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### **Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)**

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**Time and Date**

2.00 pm on Thursday, 11th January, 2018

**Place**

Committee Room 3 - Council House

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**Public Business**

1. **Apologies and Substitutions**
2. **Declarations of Interests**
3. **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 8)
  - a) To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2017
  - b) Matters Arising
4. **Private Fostering** (Pages 9 - 16)

Briefing Note of the Deputy Chief Executive (People)
5. **Quality Assurance Audit Activity** (Pages 17 - 24)

Briefing Note of the Deputy Chief Executive (People)
6. **Improvement Board Report from 18th October, 2017** (Pages 25 - 76)

Briefing Note of the Deputy Chief Executive (People)
7. **Outstanding Issues**

Outstanding Issues have been picked up in the Work Programme
8. **Work Programme** (Pages 77 - 82)

Briefing Note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator
9. **Any Other Business**

Any other items of business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.

**Private Business**

Nil

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Martin Yardley, Executive Director, Place, Council House Coventry

Wednesday, 3 January 2018

Notes: 1) The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Michelle Rose, Governance Services, Council House, Coventry, telephone 7683 3111, alternatively information about this meeting can be obtained from the following web link: <http://moderngov.coventry.gov.uk>

2) Council Members who are not able to attend the meeting should notify Michelle Rose as soon as possible and no later than 1.00 p.m. on 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2017 giving their reasons for absence and the name of the Council Member (if any) who will be attending the meeting as their substitute.

3) Scrutiny Board Members who have an interest in any report to this meeting, but who are not Members of this Scrutiny Board, have been invited to notify the Chair by 12 noon on the day before the meeting that they wish to speak on a particular item. The Member must indicate to the Chair their reason for wishing to speak and the issue(s) they wish to raise.

Membership: Councillors S Bains, J Clifford (By Invitation), S Hanson (Co-opted Member), K Jones (Co-opted Member), B Kaur (By Invitation), D Kershaw, J Lepoidevin, A Lucas, P Male, K Maton (By Invitation), C Miks, K Mulhall, M Mutton (Chair), R Potter (Co-opted Member), E Ruane (By Invitation) and P Seaman

Please note: a hearing loop is available in the committee rooms

If you require a British Sign Language interpreter for this meeting OR if you would like this information in another format or language please contact us.

**Lara Knight/Michelle Rose**

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**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)**  
**held at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 30 November 2017**

Present:

Members: Councillor M Mutton (Chair)  
Councillor S Bains  
Councillor D Kershaw  
Councillor J Lepoidevin  
Councillor A Lucas  
Councillor P Male  
Councillor C Miks  
Councillor K Mulhall  
Councillor P Seaman

Co-Opted Members: Mrs S Hanson and Mrs K Jones

Cabinet Member: Councillor K Maton

Employees (by Directorate):

Place G Holmes, M Rose

People J Essex, S Mills, K Nelson,

Apologies: Councillor Ruane

Invited:

**Parents**

C McCann

L Grove

**Headteachers**

J Benton – Westwood Academy

J Silverton – Fredrick Bird Primary School

## **Public Business**

### **25. Declarations of Interests**

There were no Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

### **26. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2017 were approved.

### **27. Implementation Update - Home to School/College Travel Assistance**

Further to Minute 44/16 'Education Travel Assistance Policy Changes – Public Consultation' the Scrutiny Board requested an update on the policy changes as they had been contacted by parents. Following consideration at Scrutiny Board 2

on 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2016 and a public consultation which took place from 21st November 2016 to 31st January 2017, Cabinet had approved a revised policy on 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2017, which was in force in April 2017 for new applicants and applied to existing applicants from September, 2017 (their minute 120/16 refers). The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills was invited to the meeting and also parent representatives were invited to speak at the meeting.

The Cabinet report noted that Coventry City Council had statutory responsibilities for travel assistance for eligible children and young people. However, it over-provided traditional forms of transport for children and young people compared to statutory duties and the provision made by other local authorities. There were two key consequences of this. Firstly, some children and young people were missing out on the opportunity to develop independent travel skills, which could be taken forward into adult life. Secondly, there was significant forecast overspend on the Council's Home to School Transport budget (2016/17 forecast £3.6m spend against a £3.1m budget). Current policies and practice were not aligned with national statutory duties.

