Children & Young People's Department Learning and Improvement Framework

Introduction

As specified in Working Together 2013:

*"There should be a culture of continuous **learning and improvement** across the organisations that work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, identifying opportunities to draw on what works and promote good practice".*

Derby Children and Young People Directorate (CYPD) is committed to a process of continuous improvement to ensure that services are effective and outcomes for children and young people are the best they can be. Learning will be drawn from a range of sources internally and externally, and improvement will be delivered through systems, management and workforce development.

Governance

Learning and improvement will be driven principally through the directorate-led Performance Improvement Board, which will review information about performance and outcomes and direct any necessary action to ensure improvement.

The Department is also subject to scrutiny through:

- Derby City Council Performance and Scrutiny Committee
- Corporate Parenting Board
- Derby Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB)
- Ofsted

It is, however, the responsibility of all managers and staff to reflect on and learn from information about performance and outcomes, and to seek to improve practice, and this should be reflected in activity throughout the organisation.

Assessing Impacts and Outcomes

In assessing the effectiveness of provision both qualitative and quantitative data and information is needed in relation to:

- **Outcomes -** Are children and families better off?
  e.g. Percentage of vulnerable children where risk is shown to be reduced
- **Quantity - Quantitative information** How much or how many did we do?
  e.g. How many referrals? How many children in care?
- **Quality - Qualitative information -** How well are services doing?
  e.g. Percentage of children who report that they felt listened to

Sources of Learning

The framework covers the following sources and methods of learning:

Analysis of performance and service data
- Quarterly performance reporting on priority and local measures
- Quantitative data around service activity
- Thematic reviews and turning the curve exercises - d*etailed review and analysis, in response to emerging issues or at request of Scrutiny Board (Performance Surgeries), DSCB or Corporate Parenting*

Local population data and strategic needs analysis
- Analysis to show trends and changing needs and priorities of the population of Derby or target groups
- Focus is on outcome measures

Workforce data
- Vacancy, sickness, agency, expertise in key areas *including the Principal Social Worker*

Quality Assurance feedback
- Thematic audits - *detailed audits into specific areas of work*
- Monthly Quality file audits - *regular case file audits of social care and early intervention cases, as identified in the forward plan*
- Annual reports – *including; IRO, LADO, Child protection & CiN, Private Fostering*
- Direct feedback to workers and managers individually and through liaison meetings – *in addition to QA audits*
- Multi-agency audits and reviews - *as commissioned by DSCB and Corporate Parenting Board*

Compliance reports
- Standardised reports or audits to check compliance against regulation or statutory requirements

Service user feedback
- Complaints - *annual and interim reports from service users*
- Analysis of children in care consultations for reviews, issues raised by CiC Council and other user feedback as identified in Participation Strategy
- Individual feedback from service users

Observations and feedback from elected members, managers and staff
- Reports from elected members, including feedback from visits to children's homes and services
- Reg. 33/34 reports - *summary reports of observations and actions from regular Reg. 33/34 visits to children's homes*
- Both formal and informal observations of practice by senior and front line managers, practice supervisors and mentors
- Staff survey
- Principal Social Worker report (*Links to Workforce data*)

Serious Case Reviews, Learning Reviews and Appreciative Inquiries
- As commissioned by DSCB

Ofsted reports of regulated services and other external feedback
- Summary report of findings and gradings by Ofsted of regulated services
- Feedback and findings from partner organisations - *Informal direct feedback, semi-formal through liaison meetings and formally through complaints, escalations, and inspection reports*
- Regional Peer reviews - *Participation in Sector-Lead Improvement Partnership programme of peer reviews and safeguarding assurance visits*

Research
- Local research projects - *as undertaken by commissioned organisations or undertaken by research students with co-operation from CYPD*
- National research and reports - *published Ofsted and other reports and research evidence through Research in Practice, Community Care Inform, Tri-x and other sources as well as directly*

These will identify areas of good practice as well as areas for improvement. They will also support in seeking 'best practice' from peers and opportunities to learn from others.

Learning into Improvement

All the above represents opportunities for learning about current practice and identifying any need and ways to improve. Feedback and reports can sometimes be received negatively, as criticism, and generate a defensive or dismissive response. Where there is a culture of continuous learning and improvement, the information will be given and received positively and reflectively, with consideration as to how it can be used to improve practice.

Opportunities for this reflection and consideration take place at:

- Partnership Boards and/or associated Task and Finish Groups (i.e. Derby Safeguarding Children Board and Derby City's Children, Families and Learner's Board)
- Member led meetings including Scrutiny and Corporate Parenting
- Performance Improvement Board and Inspection Review Group
- DMT and other management / team meetings (at all levels)
- Learning from Practice meetings
- QA liaison meetings
- Annual planning workshops / processes
- Team development sessions
- Supervisions and MIPs (which can lead to appropriate training)
- Mentoring and feedback sessions
- Training events and programmes
- Action learning sets

Approaches to Improvement

Improvements in practice and outcomes for children and young people are made through:

System changes – sometimes the required response is best delivered through organisational or process changes. Resources can be shifted from one area to another, services can be re-structured, IT software can be changed and processes can be re-engineered, procedures re-written. These changes may be small or large scale.

