

# Agenda Item 36.

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| <b>TITLE</b>                | <b>Quality Assurance Framework/Annual Quality Assurance Report</b>     |
| <b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b> | Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 January 2019 |
| <b>WARD</b>                 | None specific  |
| <b>DIRECTOR</b>             | Director of Children's Services - Carol Cammiss                        |

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

The recently introduced quality assurance processes will over time deliver service improvements from which the local community and its most vulnerable members will benefit.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the attached report be noted as the basis for future reporting on the performance and quality assurance for the Directorate.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

This report provides information on the quality assurance system introduced by the Directorate in 17/18 and identifies an appropriate way forward for future reporting arrangements



## **Background**

The attached report outlines the quality assurance activity for Children's Social Care for 2017/18. This should have been reported in Spring of last year. Due to major changes in the senior management arrangements of the Directorate and the Council this was not followed through. It is important however that this information is made available to Scrutiny and Overview Committee as it provides a comparative baseline that will allow the Committee to compare current and future performance with that of previous years.

The report provides a performance overview of children's social care activity as seen through the recently developed quality assurance system. It builds upon the monthly performance reports so as to give a more comprehensive picture of activity, what's been done well and what areas need to be improved. It goes on to identify proposed key lines of enquiry for 18/19 that would underpin the intended audit programme for this current year. This is to be reported to a future meeting of this committee.

During 18/19 there have been a number of very significant changes that have influenced and shaped the work of the service including:

- The appointment of a new senior management team
- Big increases in activity in referrals, assessments and statutory interventions to support vulnerable children
- Further inspections by regulators
- Projected overspends in children's services as a consequence of increasing workloads
- High levels of churn in frontline staff resulting in the loss of large numbers of experienced staff to neighbouring Local Authorities

Taken together, this has radically changed the landscape in which Children's Social Care has been operating and will undoubtedly shape the future agenda for the service.

## **Analysis of Issues**

Quality Assurance activity for 17/18 was concentrated providing detailed information that assisted the Directorate in making improvements in service delivery. The principle sources of information included:

- The reported and observed experiences of frontline practitioners and managers;
- Observations and analyses of multi-agency meetings;
- Feedback from children, young people and their parents and carers;
- Audit of cases;
- Analyses of aggregated child level data, benchmarking exercises and accurate performance data.

The data outlined in the attached report demonstrates positive activity in a number of areas along with the need to make improvements. The main recommendations from the audit work are outlined in Appendix 1 of the attached report. This has formed the basis for the service action plan for this year (18/19) and will be reported upon to a future

meeting of this committee. This is the beginning of the Directorate's new performance/quality assurance processes it provides a marker and future direction for the Service.

**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)   | Nil                           |   |                     |
| Next Financial Year (Year 2)      | Nil                           |   |                     |
| Following Financial Year (Year 3) | Nil                           |   |                     |

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| <b>Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision</b>    |
| There are no financial implications for the Council arising from this report. |

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| <b>Cross-Council Implications</b>   |
| The introduction of an effective quality assurance system will identify the impact and influence of both partner organisations and other Directorates of the Council. |

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| <b>Reasons for considering the report in Part 2</b> |
| N/A   |

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| <b>List of Background Papers</b> |
| None                             |

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| <b>Contact</b> Rachel Oakley           | <b>Service</b> People Services (Children)   |
| <b>Telephone No</b> Tel: 0118 974 8286 | <b>Email</b> rachel.oakley@wokingham.gov.uk |