The Cabinet report detailed the findings from the public consultation and recommended the implementation of revised policies. Where this led to travel assistance stopping for some children and young people, alternatives were to be discussed with the family including particular consideration of independent travel as appropriate.

The briefing note to update Scrutiny on the revised policy explained applications for assistance and the process of appeals. It was evident that the new process was labour intensive and the decision making process in relation to entitlement was complex. Many applicants met the eligibility criteria on the basis of distance. In these cases, Special Educational Needs (SEN) criteria did not need to be applied and the applications were processed quickly. The application of entitlement on the grounds of SEN for children of statutory school age, was relatively easy to apply and most of these applications were processed quickly. Post 16 applications proved more problematic to process, because there was no automatic duty on the Local Authority to make arrangements. Judgement therefore had to be applied on whether a young person could reasonably make independent arrangements to travel to school or college. This was particularly difficult when a student or their parent/carer declared that they had access to a car and a driver, but were seeking reimbursement for the cost of fuel.

Following application of the process, learning and feedback has led to the following actions for improvement:

- The application deadline for 2018/19 would be brought forward to ensure that applicants received a decision before the end of the current academic year
- The application form would be revised, to assist applicants in providing all necessary information to inform the eligibility decision making process. This would be tested with the assistance of parents before it was launched to ensure that it was easy to understand and as simple as possible to complete

- The application form would enable post 16 applicants to provide evidence of low-income eligibility where required, at the point of application. This would ensure that contributions towards the cost of transport were assessed accurately at the point of first application thereby avoiding the need to appeal
- The current Travel Assistance policies would be supported with an easy to follow parent/young person guide. The draft guide would be reviewed with and by parents to ensure that it provided all of the information necessary before publication.

Parents spoke to the Board about their survey regarding the concerns of over 200 families affected which included:

- Poor communication most were not aware of the consultation
- Ambiguous, inconsistent and unhelpful advice
- Confusing appeals
- Anxiety caused for parents
- Ongoing appeals and concerns about whether the process would need to be an annual application
- Writing a poor letter addressed to young people with learning difficulties

The Cabinet Member and officers present responded to parents by thanking them for their feedback and apologising for the anxiety caused by the process. The process would benefit from improvements put in place following discussions with parents. Officers also reported on recent government revised guidance, publicity, consultation events and communication.

The Scrutiny Board questioned the Cabinet Member, officers and parents on the following:

- The appeals process
- Applications refused at statutory school age
- Disruption to attendance at school during the process
- Contacting parents
- Improving consultations

The Scrutiny Board thanked parents for their contribution to the meeting and felt it added value to the discussion.

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board requested a report back be considered in 6 months following the analysis of the implementation and that parent representatives be invited to the meeting.**

## 28. Exclusions, Alternative Provision and Elective Home Education

The Scrutiny Board considered a briefing note of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) which provided an overview of:

- The number of permanent exclusions that had been implemented by Coventry schools over the last three academic years;
- The post exclusion process, leading to either an alternative school offer or alternative provision. This included recent service developments which

were implemented in September 2017, as an outcome of the Education re-design process;

- The numbers of families who had made a decision to educate their children at home, Elective Home Education (EHE) and the reasons, highlighting those that had chosen that route to avoid a permanent exclusion.

The briefing note explained that the vast majority of primary age pupils excluded from school were offered an alternative mainstream primary school. The specialist teaching support and advice service to schools for social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH Team) delivered a nationally accredited de-escalation behaviour management intervention and other support. There was not a Pupil Referral Unit for Primary but an intensive programme known as KEYS, targeted at children at risk of exclusion, individual needs were assessed and then a programme of support established prior to re-integration into school. Woodfield School was a special school for primary age pupils with SEMH, at which children could be placed.