Leadership focus - senior leaders and managers may re-direct or re-focus activity, may look at ways to inspire or motivate staff to improve, work with partners, develop new models or approaches, emphasise or re-prioritise staff development.

Individual effectiveness – individuals can improve their practice through reflection and adjustment, taking up training and development opportunities, self-directed learning. This can be supported through supervision and MIPs, and through a responsive learning and development service which adapts the offer to reflect the learning above.

All of the above will then be reflected in both corporate planning processes and also local team planning through the development and revision of

business and service/team plans, local improvement/action plans and development plans. Corporate planning takes place on an annual basis whilst local plans and targeted improvement occurs more frequently. In both instances there should be clear links to established governance to support 'Evaluation and feedback'. Supervision and MIP's are critical in making sure this is embedded from an individual staff level upwards.

Evaluation and feedback

To complete the Learning and Improvement Cycle any changes made or actions taken in response to learning will be reported back through established governance arrangements (*Page one*) and evaluated to ensure this was the correct response and there has been the desired improvement in practice and outcomes for children.

Nina Martin - Head of Quality Assurance
Sarah Walker - Improvement Partner
June 2014

Based on "Improving Local Safeguarding Outcomes - Developing a strategic quality assurance framework to safeguard children" Local Government Improvement and Development, January 2011
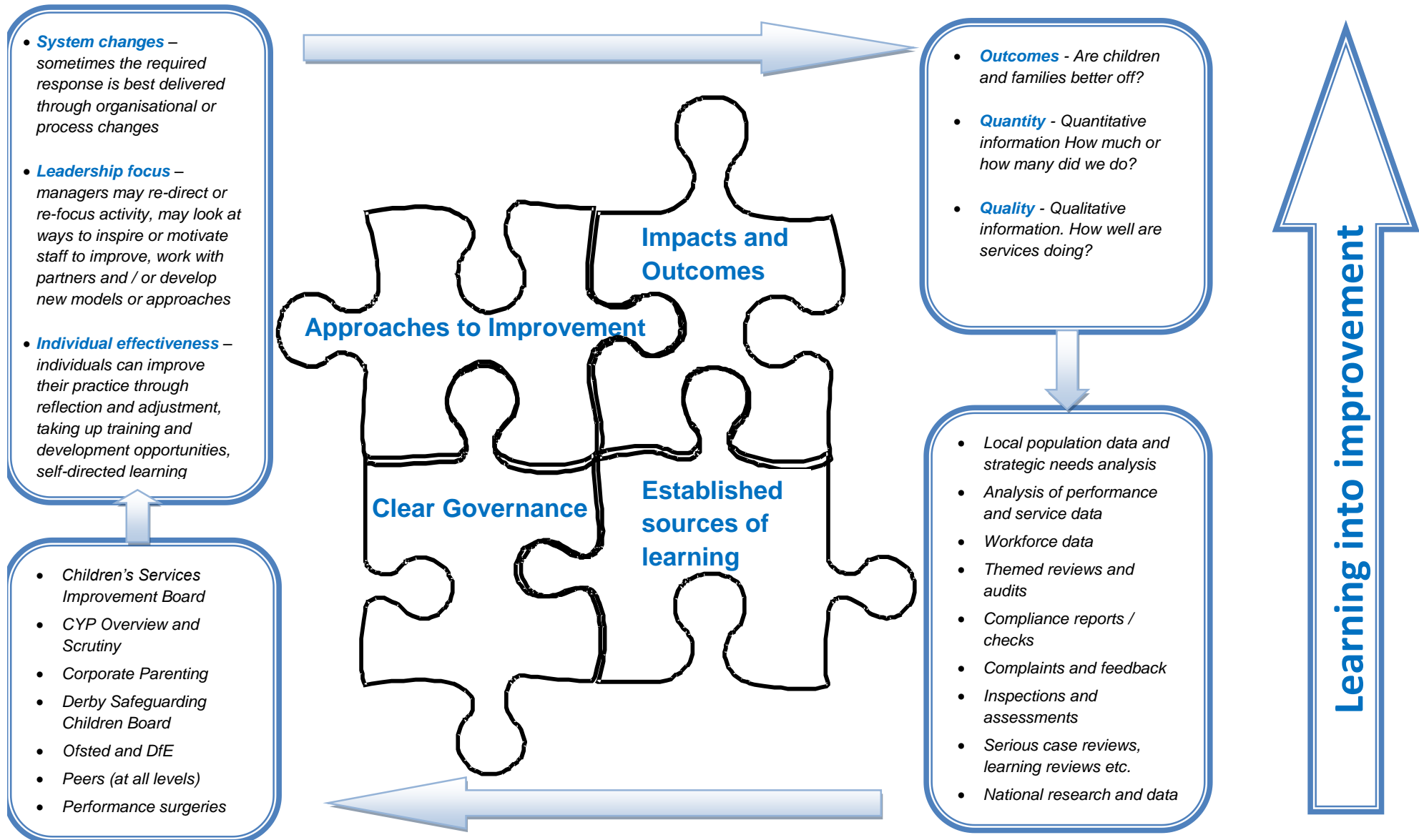
Appendices
Appendix 1 – A one page summary of the framework.
Appendix 2 – A summary of the links between the 'sources of learning' and when / where they are most linking to be reviewed to support the 'learning to improvement' and 'evaluation and feedback' stages in the cycle.

