

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2011/2012 - REPORT NO. 159

MEETING TITLE AND DATE:

Cabinet:
14 December 2011

REPORT OF:

Director of Schools and
Children's Services

Agenda – Part: 1	Item: 9
Subject: The Munro Review of Child Protection – Work in Progress	
Wards: All	
Cabinet Member consulted:	Cllr Ayfer Orhan

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 At their July meeting, Cabinet received a report on the subject of Prof Eileen Munro's national review of child protection.
- 1.2 Cabinet asked for an updating report to be presented to the December meeting outlining the response of government to the Munro Report, together with initial developments both nationally and within Enfield to her recommendations.
- 1.3 This report will therefore summarise the initial response of Government to the Munro Report (published in July 2011) and provide information about significant local developments e.g. a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, a 'Single Point of Entry' and the expansion of our involvement with the A.D.A.M. (Attachment, Disorganised Attachment and maltreatment) project.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

To note the content of this report and the potential reforms to the existing child protection systems, both locally and nationally.

3. BACKGROUND

The report of Prof. Eileen Munro entitled 'A child-centred system' was published in spring 2011. Cabinet were informed of the key recommendations within this report at their July meeting. The report contained 15 key recommendations that can be described within four broad areas:-

- Valuing professional expertise
- Sharing responsibility for the provision of early help
- Developing social work expertise and supporting effective practice
- Strengthening accountabilities and creating a learning system

At the end of July, the Government published their response to the Munro Report. This states that:-

The Government agrees with Professor Munro that the system has become too focused on compliance with rules and procedures and has lost its focus on the needs and experiences of children and young people.....

The system is therefore, not helping professionals to do their best for children and young people. That has to change. The Government is determined to work with all involved with safeguarding children to bring about lasting reform. Together, we want to build a system where the focus is very firmly on the experience of the child or young person's journey from needing to receiving help. This means reducing central prescription and interference and placing greater trust in local leaders and skilled frontline professionals in accordance with the principles outlined in the Government's Open Public Services White paper.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) provides the framework within which to build a child-centred system. The UNCRC recognises children and young people as individuals with rights, including their right to participate in major decisions about them in line with their age and maturity. Crucially, the UNCRC establishes that a child's right to protection from maltreatment means designing a child protection system that does not just react when things go wrong but also provides support to children and families to prevent maltreatment happening in the first place.

Building a system centred on children and young people also means building even stronger partnerships between government, local authority children's services, the voluntary and community sector, social work, education, police and health services. Given the tighter financial climate, it will be ever more important for the range of agencies involved in child protection to work together effectively to get the most out of resources.

A child-centred system; the Government's response to the Munro review of child protection: DfE: July 2011

Summarised below are the recommendations from Prof Munro and the Government's initial response to them.

'Valuing Professional Expertise' – Munro recommendations

- The Government should revise both the statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children and 'The Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families' - **Accept**
- The inspection framework should examine the effectiveness of the contributions of all local services to the protection of children - **Accept**
- The new inspection framework should examine the child's journey from needing to receiving help.... and look at the effectiveness of the help provided to children, young people and their families - **Accept**
- Local authorities and their partners should use a combination of nationally collected and locally published performance information to help benchmark performance - **Accept**

'Sharing responsibility for the provision of early help' – Munro recommendations

- The Government should work collaboratively with the Royal Colleges and others to research the impact of health reorganisation on effective partnerships and the ability to provide effective help for children who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm – **Accept in Principle**
- The Government should place a duty on local authorities and statutory partners to secure the sufficient provision of local early help services for children, young people and families – **Accept in Principle**

- Local authorities and their partners should start an ongoing process to review and redesign the ways in which child and family social work is delivered – **Accept**

‘Developing social work expertise and supporting effective practice’ – Munro recommendations

- The Social Work Reform Board’s Professional Capabilities Framework should incorporate capabilities necessary for child and family social work – **Accept**
- Employers and higher education institutions should work together so that social work students are prepared for the challenges of child protection work – **Accept**
- Local authorities should designate a Principal Child and family Social Worker, who is a senior manager with lead responsibility for practice in the local authority – **Accept (target - April 2012)**
- A Chief Social Worker should be created in Government whose duties should include advising the Government on social work practice – **Accept (target - late 2012)**

‘Strengthening accountabilities and creating a learning system’ – Munro recommendations

The existing statutory requirements for each Local Safeguarding Board (LSCB) to produce and publish an annual report for the Children’s Trust Board should be amended to require its submission to the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council plus other key agencies – **Accept**

The statutory guidance , Working Together to Safeguard Children’ should be amended to state that when monitoring and evaluating local arrangements, LSCBs should include an assessment of the help being provided to children and families and the effectiveness of multi-agency training – **Accept in principle**

Local authorities should give due consideration to protecting the discrete roles and responsibilities of a Director of Children’s Services and Lead member for children’s services before allocating any additional functions to individuals occupying such roles – **Accept in principle (consultation in autumn 2011)**

The Government should require LSCBs to use systems methodology when undertaking Serious Case Reviews (SCRs). In the meantime, Ofsted’s evaluation of SCR’s should end – **Consider further**

Four local authorities have been selected to 'pilot' new systems and processes for their child protection work, whilst still remaining within the statutory framework of the 1989 Children Act. These authorities are being closely monitored by Ofsted at present, in order to assess how effective their new 'freedoms' are in protecting children and in improving practice.

