

IMPLEMENTATION OF FAMILY SAFEGUARDING MODEL AND HOW THIS SUPPORTS CHILDREN IN CARE

To: **Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee**

Meeting Date: **25 March 2020**

From: **Sam Howlett
Head of Service: Safeguarding**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Purpose: **To report on the implementation of Family Safeguarding and how the model can support Children in Care.**

Recommendation: **The Sub-Committee is recommended to:**

- a) note the information within the report relating to the implementation of the Family Safeguarding model.**
- b) note how the Family Safeguarding model can support Children in Care.**

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Summary:

- Family Safeguarding is a new way of working.
- It will help the adults in families to make changes that will make sure that their children have safe living conditions and lifestyles.
- The aim of Family Safeguarding is to work with children and families so that less children need to come into care.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 This report focuses on providing an update on the progress being made in relation to the delivery and implementation of the Family Safeguarding approach across Cambridgeshire and will include how the model can support Children in Care. The aim of Family Safeguarding is to keep families together safely, improve the health and educational achievements of children and reduce emotional, physical harm and neglect
- 1.1.2 At the time of writing this report seven Adult Practitioners are in post and have completed their induction. Three remaining Adult posts are in the process of being recruited to.

2. MAIN ISSUES

Update on the Implementation of Family Safeguarding

- 2.1.1 The Family Safeguarding Model went live in Cambridgeshire on 10th February 2020. The launch of the Model was attended by representatives from Childrens Social Care and partners; Change Grow Live, Barnardo's, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust and Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire CRC. At the launch of the model all partners signed a Pledge, an undertaking to ensure Cambridgeshire will work towards;
- 2.1.2 Children and Families in Cambridgeshire experience a high quality service from appropriate, skilled and responsive multi-agency practitioners when involved with the Family Safeguarding Teams
- 2.1.3 Children and their families will be able to access support without delay and there will be fast access to resources between services
- 2.1.4 Appropriate services are offered to the Adults within families to assist them with achieving changes to ensure their children have safe living conditions and lifestyles
- 2.1.5 Strong local partnership working arrangements maximise the impact of the Family Safeguarding teams intervention on outcomes for children and their care givers

- 2.1.6 The views and experience of children and their families influence and shape the services we develop, commission, fund or deliver
- 2.1.7 Services continue to improve as a result of our joint agency learning and we work together to financially sustain this multi-agency practice going forwards

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1.8 Child Practitioners, Social Workers, Senior Practitioners, District Safeguarding Managers and Heads of Service working within the Family Safeguarding Teams across Cambridgeshire have completed training in Motivational Interviewing, Group Supervision and using the Workbook embedded in Liquid Logic prior to the launch of Family Safeguarding.
- 2.2 A key component of Family Safeguarding is Motivational Interviewing. Motivational Interviewing functions as a framework for practice and is a strengths-based approach designed to better engage and structure conversations with families.
- 2.3 Family Safeguarding provides a multi-disciplinary team approach to working with Children and Families including specialist adult workers with domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health expertise working within Social Work teams. Group case supervisions are also held with all workers allocated to a case.
- 2.4 The electronic workbook is a new method of recording case notes and modules with the aim of improving information sharing, streamlining processes and reducing the amount of time spent reporting.
- 2.5 All our workers are trained in working with and supporting families to understand why we are involved to support families to make the necessary changes in the various issues families can face such as domestic violence, substance and alcohol misuse and mental health difficulties.
- 2.6 A 12 month skill development programme is in place for all staff together with a rolling programme of training for new workers.
- 2.7 In preparation for Family Safeguarding, Cambridgeshire changed their database to Liquid Logic. A key component of Family Safeguarding is the workbook embedded in Liquid Logic. Staff started training on Liquid Logic in autumn 2019 in readiness to go live in January 2020.