Secondary schools invested in a variety of internal behaviour support interventions and have managed move arrangements as part of their fair access protocol, there was also SEMH provisions. The Local Authority maintained a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) (Coventry Extended Learning Centre) to secure an appropriate education for students who had been permanently excluded from school. The Work Related Learning Team, work on behalf of schools to commission, coordinate and quality assure, off-site work-related learning provision for 13-19 year-old learners, particularly those who were most at risk of becoming disengaged from learning and 'not in education employment or training' (NEET). A pupil referral unit for pupils admitted to the University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire (UHCW) provided education for pupils aged 4-16 on three paediatric wards (Wards 14-16), who were well enough to access learning.

The briefing noted the legal position with regard to Elected Home Education (EHE) was Section 436A of the Education Act 1996, imposed a duty on the local authority to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children of compulsory school age in the authority's area; who were not registered at a school and were not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school. Local Authorities had no statutory duties in relation to monitoring the quality of home education and did not have the power to meet with or directly speak to the child. However, if the Council believed a child was not receiving a suitable education or was at risk, separate powers were invoked to enable an appropriate intervention.

It should be noted that parents were not required to register their child for EHE, or to seek the local authority's permission or approval. Consequently, it was recognised nationally, that LA EHE registers did not include the whole EHE population. The briefing provided analysis of the register, categorised reasons parents chose to EHE and key issues in relation to EHE.

Headteacher representatives had been invited to the meeting to contribute to the discussion.

Officers and Headteachers discussed the following with the Board:

- National context
- Safeguarding

- Relationships with the community
- Access visits
- Pathways
- Partnerships
- Managed moves
- Signs that more challenging behaviour is being displayed by children at a younger age
- KEYS provision

The Board questioned officers and Headteachers on the following:

- Data
- Managing transfers
- Excusions
- Safeguarding EHE
- Mental Health
- Alternative Provision PRU request
- Pathways back into mainstream education
- Behaviour support pre-school
- Financial implications of EHE
- Reasons for disruptive behaviour
- The category of philosophical/religious/cultural reasons parents chose to elect for Home Education

Officers agreed to circulate further information about the category philosophical/religious/cultural reasons parents chose to elect for Home Education.

The Board thanked the Headteachers for contributing to the discussion.

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board requested the following:**

- 1) a report at the end of the academic year regarding changes to the Coventry Extended Learning Centre (CELC) be considered by Scrutiny
- 2) a Task and Finish Group to consider Mental Health from an educational perspective be arranged

29. **Outstanding Issues**

The Scrutiny Board noted the Outstanding Issues.

30. **Work Programme**

The Board noted the work programme with the addition the following issues requested today:

- a home to school/collage travel assistance report in 6 months
- an update on the Coventry Extended Learning Centre (CELC)
- Task and Finish Group be arranged to consider Mental Health from an educational perspective

31. **Any Other Business**

**Mrs Hanson's Award for her services to education in the City**

The Scrutiny Board congratulated Mrs Hanson on her recent nomination for Maundy Money from the Queen. The Board were very supportive as Mrs Hanson was a valued member of the Board and had been part of the Board since it was established. She had been nominated for her services to Education in the City and was successful. The award will take place on Maundy Thursday.

(Meeting closed at 4.30 pm)





Coventry City Council

## Briefing note

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**To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)**

**Date: 11 January 2018**

**Subject: Private Fostering**

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### **1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 To provide an update on current private fostering activity in Coventry and compliance with national standards in response to the Ofsted recommendation to "Review the authority's arrangements for privately fostered children and ensure that those arrangements and associated practice comply with statutory guidance".