Five local authorities, of which Enfield is one, were selected to 'pilot' Ofsted's proposed new Inspection Framework. This unannounced process took place from October 31st – November 11th. Enfield, together with the other four selected local authorities, will be providing formal feedback to Ofsted about the strengths and weaknesses of their suggested new approach at a conference in December. Ofsted will then be issuing the new Inspection Framework in January 2012 with a view to it coming into effect from April 2012 onwards.

Developments in Enfield

Members will be aware that Schools and Children's Services. has recently developed the 'Building Resilience Project'. This project is a major re-evaluation of the way we have been supporting our vulnerable young people and their families

As a department we need to restructure and redirect our services in the most efficient and cost-effective way, to enable us to intervene early, to target families and children and young people in most need, and to provide co-ordinated, focused support and intervention to adolescents with the most challenging behaviours and their families. We also need to ensure that there are clear routes into our services for children, young people and their families, and clarity around accessing services for all professionals.

We are reviewing all services provided by Enfield's Children's Trust, for children and young people and their families, to ensure that our services are easy to access and use and those we identify and address problems as early as possible. This will mean that our services work together, often in integrated teams, to achieve good outcomes for children and young people and deliver value for money. As part of this project we have set the following as first-stage targets:-

- We will examine how we assess and identify children and families at risk
- We will continue to develop and extend the use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) to refer children and young people for advice and support

- We will explore how we can develop a single point of referral to simplify and accelerate access into appropriate support.
- We will reshape our teams and services so that we can make the best use of skills and expertise, reduce overlaps and duplications and extend existing good practice to intervene at the earliest opportunity
- We will develop and extend our skills to meet the needs of our most challenging young people and explore the possibility of establishing a specialist support team to work with their families.

In her earlier reports, Prof. Munro had recommended that local authorities, together with their partner agencies, should examine the potential to develop Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (M.A.S.H.). Enfield had already started to prepare for the development of a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (M.A.S.H.), indeed the Enfield Safeguarding Children Board (E.S.C.B.) had listed the development of a M.A.S.H. as one of their five key priorities for 2011/12

Essentially, a M.A.S.H. is a co-location of Police and Children's Social Care staff to share information, from their respective databases, about all incoming referrals. This process is designed to ensure that all available information is made available to staff undertaking investigations or assessments. Staff from the Met. Police and Children's Social Care have now been identified for this project. It is planned that Enfield's M.A.S.H. will be located within the Civic Centre.

A further scheduled development, as mentioned above, is the proposal to develop a 'Single Point of Entry' (S.P.O.E.). This was recommended within the Leaner Review of Enfield's Early Intervention Services (Tribal: 2010) and has also been highlighted by Prof Munro as a means of reducing unnecessary referrals to Children's Social Care services.

A S.P.O.E. is a further development of a M.A.S.H.; it entails all referrals and requests for support services for children and families being passed through a single gateway, together with a clear process for identifying the most appropriate agency to deliver that support. The core agencies for a S.P.O.E. are Police, Children's Social Care and Health, with a number of other agencies/services being linked in to the process.

Whilst the development of a M.A.S.H. and a S.P.O.E. is unlikely to deliver any financial savings, it is hoped that over the course of time, they will reduce duplication of effort and assessment between services enabling a 'right first time' approach and greater efficiency in intervention at the appropriate levels. These are therefore likely to prove to be cost-effective developments in the longer-term.

A key strand of the Munro recommendations was also to further develop the expertise of social workers, who work with vulnerable and/or 'at risk' children. Munro argued and the government have accepted that the process of delivering social work to children and families has become too prescriptive and that social workers have been spending too much time completing administrative processes and reports, as opposed to spending direct time with children.

The government have therefore allocated 'ring-fenced' sums of 'development monies' to local authorities, known as the Social Work Improvement Fund'. This funding is intended to provide additional training for social work staff and to improve their expertise and confidence in working with children and families.

Government have also provided a further ring-fenced grant to assist local authorities with implementing Munro recommendations, of which 50% has to be provided to the Local Safeguarding Children Board to allocate.

A key part of our development of social work practice in Enfield, over the last two years, has been our work with the A.D.A.M. (Attachment, Disorganised Attachment and Maltreatment) project. This project, which has been led by Prof. David Shemmings (University of Kent), has been piloted in three London authorities. It provides social workers with a new repertoire of child-centred techniques to assist with assessing children, their inner world and thereby to better understand their thoughts and feelings.

Our involvement in the project so far has meant that we have trained a group of our social workers in these new techniques. The response from our social workers has been very positive and we would now wish to expand our involvement with the project and teach all of our managers and social workers in these methods. In order to fulfil this, we will use some of our grant-funding from the 'Social Work Improvement Fund' (see above) to deliver the programme.

