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## **One Minute Guide: How Senior Managers Know about Your Work**

The Director of Children's Services (DCS) and the senior management team in Redbridge are passionate about providing consistently high quality services that make a difference to improving the life chances of children and young people in Redbridge. The Chief Executive, Director of Children's Services, Lead Member, Managing Director, Deputy Managing Director and Heads of Service are well informed and are committed to taking the right steps to consolidate good performance and continued improvement in line with the ethos of a 'learning' organisation.

Links between the Chief Executive, the Director of Children's Services and the Interim LSCB Independent Chair are clearly defined, forged through clear governance arrangements and one-to-one and other regular meetings. They seek to ensure lessons are learned from feedback from children, young people, their families and carers as well as learning from observations of front line practice, audits and lessons from compliments, complaints and Serious Case Reviews, as part of our commitment to evidence informed practice.

### **Performance Management**

There is regular and rigorous scrutiny of detailed performance management information. Senior Managers review key data on a weekly basis, which includes number of contacts, referrals, Common Assessment Frameworks (CAFs), and Single (Child and Family) Assessments completed etc. Caseloads are also reviewed weekly across the service areas and senior managers are acutely aware of where there are pressure points and seek to act on this. The DCS and Lead Member, Councillor Elaine Norman, have also agreed additional resources as required (e.g. additional social workers in CPAS (Child Protection and Assessment Service) the Community Social Work Teams, external mentoring etc.)

### **Management Oversight and Audit**

There is a well-established Quality Assurance Programme of activity in place, with audit's having a key role. Case file audits are comprehensive and robust and senior and middle managers, including the DCS, regularly audit at least two cases per month, making extensive use of audits, thematic reviews, 'health' checks, and 'deep dives' to rigorously scrutinise and understand local practice. The findings and learning from these are presented at the fortnightly Social Work Transformation and Performance Boards chaired by the DCS and also shared with the Chief Executive and Lead Member. Recent Quality Assurance roadshows have also taken place to share findings and learning with front line staff.

### **Practice Observations**

The senior management team and the DCS are keen to observe front line practice. They routinely observe Child Protection Conferences and Child Care Review's (on a monthly basis). Another helpful way senior Managers scrutinise practice is by regularly chairing Casework Panels and Legal Planning Meetings.

## **Corporate parenting**

Corporate parenting is a key priority for the senior management team with elected Members actively promoting high aspirations for our looked after children. There are a variety of mechanisms and key forums to strengthen the voice of our children looked after, including participation through our Participation Officer, the Voice of the Child Working Group, feedback from Looked After Reviews etc. The Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel listens actively, to the voice of young people in care, with regular representation at meetings and reports from the Participation Officer. The achievements of looked after children and care leavers are celebrated at an annual awards ceremony.

## **Voice of the Child**

A key mechanism for senior management to know about the impact of our practice is direct from the feedback of the children, young people and families we work with. There are a variety of mechanisms and forums in Redbridge to do this. Children and young people are supported to feed back their experiences through the Children in Care Council ("Don't Whisper" Group) and the Junior Children in Care Council. The DCS meets with these groups on a quarterly basis. Additionally children and young people receive support and advocacy through the commissioned Independent Visitors scheme and the Children's Rights Advocate. The Principal Child and Family Social Worker (PCFSW) has also established a Voice of the Child (VoC) Working Group which meets monthly and has been seeking to embed feedback and learning from the feedback and voice of young people into social work practice. A group of young people are actively engaged in the agenda planning and priority setting of the Group.

## **Staff Feedback**

Staff feedback is much valued and there are a variety of mechanisms for this in place. These have included the information from the annual social worker 'health' check, which has been used effectively to identify areas for development. The senior management team also supports and facilitates a variety of forums with staff and often visit the teams and service areas. This includes monthly group Supervision with the NQSW's and the PCFSW. The DCS and Deputy Managing Director meet with NQSWs on a six monthly basis. The PCFSW also holds regular briefings and meetings with staff and feeds back practice issues and developments to the DCS and the leadership team on a weekly basis.

The Management Team strongly supports learning and service development from examples identified across Redbridge and also from other authorities. Additional management oversight of practice and feedback is received through:

- direct observations of practice;
- supervision/performance management and case discussions;
- Staff consultation events including Staff Induction Briefings, the CS Staff Feedback mail box, Development and Practice Days etc.
- "First Impressions" Survey data and Exit Interview data;
- Team/Service Report Cards;
- Complaints investigations; and
- Service User Feedback Reports.

The senior management team very much appreciates the hard work and commitment from frontline staff and are committed to work together to safeguard and improve the lives of the children we support.