



TO: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
FROM: Andrea Sturgess and Imran Akuji (Heads of Service)
DATE: 22 th August 2023

PORTFOLIOS AFFECTED: All

WARDS AFFECTED: All

TITLE OF REPORT: Next steps following LGA training '6 Steps to Effective Scrutiny of Children's Services'

1. PURPOSE

To update the committee on next steps following the training on July 31st 2023.

2. BACKGROUND

The committee recently took part in the LGA training '6 steps to Effective Scrutiny of Children's Services.

This covered the general overview of the steps:

- Knowledge of children's services
- Clarity of role and purpose
- Work programming and planning
- Demonstrating value and influence
- Engagement and working with others
- A strong organisational culture

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

All of the advice and recommendations were noted and those who attended asked for feedback. Discussions are taking place about implementing as much as possible whilst recognising many are dependent on extra capacity. Reducing duplication is being considered as part of agenda setting process. There will be more focus on data and analysis – with a dashboard at every meeting with relevant KPIs. A glossary of terms specific to Blackburn with Darwen Children's Services is to be developed. Further 'deep dive' training can be accessed on any of the 6 steps

There is a view to explore with Members, Officers and partners the proposal to merge the Corporate Parenting Special Advisory Group (Members) and the Corporate Parenting Executive Board (Officers and partners) to form a Corporate Parenting Panel. A workshop is planned for mid-Sept to explore this further, once structures and membership are in place the LGA can be invited to deliver training.

Development and training offer via the LGA will aim to support the council in:

- Embedding strong governance and accountability for Corporate Parenting, with clear understanding of responsibilities and expectations.
- Achieving a whole system approach to Corporate Parenting across the wider council and partners, driven by the voice and experiences of children and young people.
- Understanding what good looks like and measuring impact.
- Achieving improved outcomes for children and young people who are care experienced.

Children's Services sector led improvement partners (SLIP) approach will also be explored to identify other local authorities that may be able to support the council on its improvement journey. The SLIP programme aims to improve the overall performance of children's social care by using the strongest performing local authorities to provide peer support to councils who are working to improve their services.