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board are recommended to:
  1. Consider the content of the briefing note
  2. Identify any further recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

### **3 Information/Background**

- 3.1 Private Fostering is when a child under the age of 16 (under 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a 'close relative'. This is a private arrangement made between a parent and a carer, for 28 days or more.
- 3.2 During March 2017 Ofsted undertook an inspection of Coventry Children's Services and published their report in June 2017. One of the recommendations was to "Review the authority's arrangements for privately fostered children and ensure that those arrangements and associated practice comply with statutory guidance". Since that time an officer task and finish group has been established to implement the recommendation and improve practice.
- 3.3 There are 7 national standards for private fostering and progress has been made against each of them since the inspection.
- 3.4 Standard 1 – *The local authority has a written statement which sets out its duties and functions in relation to private fostering and the ways in which they will be carried out.*
- 3.5 There is a Coventry Family and Friends Care policy within which is a statement of the duties and functions in relation to private fostering and provides information which is helpful to anyone who is caring for someone else's child in a variety of circumstances. There is also a procedure which guides practice and those who are working with children and families. These form part of the Children's Services Procedures Manual, available to all staff and plans are in place to have them included onto the LSCB Website.

- 3.6 *Standard 2 – The local authority promotes awareness of the notifications requirements and ensures that those professionals who may come into contact with privately fostered children understand their role in notifications. Responds effectively to notifications and any private fostering arrangement that comes to their attention.*
- 3.7 A communications plan has been devised and will be implemented in January and throughout the year using workshops and leaflet and poster distribution to improve the notifications and understanding of roles and responsibilities of parents, carers and professionals. (Appendix 1) Schools have a particular role to play as children will often come to their attention in the first instance. A letter has gone out to all schools reminding them of their responsibilities and once the revised leaflet is finalised this too will be distributed to schools for onward distribution for parents/carers
- 3.8 Coventry has a poster and leaflet that outlines the responsibility of professionals. The leaflet has very recently been refreshed and now also includes information to parents and carers of their responsibility to notify the local authority if they are intending to make private fostering arrangements.
- 3.9 The Initial Contact Team (tel.02476788555) is the contact number for all those who wish to notify Children's Services of a private fostering arrangement and this number is widely publicised and has remained unchanged throughout the recent changes within Children's Services. When a notification comes through the case is triaged including the sharing of multiagency information and is allocated to the relevant area team and a private fostering assessment is undertaken.
- 3.10 *Standard 3 – The local authority determines effectively the suitability of all aspects of the private fostering arrangement in accordance with regulations*
- 3.11 Coventry uses an assessment tool for private fostering arrangements which reflects the regulatory requirements. This includes questions regarding the carers, police checks, the parents and the circumstances of the arrangements, the child and their needs and the carer's ability to meet them. As part of the response to the Ofsted recommendation a designated lead manager for private fostering has been identified. His key responsibility is to quality assure the assessment before it is signed off. Any potential carer or arrangements which are not suitable will also be brought to the attention of the lead manager.
- 3.12 *Standard 4 – The local authority provides such advice and support to private foster carers and prospective private foster carers as appears to the authority to be needed.*
- 3.13 During the assessment of the private fostering arrangements there is a requirement to ensure that advice is offered to the carers about their responsibility but also the type of help and support they might expect. This will vary from support and resources being identified through a Child in Need plan (where this threshold has been met), to just the statutory visiting requirements which is a visit to child and carer every six weeks. Information for carers is an area which will be improved with the revised leaflet and a clearer focus on the carers and their needs in assessments. The planned workshop presentations and training over the next few months will focus on the importance of the needs and capacity of the carers as well as the needs of the child. This will include highlighting the Family hubs as a place where carers can go to receive advice as well as the fostering training events, should they wish to attend.
- 3.14 *Standard 5 – the local authority provides advice and support to the parents of children who are privately fostered within their area as appears to the authority to be needed.*
- 3.15 In undertaking the assessment of the private fostering arrangements the social worker speaks with the parents of the child to understand why the arrangements are being made and their suitability. It is the local authority's duty to promote and safeguard children and so far as it is consistent with this duty, provide services and support to families so that they can look after their own children. As part of this any particular issues which may be

hindering parents from providing care for their children themselves should be addressed. This is an area for improvement and needs to be more clearly demonstrated in the assessment.

