

TITLE	Innovations Programme
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20 November 2018
WARD	None Specific
DIRECTOR	Director of Children's Services - Carol Cammiss

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Wokingham Borough Council Children's Services are adopting Signs of Safety as the Practice approach for our work with Children and Families. The underlying principles of Signs of Safety fit with the council's priorities with an emphasis on building on the strengths of the family network with the aim of reducing the need for statutory intervention unless absolutely necessary for the safety of the child.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Innovations Programme is noted.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

See below

Background

English Innovations Programme (EIP):

In mid-2014, Munro, Turnell and Murphy Child Protection Consulting (MTM) and ten local Authorities succeeded in securing DfE innovations funding through a joint bid to work intensively with ten local authorities over a period of eighteen months. The project became known as the Signs of Safety English Innovations Project. Funding was provided to implement Signs of Safety practice in each local authority and to work with each authority in re-designing their organisational procedures and functioning to better support this practice approach in their work with children, young people and their families.

English Innovations Programme Phase 2 (EIP2):

Wokingham and MTM succeeded in a further joint bid for DfE innovations funding to launch the second wave of the Innovations Project (EIP 2). This project was launched on 29th September 2017 and will be for the duration of two years until the end of September 2019. MTM will continue to work with the group of 10 Local Authorities from EIP 1. This project is focussed on driving the next steps in the full Signs of Safety implementation through the following key deliverables:

- Working with family and social networks in safety planning
- Aligning case management processes with the continuity of Signs of Safety practice (from the initial and all work with the case to closure).
- Further developing and implementing a Signs of Safety quality assurance framework.

Other focus areas are:

- Aligning child protection case conferences with the practice framework
- Bringing basic Signs of Safety training in-house
- Aligning our recording system with Signs of Safety
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1) Implementation plan and trajectory:

The implementation plan was finalised in November 2017 and the trajectory spans the duration of the Innovations Project which concludes in September 2019. The plan is divided in four quarters each year with the key deliverables, including the Munro, Turnell and Murphy Consultancy (MTM) deliverables set out for each quarter. There are eight Leaders’ Workshops over the two-year period, which is the main forum for the ten Local Authorities in the Innovations Project to share learning from their individual implementations and to track overall progress and direct planning at strategic level.

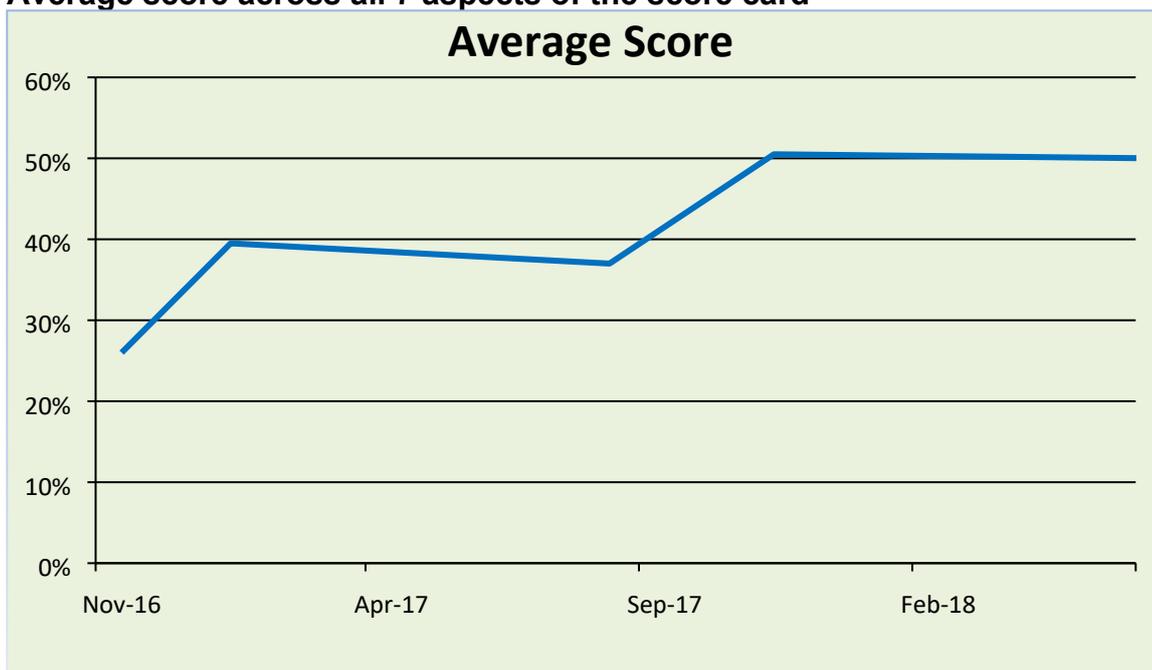
Wokingham now reached the halfway point in the implementation plan. The focus this far had been on developing and refining the implementation plan; rolling out a learning and development programme for practitioners, practice leaders and the senior management team, aligning the child protection case conference process to the Signs of Safety practice framework and establishing a framework to measure the progress of the implementation and outcomes for staff, children and young people and their families.

Progress is tracked locally via the quarterly score card, monthly steering group meetings, monthly project update reports and a monthly project leads meeting as part of the borough’s wider Quality Improvement Programme.

2) Where we are:

The figure below indicates the overall progress made since November 2016. There is evidence of progress in workers’ application of the practice framework across most of the areas measured in the score card, with the most significant progress in the use of trajectories in plans and involving the wider family network in safety planning.

Average score across all 7 aspects of the score card



Learning and Development:

Four members of staff completed a Learning and Development training and coaching programme with a licenced Signs of Safety consultant which enabled them to deliver the standard 2 day signs of safety training in-house. A total number of 72 members of staff have completed the basic 2 day Signs of Safety training and 15 members of staff have completed the advanced 5 day practice leader's training since September 2018. An additional 8 members of staff completed the 5 day Family Finding specialist training in June 2018. The majority of practitioners and practice leaders in the current Children's Services workforce (60%) have been part of EIP1 which would greatly contribute to the Service's ability to embed the practice framework and achieve a whole system alignment. The Signs of safety training analysis in June 2018 showed that 68% of children's services staff has completed at least the 2 day basic training.

Participatory Conferences:

Much progress has been made in this respect and the conference process and agenda for the meetings have been fully aligned to the Signs of Safety practice framework. Extensive feedback from children and young people, parents and partner agencies have been sought during the period 9th September 2017 and 4th January 2018 to help refine and monitor the impact of the changes. A further conference participant survey is currently in progress and this will capture participant views between November 2018 and January 2019.

Incorporating the Signs of Safety forms and documents into Mosaic

Wokingham is part of the Servelec User's group and are working alongside a number of local authorities to further refine the Signs of Safety forms developed by Resolutions Consultancy and Servelec with a view to start the local development and implementation of the forms into Mosaic from January 2019.

3) Key next steps and focus for the second half of the project:

- Reviewing the file audit policy and documentation with a view to fully align these to the Signs of safety Practice framework – December 2018
- Annual evaluation of the project and evaluation report – End November 2018
- Implementing the Signs of Safety documentation into Data recording system – June 2019

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)			
Next Financial Year (Year 2)			
Following Financial Year (Year 3)			

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
Ofsted framework requires Children's Services to state their practice model. Wokingham is part of the England Innovations programme embedding Signs of Safety Practice and this does attract a match funding for training.

Cross-Council Implications
N/A

List of Background Papers
N/A

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