ensures both performance and progress towards improvement plans is monitored, key areas of operational concern are prioritised and childcare services are held to account by the service wide Performance Forum.
- A staff survey was completed in May 2012 measuring staff views across childcare services and social services as a whole.
- A staff engagement plan is in place encompassing workforce views voiced at the Chief Social Work Officer Consultation events, through the staff survey and through wider feedback opportunities. This ensures that developments are appropriate to front line activity and staff need.
- A review of childcare business processes, initially focussing on Child Protection, is being developed. The second planning meeting is on 23 August and includes both IT and Admin input. The aim is to ensure key areas of practice are prioritised, supported and staff appropriately trained.
- A review is underway of all childcare improvement plans, now overseen and monitored by the Strategy service to ensure progress is being made. These are all being updated and placed on Covalent for easy reporting. Performance reports will be presented to Committee as appropriate.
- A working group is underway to ensure regular surveys of customer, carer and stakeholder perception take place.
- A business case is being developed for an enhanced SWIFT client case management system across Shared Services. Staff have been involved and the proposal will be considered at the Shared Services September Programme Board. Childcare services are being considered a priority for implementation.
- All childcare services will undertake the Public Service Improvement Framework assessment during the Autumn of this year, this will offer wider information on leadership, management, systems and outcomes. This is being facilitated by corporate colleagues to offer objectivity.
- Discussions are underway with the Care Inspectorate to support us to apply the HMIE 2009 Children's and Young Peoples Self Assessment tool to our Child Protection processes. This model has shown to be successful across other Scottish Local Authorities.

### **3.6 External Inspection and Partner Engagement**

The service recognises the need to work closely with external scrutiny bodies and key partners to support improvement and provide reassurance both internally and to the Council.

To support this, the following actions have been taken:

- Meetings are taking place with Care Inspectorate link inspectors. The aim is to provide a joint programme of meaningful support and ongoing engagement to the Long Term teams. The focus will be on self assessment, staff support and assistive scrutiny.
- The British Association of Adoption and Fostering has been offering training within the service and the intention is to continue with this support. The Care Inspectorate proposes a joint approach to maximise support and reduce any additional burden on the service.
- The Assistant Heads of Service will establish regular meetings with Solicitors and stakeholders who have ongoing concerns with the Long Term team. The aim of this is to improve relations, increase transparency and speedily address any future issues if they were to occur.
- Regular meetings are underway with the Children's Panel Members in order to clarify roles and expectations, address any potential issues at the earliest opportunity and to build effective working relationships
- Meeting with Senior Officials from the Care Inspectorate, Scottish Government and the Chief Social Work Advisor has taken place. It was agreed that the Care Inspectorate will assist in monitoring progress against the Improvement Plan and will provide support and challenge going forward.

**3.7** The service faces a considerable challenge in achieving real and sustainable change but is committed to working in partnership with stakeholders to achieve the improvements required.

### **4.0 Sustainability Implications**

### **5.0 Resource Implications**

5.1. There are no additional financial implications associated with this report.

5.2. The full financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. This includes a reference to full life cycle costs where appropriate. Yes ✓

5.3. Finance have been consulted and have agreed the financial implications as set out in the report. Yes ✓

5.4. *Staffing*

*There are no additional staffing implications associated with this report.*

**6.0 Exempt Reports**

6.1. Is this report exempt? Yes  (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No ✓

**7.0 Declarations**

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

(1) **Our Priorities 2012 – 2015** (Please double click on the check box )

- The area has a positive image and attracts people and businesses
- Our communities are more cohesive and inclusive ✓
- People are better skilled, trained and ready for learning and employment ✓
- Our communities are safer ✓
- Vulnerable people and families are supported ✓
- Substance misuse and its effects are reduced ✓
- Health is improving and health inequalities are reducing ✓
- The environment is protected and enhanced for all
- The Council is effective, efficient and recognised for excellence ✓

(2) **Council Policies** (Please detail)

**8.0 Equalities Impact**

8.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?

Yes ✓ No

**9.0 Legality**

9.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes ✓

**10.0 Appendices**

10.1 Appendix 1. High Level improvement Action Plan

**11.0 Background Papers**

11.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)


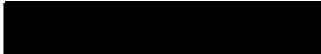
Yes ✓ (please list the documents below)

Full action plan with operational detail available on the Members' portal.

