

Children's Services Select Committee
26 July 2012

Executive Response to the Final Report on the Family Information
Service Rapid Scrutiny Exercise

Question from Ask Board of Trustees

At the Children's Service Select Committee meeting on 31 May 2012 the recommendations of the Rapid Scrutiny were endorsed and were as follows:

1. The Rapid Scrutiny Group welcomes the proposed six monthly review of the reconfigured Family Information Service, but recommends that a wider subset of agencies, partners and service users be involved, including the Police, health visitors, voluntary groups (such as the Trussell trust), nurseries, pre-schools and the providers of the Family Information Service;
2. The Rapid Scrutiny Group is concerned that
 - a) those children and families previously or currently receiving outreach services from **ask** must be 'picked up' by outreach services provided by children centres;
 - b) the potential benefits of a 'one stop shop' for family information should not be lost as a result of this service reconfiguration;
 - c) the reconfigured Family Information Service must be monitored to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of vulnerable users;and therefore recommends that the Council and **ask** work closely together to ensure that these concerns are addressed, including in the proposed six month review of the reconfigured service

Some further communication has taken place between **ask** and the Council's commissioning staff which raise some concerns about the purpose and timescale for reporting the outcome of the Review back to the Children's Service Select Committee. We are told that the work plan is for a meeting in January with **ask** and other organisations to plan this review.

In our view this delay in working with **ask** and other organisations and in planning the review, will make it impossible for that review to achieve the objectives set out by Rapid Scrutiny and endorsed by this Select Committee. We would appreciate member's views on the value of an earlier meeting to set terms of reference for the review and thus ensure that information which will inform it is collected from an earlier date.

Response

At the Rapid Scrutiny meeting on the Family Information Service, it was agreed that it would be helpful to undertake a review of the reconfigured Family Information Service in the first part of 2013. The Children's Services Commissioning Team has built this into their work programme, with a meeting with key stakeholders to plan the review in January 2013. The purpose of the review is to consider plans for Family Information Services from April 2014 (ask's current contract has been extended until this date). A review in the first half of 2013 will therefore allow ample time to implement any recommended changes before April 2014. Each organisation/service involved in providing information to parents and carers is already collecting statistics on contacts from parents and carers. Over the next few months, a significant amount of resource within the Children's Services Commissioning Team is being used to support the Council's Safeguarding Improvement Plan and for implementing the Government's Troubled Families Initiative and this work needs to be prioritised.