

Regional Improvement Plan for Children and Young People

Bringing focus to improvement and creating efficiencies



Safeguarding

Joint
commissioning

Workforce
development

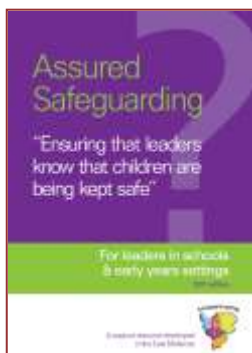
Health
Inequalities

A plan created by the Directors of Children's Services to tackle common issues in the East Midlands

Newsletter 6 – September 2011

Sector-led improvement in children's services

The year ahead is going to see some exciting developments in the region as the Directors of Children's Services (DCS) work together to develop and implement a scheme of peer challenge and support. The design of the scheme is still in its final stages and is likely to include two elements: **Peer Challenge Reviews** and **Unannounced Safeguarding Assurance Visits**. The DCSs will lead the scheme themselves and involve a group of senior leaders from across the region in a programme that will strengthen improvement work here in the East Midlands.



Assured Safeguarding – Third edition coming soon

Two editions of safeguarding leadership guidance have now been produced and a third is coming soon. Copies can be downloaded from www.jriep.com of the edition for **Directors of Children's Services and Lead Members** and an edition for **Leaders of Schools and Settings**. These are already being well received and adopted within some national leadership development programmes. Edition three for **GPs and Health Leaders** will be published before the end of the year. Each of the publications follows a similar approach and provides questions and anecdotes from around the region of how leaders are assuring themselves with regard to leadership accountability, casework and reviews, workforce, prevention, partnership working and performance management.

Advanced leadership in children's services – The development of a ALICSE Leadership Menu

During the next two years the ALICSE 'brand' will be developed to provide a broader range of leadership development opportunities for leaders in children's services across the region. In the coming year the ALICSE 'taught' programme will be continued alongside a series of Local Learning Seminars and Regional Priority Projects. See further information on these items below or visit www.alicse.com

The ALICSE 'taught' programme

Last year 100 leaders from across all sectors of children's services in the region completed the ALICSE programme and it received high acclaim in the support it provides for leadership development within the more integrated environment that now exists in children's services. This year and next there will be further cohorts to extend this important opportunity to more leaders. Recruitment is co-ordinated by the DCSs with their children's trust partners. Further information is available at www.alicse.com

Local Learning Seminars

As a new development for 2011/12 the region's DCSs are leading a series of Local Learning Seminars for leaders across the region. Each seminar will be organised and led by the host authority to illustrate how they are developing an aspect of practice or tackling a particularly challenging theme. The seminars will be highly interactive and provide a valuable opportunity to exchange knowledge across the region and provide local support. The programme is currently being finalised and places are starting to become available at www.alics.com

Date	Host Local Authority	Theme
21 st Oct 2011	Leicester	Safeguarding: Learning the lessons
30 th Nov 2011	Nottinghamshire	Addressing the challenge to Close the Gap
14 th Dec 2011	Leicestershire	The Structure of Children's Services in the 'Govian World'
January 2012	Rutland	Establishing an integrated Service for People
February 2012	Derbyshire	New ways of working with vulnerable families
March 2012	Nottingham	How commissioning links to early intervention
April 2012	Northamptonshire	Developing the local authority's mediating role with schools
April 2012	Lincolnshire	Prevention and improving outcomes across the system
May 2012	Leicester	The commissioning of 0 – 19 services
June 2012	Derby	Integrated safeguarding

Regional Priority Projects

In order to tackle some regional priority themes effectively, identified groups of key leaders will receive support and resources to enable them to undertake high impact projects. The DCSs have agreed to sponsor and support just 2 or 3 of these at any time and will use them to address the improvement themes emerging from the sector-led improvement processes above. The first of these Regional Priority Projects is being established during the coming months to address the shared aspiration to **develop a stronger culture of reflective safeguarding** and will be led by the regional group of 2nd Tier Safeguarding Leaders. (See Eileen Munro item below) A second is being developed to support confident leadership of **child poverty strategies**. See www.alicse.com

Professor Eileen Munro supporting work in the East Midlands

We are delighted that the leader and author of the *Munro Review of Child Protection: A child-centred system*, Professor Eileen Munro, is pleased to offer her support to the DCS's aspiration to develop a stronger culture of reflective safeguarding in the region. She will be spending a day with senior safeguarding leaders in November and the schedule will allow an opportunity for ten social workers and managers per local authority area to attend.