- 3.16 Standard 6 – *Children who are privately fostered are able to access information and support when required so that their welfare is safeguarded and promoted. Privately fostered children are enabled to participate in decisions about their lives.*
- 3.17 The child and their welfare remains the key focus of the assessment in the private fostering arrangements. The assessment covers all aspects of their needs including health, education and contact with their parents and siblings. There is a requirement to visit children with their carers every 6 weeks as a minimum during the first year. The children are seen alone as part of this so that they get an opportunity to speak privately with the social worker about any worries or concerns they may have. These visits take place and are reported on every 4 weeks which is necessary if the child is also subject to a Child in Need plan.
- 3.18 Standard 7- *The local authority has in place and implements effectively a system for monitoring the way in which it discharges its duties and functions in relation to private fostering. It improves practice where this is indicated as necessary by the monitoring system.*
- 3.19 There is now a system in place for monitoring and reporting on private fostering arrangements. The lead manager for private fostering now has responsibility for ensuring that the assessments are of a good quality and adequately consider the carers needs and abilities to safeguard the welfare of the children they are looking after. The private fostering cases are subject to management oversight in line with performance management processes as with other children's cases and a record is kept about the notifications received. A further audit of arrangements is taking place in March 2018. The Local Safeguarding Children Board will receive update reports every 6 months and there is a requirement to produce an annual report on the discharge of private fostering functions which is due in April 2018.
- 3.20 There are currently 13 Children who are privately fostered in Coventry although this is likely to be an under representation of the actual number of such arrangements in the city. This under representation is a national issue as local authorities struggle to persuade families and communities to notify them of arrangements, as often these can be regarded as wholly private family matters and often the requirement to notify the local authority is not understood.
- 3.21 The children's ages range from 1 year to 15 years, but the majority are older children. 6 are girls and 7 are boys so gender is not a determinant.
- 3.22 The ethnicity of the children is diverse, with children from white and black minority ethnic backgrounds.
- 3.23 The children's circumstances broadly divide into two types; family breakdown or bereavement where the private foster carers tend to be extended family members and children who are foreign nationals but are in the UK to have better education and opportunities.

**Name: Jane Brooks**

**Job Title: Strategic Lead Help and Protection**

**Contact Details: Broadgate House, Floor 3  
Tel.024766833403**

## Private Fostering Communication Plan 2018

### DRAFT

A private fostering arrangement is essentially an arrangement between families/households, without the involvement of the Local Authority, for the care of a child under the age of 16 (under 18 if the child has a disability) by someone other than a parent or close relative (close relatives are parents, step-parents, siblings, siblings of a parent and grandparents) for 28 days or more. This is an arrangement by mutual agreement between parents and the carers.

Once a local authority becomes aware of a private fostering arrangement it has a legal duty to assess the suitability of the arrangement and must make regular visits to the child and the private foster carer. Children's services should visit and see the child alone unless this is inappropriate; they must visit the parent of the child when reasonably requested to do so. The child should be given contact details of the social worker who will be visiting him/her while s/he is being privately fostered.

The local authority also has a duty to promote awareness in the local authority area of, the requirement for them to be notified; advertise services to private foster carers and ensure that relevant advice is given to privately fostered children and their carers. There are therefore three connected but different groups who are the target of this communications plan aimed at raising awareness and improving professional practice:

- The wider public and those who might be carers,
- Organisations, working with children and families who will need to understand the requirement to notify the local authority and
- Workers who are delivering the specific duties to assess and visit private fostering arrangements.

## Appendix 1

Page 14	<b>Objective:</b>	1. To ensure that parents, carers and the wider general public understand why it is important to make the local Authority aware of private fostering arrangements, and how to notify the city council				
	<b>Action/task and priority</b>	<b>Audience focus</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Measure of success</b>	<b>Achieved</b>
	Advertising campaign, developed, making use of social media as appropriate	Parents, carers and wider public. Partner agencies	LSCB	March 2018	Increase in notifications	
	Message on Coventry City Council (CCC) Twitter feed and Facebook during relaunch of the leaflet and posters	Parents, carers and wider public. Partner agencies	CCC Communications team/Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)	March 2018	Increase notifications and understanding of roles and issues	
	Poster developed for council and other public buildings	Parents, carers and wider public. Partner agencies	CCC Communications	March 2018	Increase notifications and understanding of roles and issues	
Update website with relevant information on Private Fostering	Parents, carers and wider public. Partner agencies	CCC Web Team	March 2018	Increase notifications and understanding of roles and issues		