FAMILY SAFEGUARDING TEAMS

- 2.7.1 There are nine Family Safeguarding Teams across Cambridgeshire: two in Cambridge City, two in South Cambridgeshire, one in East Cambridgeshire,

two in Huntingdon and two in Fenland. Family Safeguarding Teams are made up of the following professionals;

- 2.7.2 **Social Workers** – working directly with parents and children to support them make the changes in their lives to keep their children safe.
- 2.7.3 **Child Practitioners** – working directly with children and parents and providing support to Social Workers.
- 2.7.4 **Domestic Abuse Practitioners** – working to support victims of domestic abuse, helping them to recognise domestic abuse, support them to make changes to safeguard their children and themselves and help them identify the impact of domestic abuse on their children and themselves.
- 2.7.5 **Domestic Abuse Officers** – working with perpetrators of domestic abuse to support them to recognise the impact of their actions and how these can affect their children, achieve change to stabilise their relationships and keep their children safe.
- 2.7.6 **Recovery workers** – working with parents who are experiencing difficulties with either drugs or alcohol or both, support them to make positive lifestyle changes and enable them to care for their children.
- 2.7.7 **Mental Health Practitioners** – working with parents who are experiencing mental health difficulties.
- 2.7.8 Over the last six months Cambridgeshire prepared for the implementation by aligning our model to sit within a Family Safeguarding structure. This included improving front line management.

HOW THE FAMILY SAFEGUARDING MODEL IS SUPPORTING CHILDREN IN CARE

- 2.7.9 A focussed visit by Ofsted to inspect Children in Care took place in February 2020. They found “*astute investments in evidence based initiatives that are designed to improve services for families and strengthen Social Workers impact are helping the Local Authority to safely reduce the numbers of children who need care*”.
- 2.7.9 Family Safeguarding is expected to deliver long term reductions in the numbers of children entering into care in Cambridgeshire. Our statistical neighbour Hertfordshire evidenced a 50% reduction of children subject to Child Protection plans within the first year of Family Safeguarding and a 38% reduction in care proceedings. Hertfordshire reduced expenditure by £2.6m in the first yea. This reduction included legal and placement costs. They also evidenced a 3% improvement in recruitment and retention.

2.7.10 Over the last six months Cambridgeshire have already evidenced a 63% reduction in the number of children subject to Child Protection Planning and a reduction of 44% in children subject to care proceedings over the same time period. Comparing the data from Hertfordshire with our model there is evidence to indicate the impact on reducing the number of children in care is on a trajectory for the numbers to continue to decrease over the next year.

2.7.11 In addition, the Reunification and Placement Stability Service, an intervention to rehabilitate children to the care of their parents or wider family when safe to do so, contributes to the reduction of children in care. This service also supports Social Workers to prevent children coming into care.

2.7.12 Cambridgeshire continue to review and monitor outcomes for unborn babies via the Unborn Baby Panels. This process seeks to secure early permanence for unborn babies when appropriate to do so

2.7.13 The aim of Family Safeguarding is to work with children and families to prevent children coming in to care.

3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 A good quality of life for everyone

- Supporting vulnerable children and young people to achieve the best possible outcomes has longer term benefits for them as well as to the wider population. Where children are enabled to remain safely with their families or provided with good quality care, they are most likely to develop resilience and be more likely to remain in good physical, mental and emotional health, make better quality relationships and contribute more to the community.

3.2 Thriving places for people to live

- Promoting the best outcomes for children and young people means that they are most likely to make a positive economic and social contribution into adulthood.

3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children

- A Children's service that is effective overall will ensure that vulnerable children and young people are supported to achieve good outcomes, including by enabling families to provide permanent, safe and loving homes to their children wherever possible.
- Where children and young people are identified as being at risk of harm, children's services take action in order to ensure that these risks are minimised.

4 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource Implications

There are no significant implications within this category

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

There are no significant implications within this category

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

There are no significant implications within this category

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications within this category

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications within this category

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications within this category

4.7 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications within this category

Source Documents	Location
Letter from Ofsted regarding Focussed visit in February 2020	Sam Howlett Samantha.Howlett@cambridgeshire.gov.uk