Derby City Council

Children and Young People's Services - Learning and Improvement Framework

- *System changes* – sometimes the required response is best delivered through organisational or process changes

- *Leadership focus* – managers may re-direct or re-focus activity, may look at ways to inspire or motivate staff to improve, work with partners and / or develop new models or approaches

- *Individual effectiveness* – individuals can improve their practice through reflection and adjustment, taking up training and development opportunities, self-directed learning

- *Children's Services Improvement Board*
- *CYP Overview and Scrutiny*
- *Corporate Parenting*
- *Derby Safeguarding Children Board*
- *Ofsted and DfE*
- *Peers (at all levels)*
- *Performance surgeries*

Impacts and Outcomes

Approaches to Improvement

Clear Governance

Established sources of learning

- *Outcomes* - Are children and families better off?

- *Quantity* - Quantitative information How much or how many did we do?

- *Quality* - Qualitative information. How well are services doing?

- *Local population data and strategic needs analysis*
- *Analysis of performance and service data*
- *Workforce data*
- *Themed reviews and audits*
- *Compliance reports / checks*
- *Complaints and feedback*
- *Inspections and assessments*
- *Serious case reviews, learning reviews etc.*
- *National research and data*

Learning into improvement

Learning and improvement can be viewed as a 'cycle', with '**clear governance**' driving forward improvement from '**established sources of learning**' and determining the '**appropriate approach to improvement**' to deliver **improved** '**impacts and outcomes**', which in turn are used as a source of learning.

Children & Young People's Department - Learning and Improvement Framework

The table below presents a summary of links between the 'sources of learning' and when / where they are most linking to be reviewed to support the 'learning to improvement' and 'evaluation and feedback' stages in the cycle. Depending on the 'source of learning' the lead agency for 'learning and improvement' is subject to change.

*It should be noted that this 'structure' of learning and improvement is not 'set in stone' and is flexible according to the needs of the service however the below presents a general overview of where sources of learning are **most likely** to be reviewed and actioned (alongside frequency if they are established) and how improvements / changes are 'tested' through evaluation and feedback, ensuring the loop is closed.*

Source(s) of learning	Governance for 'learning to improvement'	Frequency	Governance for 'evaluation and feedback'
• Multi-agency audits and reviews • Serious Case Reviews, Learning Reviews and Appreciative Inquiries	DSCB	Quarterly	CYP Performance Improvement Board ↓ DMT and other management / team meetings ↓ Supervisions and MIPs ↓ Targeted review (i.e. mentoring and feedback sessions / Team development sessions / QA liaison meetings)
• Local population data and strategic needs analysis	CYP Performance Improvement Board ↓ Team meetings / Targeted reviews	Annual to support planning and as required to inform service developments	Leadership Board, DSCB, CFLB, CYP Scrutiny and Corporate Parenting
• Analysis of performance and service data • Themed performance reviews and	CYP Performance Improvement Board ↓ DMT and other management / team	Quarterly	DSCB, CFLB, CYP Scrutiny and Corporate Parenting. ↓

Source(s) of learning	Governance for 'learning to improvement'	Frequency	Governance for 'evaluation and feedback'
turning the curve exercises • Thematic audits • Monthly quality file audits and QA feedback • Service user feedback • Complaints	meetings ↓ Supervisions and MIPs ↓ Targeted review (i.e. mentoring and feedback sessions / Team development sessions / QA liaison meetings / targeted working or 'task and finish groups')		Performance Surgeries as appropriate ↓ Annual Planning Workshops
• Ofsted inspection reports of regulated services • Regional Peer reviews	Inspection Review Group ↓ Team meetings ↓ Supervisions and MIPs	Monthly	CYP Performance Improvement Board DSCB, CYP Scrutiny and Corporate Parenting.
• Workforce data	Inspection Review Group linked to inspection frameworks CYP Performance Improvement Board DMT	As required	DSCB, CYP Scrutiny and Corporate Parenting.
• Feedback and findings from partner organisations • Local research projects • National research and reports	DMT and other management / team meetings ↓ Supervisions and MIPs ↓ Mentoring and feedback sessions	Monthly	CYP Performance Improvement Board DSCB, CYP Scrutiny and Corporate Parenting.