**Author(s)**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>DESIGNATION</b>	<b>TEL NO / EXTENSION</b>
Jane Menzies	Assistant Head of Service, Strategy Performance and Partnership	452376

**Approved by**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>DESIGNATION</b>	<b>SIGNATURE</b>
Deirdre Cilliers	Head of Social Services	
Elaine McPherson	Chief Executive	





Recommendation		Action	Lead	Review Date	Progress
1	<b>Implementation of Getting it Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)</b>	• Appropriate training	JM	August	Training programme underway
		• IAF tool rollout	VDS	December	On course for phased implementation to begin on 20 August
2	<b>Tools for the Job</b>	• Review of business process	JM	December	3 day programme planned, commencing August
		• ICT review	DC	September	Review of Business Case to introduce SWIFT across Shared Service underway
		• Survey of individual ICT needs	JM	July	Survey completed, plan underway to provide appropriate technology to individual staff members to meet the identified need
		• Provide child friendly premises	JM	August	Position reviewed, variety of premises already in place. Room at LTH identified and will be ready by August
3	<b>Workforce Capacity</b>	• Long Term Team capacity exercise to benchmark needs	VDS	December	Activity underway. Report to be put forward for consideration by Committee in December
		• Recruit staff to meet shortfall already identified	VDS	August	Interim Service Manager starts 6 August Second Team Leader starts July Two additional social workers appointed, awaiting start date
		• Review structure of teams across the Shared Service	VDS	September	Proposal drafted for Shared Service Project Board meeting in September
4	<b>Skills and Knowledge</b>	• Staff survey	JM	June	Survey complete - results to feed into staff engagement plan
		• Comprehensive workforce Development Plan	JM	September	Plan in place, updates ongoing through PRD. Formal monitoring process being introduced. Focus on audit to ensure supervision policies are robustly adhered to - being taken forward within Shared Service context

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specialised training, mentoring and coaching for areas where gaps are identified</li> </ul>	VDS	December	Programme agreed with British Association of Adoption and Fostering. In addition specialist mentor to provide coaching to Team Managers and specialist staff is in place. Regular clinic with legal staff in place to review and track Permanency Planning processes
5	<b>Practice Standards and Procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self Evaluation programme being established with input from BAAF and Care Inspectorate (CI)</li> </ul>	JM	August	Meeting with CI arranged to agree framework
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Process being established to ensure learning from audit outcomes</li> </ul>	JM	August	Performance Forums in place. Service Development Plans being established to track improvement
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy Review and update</li> </ul>	JM VDS	August	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upskill Managers in relation to HR processes</li> </ul>	VDS	September	Programme of Development Events to review roles and maximise capacity being established  HR link strengthened and regular meetings established
6	<b>Management Capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leadership and role expectations clearly communicated</li> </ul>	DC JM VDS	December	Outlined in core competencies through PRD framework, Delivery Strategy and Staff engagement Plan.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish Long Term Team Plan to ensure managers demonstrate clear planning and decision making</li> </ul>	JM VDS	September	Plan in development through Service Performance Group - focus on strengthening approach to risk assessment and management
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put in place adequate support and training for Team Leaders</li> </ul>	JM VDS	October	Cycle of Development sessions being established. In addition a Practitioner Forum for Team Leaders is being developed
7	<b>Performance Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child Care Performance Forum will track improvement plans and monitor progress</li> </ul>	JM VDS	October	In place
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Audit cycle to monitor service quality</li> </ul>	JM	July	In place and will be aligned with Improvement plan

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of Looked After Children Review process</li> <li>Review all Long Term Cases in order to Quality Assure</li> </ul>	<p>VDS JM</p> <p>JM VDS</p>	<p>September</p> <p>September</p>	<p>Underway, activity to move to Strategy Service to build in objectivity</p> <p>Review of Pending cases complete - plan in place to address actions.</p> <p>Review of current cases to be taken forward by a Quality Panel being established to address outcomes.</p>
<b>8</b>	<b>Staff engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update Delivery Strategy and communicate progress to staff</li> <li>Team meeting schedules established</li> <li>Regular structured supervision sessions held will all long term staff</li> <li>Scrutiny work drives learning and improved quality</li> </ul>	<p>DC</p> <p>VDS</p> <p>VDS JM</p> <p>JM VDS</p>	<p>December</p> <p>July</p> <p>August</p> <p>December</p>	<p>Senior Management Away Day to Review Shared Service progress held in July, date for wider management team planned for August. This stock take exercise will inform a review of Delivery Strategy and Staff Engagement sessions to communicate the outcome are planned for November/December</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place. Audit cycle to monitor quality, provide support and training and challenge practice in place</p> <p>Framework for implementing actions and learning from Scrutiny is being established for implementation</p>
<b>9</b>	<b>Partnership Working</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance corporate engagement</li> <li>Further develop external partnerships</li> </ul>	<p>DC</p> <p>Dc JM VDS</p>	<p>December</p> <p>December</p>	<p>Transparent approach through performance reporting to committee</p> <p>Build on existing good relationships to establish feedback to partners on progress in implementing improvements to long term work with looked after children</p>
<b>10</b>	<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve service reputation</li> </ul>	<p>Dc JM VDS</p>	<p>December</p>	<p>Communications group established to work on service profile and promote successes Regular meetings have been agreed with Solicitors Discussion underway with Childrens Panel members to improve relations Regular meeting between CSWO and CS Police and NHS Snr Mgt</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with stakeholders to mitigate damage</li> <li>• Report to Members</li> </ul>	JM VDS  DC	September  January	Meetings with key stakeholders being arranged. Regular updates on progress  Regular update to Housing, Health and Care Committee
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