	2. For all partners and city council employees to be able to identify and refer private fostering arrangements to children's social care.				
<b>Action/task and priority</b>	<b>Audience focus</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Measure of success</b>	<b>Achieved</b>

## Appendix 1

1) Include article in LSCB partner staff publications	Professionals working with children and families	LSCB	January 2018	Increase notifications and understanding of roles and issues	
2) Develop PowerPoint presentation for Professional training and cascade information sessions	Schools Family Hubs Strengthening Families partners LSCB partners	CCC/LSCB	January - March 2018	Increase in notifications	
3) Leaflet production and distribution	Libraries GP surgeries Family Hubs Health Hubs Schools Private Schools and language schools	LSCB	January - February 2018	Increase in notifications	

<b>Objective:</b>	3. For social care practitioners to understand the law, their roles and responsibilities and improve the quality of interventions				
<b>Action/task and priority</b>	<b>Audience focus</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Measure of success</b>	<b>Achieved</b>
Develop and deliver training on revised expectations and responsibilities	Social workers undertaking assessments, visits and reviews	CCC	January – February 2018	Improved quality of assessments and understanding of legal framework	
Update current procedures and include on TriX and intranet	Social workers undertaking assessments, visits and reviews	CCC	completed		Private Fostering procedure Updated September 2017
Feedback form for young people and carers to be consistently used to inform working practice	Children who are privately fostered	CCC	Form to be devised	Improved quality of social work practice and to inform planning	

## Appendix 1

Canvas current carers on the development of a Private fostering support group	Current carers	CCC	March 2018	Feedback from carers and young people inform improved practice	
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Coventry City Council

## Briefing note

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**To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board**

**Date: 11 January 2018**

**Subject: Quality Assurance Audit Activity**

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### **1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 To inform the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) of the progress on Quality Assurance and auditing activity to date and provide a summary of case audit activity undertaken in Children's Services in this financial year.

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board:
- 1) Consider the information presented and note the progress made to date.
  - 2) Identify any recommendations to the appropriate Cabinet Member.
  - 3) Agree that Members from the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) attend a Children's Services Audit Workshop, following SB2 on 14th February 2018.

### **3 Background/Information**

- 3.1 The Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement Framework was revised in December 2015 and last updated in October 2016. This framework articulates how Coventry City Council Children's Services manages and measures quality. Improving the consistency in the quality of work improves outcomes for Coventry's children. This supports the development of a culture that expects and values high standards to improve the experience of users and carers. These aspirations and standards drive up expectations, improve learning, and strengthen outcomes and impact.
- 3.2 The Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement Framework focuses specifically on casework services for children provided by children's social care and early help services with an emphasis on quality assurance that underpins continuous improvement. The framework has been used to support improved outcomes. Assuring quality of practice is essential to the provision of a good service to the children and young people of Coventry. A revised Audit schedule for 2017/18 is part of the framework which is updated monthly.
- 3.3 The framework continues to evolve as changes as a result of information learnt from the assurance activity is embedded. It is informed by learning from the audits, single agency learning reviews and serious case reviews overseen by Coventry Safeguarding Children Board.
- 3.4 Since January 2017 there has been a renewed and relentless focus on improving the quality of practice through the audit and review cycle, which is linked to developing practice through the use of supervision, team meetings, practice improvement forums and manager briefings.

- 3.5 The service has developed a more robust programme of audit activity to inform continuous improvement in front line practice.