We will also be using some of the government funding to further support 'newly-qualified social workers' (NQSWs) in their first year of practice through a combination of additional supervision and protected case-loads.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The recommendations from Prof. Munro are being considered alongside the recommendations of the two Leaner Reviews that reported in the early part of 2011. Together these reports provide a coherent framework for re-shaping our arrangements

and services that are designed to help and support vulnerable children in Enfield.

5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Local Authorities have statutory responsibilities to act as the lead agency for ensuring that vulnerable children are properly safeguarded.

Cabinet members are asked to note the content of this report – there will be many further developments to this area of work within the foreseeable future.

6. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, RESOURCES AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS

6.1 Financial Implications

The Munro Report recommendations highlight a number of potential changes which could have significant financial implications for Enfield if the Government agrees to them. These could be in the following areas:

- Changes to the Assessment Framework and performance information will require amendments to the existing IT systems.
- The planned reduction in bureaucratic processes may offer up opportunities for future budget redirections or savings from the support services.
- Some senior social worker grades may require revising to prevent career progression into management and away from practice.
- There will be a need to spend more on the training of our trainee and qualified social workers.

Unfortunately there is currently no indication that the Government will provide any additional funding to support the implementation of these recommendations. However, Enfield has recently been awarded £474,611 by the Children's Workforce Development Council. This is an allocation from the Social Worker Improvement Fund and will be used to develop and train our children's social care staff over the next year. This funding is for 2011/12 only and cannot be used for any long term ongoing costs. Therefore for any ongoing implications it will be necessary to identify funding from within the Department's existing resources.

There are already a number of planned service developments and restructures, which will now incorporate some of the Munro recommendations. When they are submitted for approval the financial implications will state how they are to be funded.

6.2 Legal Implications

The Children Act 1989 embodies the current statutory scheme for the Council in supporting children in need and their families and for child protection. This legislation imposes various powers and duties upon the Council and is underpinned by secondary legislation (statutory instruments) and detailed mandatory Central Government guidance.

Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 imposes a statutory duty upon the Council to make arrangements for co-operation between the Council and its partners with a view to improving the wellbeing of children in our area regarding:-

- their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing ,
- protection from harm and neglect,
- education, training and education,
- the contribution made by them to society and
- social and economic wellbeing

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 requires the Council to establish a multi-agency Local Safeguarding Children Board to co ordinate actions of the Council and its partners in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in our area.

Sections 18 and 19 of the Children Act 2004 require the appointment of a Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Children's Services.

The functioning of the bodies appointed under sections 10, 11, 18 and 19 are all underpinned by secondary legislation and mandatory guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Professor Munro's report touches upon the whole range of the current statutory framework for services to children in need and for child protection and suggests further work and likely legislative changes to improve the system of child protection and remove barriers to that improvement. Professor Munro views her recommendations to the Government as long term objectives and requests her recommendations are not viewed or implemented in isolation.

7. KEY RISKS

Professor Munro's report makes the point that risks to vulnerable children can never be completely eliminated but does not consider ways in which the public, individuals, and communities can play a more prominent role in keeping children safe.

Risks addressed include:

- Too much bureaucracy resulting in loss of focus on the needs of the child;
- Senior staff moving away from practice and into management;
- Media pressure resulting in inspection/procedural-led activity; and
- Financial pressures during the transition from a command and control culture to a learning and adapting culture.

Opportunities identified include:

- Reducing the bureaucratic burden on local authorities;
- The critical importance of early help; and
citation of the junior doctor model as a possible way forward where advice and support is available from those more experienced and knowledgeable but with some degree of autonomy allowing the junior to become more effective and experienced and able to make decisions on their cases.

8. IMPACT ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES

Ensuring the adequacy of child protection arrangements is enshrined in statute as a key duty for every local authority. Services to vulnerable children in Enfield are regularly inspected by government inspectorates and are consistently regarded as being of good quality.

8.1 Fairness for All

- Tackling the inequalities faced by many children and young people in Enfield through a wide range of interventions.
- Keeping children and young people safe
- Enabling young people to achieve their full potential

8.2 Growth and Sustainability

- Helping young people remain in education, employment and training
- Ensuring young people have the skills they need to achieve economic well-being in adulthood.

8.3 Strong Communities

- Improving the physical, emotional and mental health of children and young people ensuring that they have a healthy start in life and make positive choices
- Ensuring that children and young people choose not to take part in anti-social behaviour or crime

9. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The Munro review recommends a new range of national and local performance indicators which Professor Munro considers to be more effective than the current set of indicators which have been in place for a number of years. These will be implemented in due course, subject to government's approval.

Background Papers

A child-centred system: The Government response to the Munro Review of child protection: Department for Education: July 2011

Enfield Safeguarding Strategic Assessment Report (Serco: December 2010)

Leaner Service Review for Early Intervention (Tribal: January 2010)