


<p style="text-align: center;">London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CEPAC 21 November 2016</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">PARTNERS IN PRACTICE AND FOCUS ON PRACTICE UPDATE</p>	
<p>Report of the Acting Cabinet Member for Children and Education – Councillor Sue Fennimore</p>	
<p>Open Report</p>	
<p>Classification For PAC review and comment Key Decision: No</p>	
<p>Wards Affected: All</p>	
<p>Accountable Director: Clare Chamberlain, Executive Director for Children’s Services</p>	
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report and the attached appendices is to update the Committee on the progress of *Focus on Practice*, our programme within family services funded by the Department for Education Innovation in Social Care programme, and the plans for our work as Partners in Practice with the DfE over the next four years.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. The Committee is asked to review and comment on the report.

3. REASONS FOR DECISION

3.1. No decisions required.

4. PROPOSAL AND ISSUES

4.1 *Focus on Practice*, funded by the DfE Children's Social Care Innovation Programme, launched in October 2014. The programme covers our work with children and families in all areas of children's social care, and includes both social workers and other allied practitioners who work within early help, with children in need, in child protection, with looked after children or those leaving care, with disabled children and with teenagers and young offenders.

4.2 The core objective *Focus on Practice* is for social workers and other practitioners to use their professional expertise to help create positive change for families and better outcomes for children and young people. The key objective for *Focus on Practice* is to create a service which will achieve the following outcomes:

- A 20% reduction in numbers of looked after children;
- A significant reduction in re-referrals;
- Improvement in morale, job satisfaction and therefore retention of social workers in the profession

4.3 To date, across the three authorities, 583 practitioners, 161 managers and 35 senior leaders (directors and heads of services) have completed or are nearing completion of a course in systemic practice. For practitioners and managers, this is a 15 day course accredited (taught one day every fortnight over approximately 8 months). The systemic leadership course is a 6 day course, over 3 months. As part of every course, real practice and organisational dilemmas are used to consider how to put theory into practice. Short courses in parenting theory and skills, motivational interviewing and Signs of Safety commenced in September 2015. All practitioners will complete these courses by January 2017.

4.4 There are early indications of the impact of practice changes on children and their families. The total number of children looked after across the three Tri-borough authorities (excluding UASC) has reduced between 2013/2014 and 2015/2016 (15% reduction overall). Although this follows a previous pattern of falling numbers, and it is not possible to isolate the impact of *Focus on Practice*, we consider the early practice changes emerging to be key in maintaining this ongoing downward trend. The number of entries to care has also continued to fall since the start of the programme (LBHF saw a slight increase this year, but after a very sharp decrease the previous year). We consider this to be a possible early indication of the practice changes which are promoting more in-depth, strengths-based work with families to keep children and young people within their networks.

4.5 We have not yet seen a significant reduction in re-referrals to the service. In LBHF, re-referrals within 12 months accounted for 15.1% of all referrals in 2013/14, 16.2% in 2014/2015 and 13.1% in 2015/2016. This is not unexpected, as the cases returning to our service this year are only beginning to have the benefit of more targeted and effective interventions, and we still anticipate seeing a reduction in re-referrals within the next 2-3 years.

4.6 In December 2015, Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham were selected as 'Partners in Practice' with the Department for Education (DfE). Over the next four years, the DfE will work with the 10 Partners in Practice authorities across England to develop models of effective practice which will contribute to overall improvement in the sector, with a particular emphasis on deregulation. A proposal was submitted to the DfE, which outlined our plans as Partners in Practice in the areas listed below. This proposal was agreed by the DfE on 1 July 2016.

Development of the practice system

4.7 We continue to develop the existing Focus on Practice programme, ensuring increased access to clinical staff and other multi-disciplinary input by family services teams, while developing dual qualified expert staff to lead practice in the longer term. We also intend to make increased use of predictive modelling to provide intensive services at the earliest stage for children who are likely to need them.

Sector Improvement

4.8 We are setting up a Centre for Social Work across three authorities to support improvement in the wider sector. Local expertise will be used to develop and offer courses applying systemic approaches to social work practice, along with coaching and opportunities to spend time in local services where systemic approaches are being employed. In the first year, we will work with three local authorities, two of which have been identified by DfE to date.

Deregulation

4.9 We continue to explore and challenge system conditions which determine the culture and practice within our services including where there might be unnecessary bureaucracy; ensuring a proportionate balance between assessment and providing services; enabling social workers and other to work intensively with families; and developing professional accountability for our work in a way which allows the front line workforce to be more creative and confident in their interventions with families. Areas include the scoping of a new case recording system, work on reducing duplication within YOS, redressing the balance between assessment and intervention, and developing a more tailored response to We would like to develop a more tailored response to unaccompanied asylum seeking children, particularly 16 and 17 year olds which reduces some of the process and bureaucratic tasks associated with looked after children status, and refocussing the work from front door to first child protection case conference to ensure effective and targeted work is being undertaken with families at this crucial time.

Practice Leader Development Programme

4.10 In addition to the plans as set out above, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, Westminster City Council and Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea were announced on 4 July 2016 as the delivery partners with the

Department of Education of a Practice Leader Development Programme. This programme, as announced by the Secretary of State in January 2016, will focus on building the next generation of talented practice leaders to strengthen the overall delivery of services to vulnerable children and families across the country. The programme will be based and have input from the best existing practice leaders and will have a particular focus on developing the pipeline of future leaders. The first cohort of aspiring practice leaders commencing the programme in April 2017.

5. OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

5.1. n/a

6. CONSULTATION

6.1. N/a

7. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. A systemic practice framework, which is central to Focus on Practice and our work as Partners in Practice, explicitly recognises the importance of practising self-reflexively (attending to areas of similarity and difference in respect of race, gender, ability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, etc) and recognising the impact of prejudice and bias on our relationship with families.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1. The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham was awarded £1,611,600 under the Innovation in Social Care Grant to deliver the Focus on Practice programme. A condition of the grant award was that match funding was available from the Local Authority and Hammersmith and Fulham contributed £350,000.

9.2. The combined amount of grant and authority contribution of £1,961,600 was spent between 2014/15 – 2016/17 as detailed in the table below:

Cost Detail	Amount £'000
Project Management	£ 40
Clinical Team	£ 824
Social Workers & Other Staff	£ 501
On Track	£ 291
Training & Evaluation	£ 305
Total	£ 1,961

9.3. The Hammersmith and Fulham award of the new funding stream of Partners in Practice is £2,808,401, with an expected spending plan as detailed below:

Cost Detail	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Total
Practice Systems Centre for Social Work (incl Practice Leader Programme)	£ 617	£ 654	£ 348	£ 67	£ 1,685
Deregulation	£ 223	£ 266	£ 283	£ 248	£ 1,019
Project Management	£ 56	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 56
	£ 24	£ 24	£ -	£ -	£ 48
Total	£ 920	£ 944	£ 630	£ 315	£ 2,808

9.4. The above costs include those to continue the clinical team work, as well as shared costs for hosting the Centre for Social Work and the Practice Leaders Development Programme, in conjunction with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster City Council.

9.5. Implications verified/completed by: Alex Ward, Strategic Lead – Family Services, 0208 753 5040

10. IMPLICATIONS FOR BUSINESS

n/a

11. OTHER IMPLICATION PARAGRAPHS

n/a

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT

None

LIST OF APPENDICES:

- Focus on Practice Impact Statement
- Partners in Practice proposal summary
- Centre for Social Work and Practice Leader Development programme description