#### **4 Monthly audit activity**

- 4.1 Quality Assurance activity is mandatory for all managers across Children's Services.
- 4.2 Case audit activity, focussing on the impact and outcomes on children and observations of practice, are completed by managers at all levels, from the Director of Children Services to front line managers.
- 4.3 10% of audits are moderated by a Senior Manager to check for consistency and a standard approach.
- 4.4 Managers are engaged in developing action plans from audit findings.
- 4.5 Learning is collated and shared with staff at the Practice Improvement Forums for managers and front line practitioners.
- 4.6 A newly developed audit tool is now embedded onto Protocol for Social Care audits which means outcomes of audits are immediately available to managers and lead professionals.
- 4.7 Early Help audits are completed in word format and added to the child's file.
- 4.8 The audit tool used across Children Services is based on the Ofsted case tracking audit tool, which focus on outcomes based on the evidence and impact on children's lives.
- 4.9 Areas of audit activity identified by changes in our performance data also take place and inform the future Quality Assurance Framework schedule.

#### **5 Training and good practice**

- 5.1 Quality Assurance workshops were held in April and June 2017 for managers at all levels and were led by Neil Macdonald Strategic Lead, Quality Assurance and Palvinder Kudhail, Interim Strategic Lead, Improvement. Their purpose was to refresh managers' skills in undertaking audits and further Quality Assurance workshops will be held in January/February 2018.
- 5.2 Audit training was held in July and September 2017 and is ongoing for managers at all levels. Further audit training is scheduled for January, 2018. Training is facilitated by Steve Hart, Chair, Improvement Board and Palvinder Kudhail, Interim Strategic Lead, Improvement.
- 5.3 During 2017, audit training was rolled out for all Early Help managers. This has widened the area of quality assurance into Early Help whilst also increasing the pool of auditors currently completing audits on a monthly basis to cover all service areas across Children's Services.
- 5.4 Good practice audit exemplars are now available for managers to model their audits on.
- 5.5 Good practice guidance is available for practitioners on specific audit themes, such as Chronology Guidance.

#### **6 Lead Member & Scrutiny Oversight**

- 6.1 The Lead Member takes an active role in the work of Children's Services and regularly receives monthly audit highlight reports from Strategic Lead, Quality Assurance and Director of Children's Services. Quality Assurance audit activity reports are also taken to Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board.

#### **7 Senior Management Oversight**

- 7.1 Senior Managers ensure quality assurance processes are consistently implemented and that learning informs practice change to safeguard and ensure an impact for children and young people.

## **8 Quality Assurance Reporting**

- 8.1 Quality Assurance reports are produced and will inform decision and business planning for children's services, measure performance against our priorities and outcomes for children and young people.
- 8.1 Action plans are produced to monitor progress of audit recommendations and actions.
- 8.2 Each audit undertaken includes direct feedback and discussion between the auditor and the case holder, and where appropriate, the team manager. This provides an immediate opportunity to discuss good practice and improvement opportunities, and agree timescales for any actions required to bring cases up to standard.
- 8.3 Senior Managers undertake moderation of at least 10% of audits and provide feedback to the individual auditors where the moderators adjust the overall judgement or identify any additional actions.
- 8.4 Where the auditor does not grade a case as at least 'meets good', Team Managers and Operational Leads ensure that appropriate corrective action has taken place within timescales set by the auditor to improve this specific case and outcomes for the child.

## **9. Findings from Audit Activity 2017**

The results of audits from 2017/18 have reinforced findings across a range of different services along the child's journey. This has allowed for some triangulation and definitive conclusions in relation to both the strengths and weakness in practice across the whole of Children's Services.

## **10 Audits undertaken in April and May 2017**

In April, audit activity was limited to 4 audits due to the manager's quality assurance workshops taking place and the Ofsted Inspection in March 2017. These audits were identified as Annex H cases as a result of the Ofsted Inspection and were subject to a re-audit in April. The audits consisted of 2 cases of looked after children and 2 cases that were subject to child protection plans. The overall judgements by auditors and agreed by the moderators were that all 4 audits were judged 'does not meet good'.

In May, a total of 19 Children in Need audits were undertaken on cases held in Children's Disability Team, Family Placement Service, Referral and Assessment Service, North East Area, South Area, Looked after Children and in the CSE teams. The Auditors judged 1 (5%) case as 'meets good' whilst the remaining 18 (95%) cases were judged as 'does not meet good'. Areas of progress and requiring further improvement have been identified through the audits for learning and are outlined below.