Research support for those tackling childhood obesity in the East Midlands

A regional seminar in autumn 2010 concluded with a recommendation that we need to find out more about the most effective, multi-agency practice to tackle childhood obesity. While it was recognised that we have strong local evidence about the effectiveness of projects to address one or two key contributory factors, there was little knowledge about whole system approaches. C4EO and NFER were therefore commissioned to undertake this research for us and we are pleased to make their report, "*What works in combating childhood obesity: an anthology of the literature on effective whole-system approaches*" freely available. It can be downloaded from www.jriep.com and we hope it can make a useful contribution to developments here in the East Midlands.

Maintaining Momentum – supporting the development of Health and Wellbeing Boards

In late September a regional seminar was held with Elected Lead Members and Directors of Children's, Adults and Public Health Services to support the development of Health and Wellbeing Boards in the East Midlands. Hosted by Nottingham City Council, the event will seek to identify the key learning from the successes of children's trust partnerships over recent years to inform the development of HWBs. See Regional Events at www.jriep.com

Strengthening school partnerships in the East Midlands

During June 2010 two important seminars were organised for the region and held at the National College to bring together some key leaders of school partnerships. The Coalition Government's education reforms will place greater responsibilities for a self improving school system with the leaders of school partnerships and a changed role for local authorities. Given the vital importance therefore of having strong school partnerships in the region these seminars served to raise awareness and develop working relationships between schools across the region that should help them address the challenges that lie ahead. See Regional Events at www.jriep.com

Joint Children's and Adult Services Efficiency Project 2011-13

We are delighted that the chief executive group of East Midlands Councils (formerly the REIP) has awarded two years of project funding to help secure savings in a joint project involving both children's and adult services in the region. The directors of those departments have agreed to focus the project upon 14 to 25 year olds with complex needs whose placements are often very expensive and away from their home communities. They have also nominated a group of *project champions* who will guide it through the initial business and action planning phase. This group met on 14th September 2011. Event information is available at Regional Events at www.jriep.com

Shaping the Market – Regional Framework for Independent Fostering Agencies

Most local authorities are now starting to realise significant savings that derive from a regional framework that was established and implemented earlier this year. The framework is a call-off contract for local authorities when they opt to use independent fostering agencies to place children in their care. This framework contract is delivering savings by introducing greater price transparency and regulation and commitments from the approved providers to fix prices until 2015.

Regional child poverty support network

During the past few months an effective regional support group has been established for colleagues who are leading the development of child poverty needs assessments and child poverty strategies across the region. This support group is proving effective in sharing knowledge and understanding and is also providing an efficient hotline through to central government advisers.

CAF and integrated working regional standards

Almost all children's trust partnerships in the region have now adopted the minimum regional standards for the common assessment framework and aspects of integrated working that was developed during 2010. These standards describe pathways, protocols and a common terminology that will help to bring greater consistency to the experiences of children young people and their families, especially those whose lives straddle local authority boundaries. The regional group of officers who developed the standards will now challenge and support each other in the implementation, maintenance and development of the standards.

Other regional support groups

A number of other regional groups support policy and practice across the East Midlands, providing an important aspect of sector led improvement. These groups operate at a range of levels:

- Some are for strategic leaders e.g. the regional DCS group, EMSIG (school improvement leads) and the 2nd Tier Safeguarding Group.
- Some support workforce development and provide important coordination of training provision, often with universities and other providers e.g CPD Partnership (school workforce), Early Years Network, Social Work Network, Youth Work Training and Workforce Development
- Some provide specialist support for officers and heads of service, often providing a highly effective and efficient way of linking the region with central government policy officers e.g. CAF Coordinators, Child Poverty Network, Schools Admissions Group

Mark Friedman in the region

Colleagues may be interested to know that Mark Friedman, the leading exponent of Results Based Accountability, is visiting the UK during October and we are pleased to have secured his services in the East Midlands for one day. He will be contributing to the ALICSE program and also leading a seminar for school leaders on 14th October to consider the application of the RBA approach to the improvement processes within schools and school partnerships. There is a charge to attend this seminar and places can be booked at <http://markfriedman.eventbrite.com>



Further information about this plan

Further information about this plan and the actions that are being developed will be distributed on a regular basis in future newsletters. To make any further enquiries about the JRIEP, please email peter.chilvers@sdsa.net who is co-ordinating this plan on behalf of the region.