

### **Monitoring of improvements in children's services and of the Children's Trust:**

This paper outlines the future monitoring arrangements once the Trust is operational, and describes the relationship between monitoring of the Trust itself, and monitoring of improvements to children services. The Trust will of course be a major contributor to those improvements, but delivering an effective children's service depends on the contribution of all key partners. This will include children's services remaining in the Council, as well as the police, schools, NHS and others.

### **Monitoring of improvements in children's services**

- a) The role of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board is to oversee the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding children arrangements. In time it is expected that the Doncaster Safeguarding Children Board will be in a position to provide assurance to the Council on how well the system is performing and what more needs to be done. However the Board has not functioned well in the past and whilst with a new chair in place it is becoming more effective it is not yet ready to oversee improvements.
- b) We therefore propose that an additional arrangement is put in place to oversee the improvements to services that are progressing and to provide assurance to senior officers, across the partnership, and to members. This arrangement will also enable the Chief Executive to monitor the effectiveness of the DSCB.
- c) We suggest that the DSCB is required to commission a peer review within the next 12 months to evaluate the effectiveness of the Board

### Proposal

1. To establish a Children's Improvement Partnership: chaired by the Chair of the Trust Board, to include the Chief Executive of the Council, the Director of Children's Services, the lead member, the Chief Executive of the Trust, senior representation from the Police and the NHS, DfE representation (Jane Hopkinson), chair of the children and families board the Bishop of Doncaster and independent chair of the DSCB (John Harris).
2. The partnership will oversee delivery of a high level improvement plan and will meet infrequently, either 4 monthly or 6 monthly. It is likely that the partnership will remain in place until the authority is no longer in intervention and the DSCB is in a position to undertake its role fully.

## Monitoring of the Children's Trust

- a) The Trust will have comprehensive internal arrangements to monitor its own performance. It is proposed that the DCS or A.D. children's commissioning are able to attend meetings of the Board or any of the sub-groups.
- b) The Trust will contribute to the Partnership outlined above.
- c) As part of the service specification a number of protocols will be agreed between the Trust and the Council to ensure effective joint working on areas of shared and inter-linked responsibility such as early help, safeguarding disabled children, use of liquid logic.
- d) The proposal below recognises the balance needed to ensure effective monitoring of the contract between the Council and the Trust but at the same time not seeking to duplicate collection of information or micro managing the Trust's performance.

### Proposal

1. To put in place regular monthly meetings between Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services, plus others as required, to share monthly performance links and review of working of protocols.
2. To establish quarterly monitoring meetings focusing on finance and performance to include Chief Executives of the Council and the Trust, chair of the Board, Lead Member, DCS and Director of Finance. If the Council's DCS has any fundamental concerns about the Trust's performance, he or she will have a right to make representation to the Board or one of its Committees about those concerns.
3. The Council and the Trust will undertake a formal annual review of the contract and agree any budget and service variations for the following year
4. The DCS will report to Scrutiny four times a year on the Trust, to include general updates, and an annual and mid- year review. The CE of the Trust or his representative will attend to respond to any questions or requests for additional information.
5. If Members wish to visit any of the Trust's children's homes or other services this will be facilitated by the Trust and these arrangements will be covered by an agreed protocol.