### **10.1 Areas of progress**

- Co-ordination between agencies is good in some cases, with all professionals working together to an agreed plan that supports the young person and family.
- Placements were judged to be either appropriate or meeting the young person's or child's needs with carers receiving appropriate support.
- The independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) continues to provide robust challenge and seeks to ensure there is no drift in one case. This scrutiny will ensure that the support provided is making good progress.
- The regular sharing of information between one family, their social worker and school resulted in the establishment of a good working relationship leading to improved outcomes for the children.

- Overall, there was some evidence that the social work involvement had improved outcomes for the child or young person and was keeping them safe from harm. Family members also benefitted and were fully supported and their needs met.

## **10.2 Areas requiring improvement**

- Decision making was not timely or effective with little evidence provided to indicate decisions taken at professional meetings.
- Assessments were either incomplete, contained limited evidence or historical factors had not been included, and in some cases were not of a suitable standard that would enable the help required for the family.
- Plans were not always updated and could be smarter or progressed in a timely way and in some cases were either missing from files or recommendations had not always been acted on.
- Risk assessments were either missing, of poor quality, not up to date or not yet actioned.
- Children, young people and family members' were not always appropriately involved due to either lack of communication with professionals or limited information held on files.
- Information on diversity was lacking on most cases and the exploration of how this impacts on children and young people in terms of their lived experience.
- In a number of cases co-ordination between agencies needed to be better.
- Reviews were limited. There was either little or no evidence of sufficient scrutiny and robust challenge to ensure children were making good progress.

## **11 Audits undertaken in June and July 2017**

In June, 20 child protection audits were undertaken on cases held in North East, North West, South and in the CSE team. The auditors judged 1 (5%) case as 'meets good' whilst the remaining 19 (95%) cases were judged as 'does not meet good'.

A dip sample of 47 cases was completed in June, looking specifically at return home interviews. These cases were not graded.

In July, 30 audits were undertaken on cases held in Childrens Disability Team, Referral and Assessment, North East, North West, South, Looked After Children, Children's Families First teams. The audits consisted of 17 cases that went to an Initial Child Protection Conference, 10 Early Help cases and 3 Child in Need cases. The auditors judged the children's cases as 1 (3.3%) 'exceeds good'; 7 (23.3%) 'meets good' whilst the remaining 22 (73.3%) were judged as 'does not meet good'.

6 managers undertook observations of Initial Child Protection Case Conference meetings. The results of the meetings were judged as 2 (33%) 'exceeds good', 2 (33%) 'meets good' and 2 (33%) 'does not meet good'.

A dip sample of 10 cases which went through the MASH was also completed in July, these cases were not graded.

Areas of progress and requiring further improvement have been identified through the audits and dip samples for learning and are outlined below.

### **11.1 Areas of Progress**

- Partner agencies were actively involved in attending meetings and sharing information. There was evidence of good communication and where there was joint working, this appeared to be effective.

- Timescales for Initial Child Protection Case Conferences were met.
- Conference chair spent time with one family explaining how the conference would run.
- Use of Signs of Safety was good with one family taking ownership.
- Conference chair used closed access appropriately.
- The professionalism of one chair in managing an extremely challenging conference meant a complaint was avoided.
- The Chair encouraged a relaxed environment and listened carefully to other's views.

## **11.2 Areas requiring improvement**

- Plans were not always updated and in most cases were out of date or not progressed in a timely way.
- Plans and assessments would benefit from smarter timescales.
- Further consideration of diversity in its widest form is required.
- Clearer information regarding the type of intervention which has taken place and how this has helped the child or young person.
- Assessments to include detailed information such as historical and parental factors.
- Chronologies were out of date and need to be updated.
- Significant issues regarding lack of information in reports.
- The practice of the Chair completing a genogram at the conference and missing family history increased the length of the conference.
- Some parents received the Child Protection Conference report the day prior to the conference meeting.
- Information shared in conference that the father was not aware of.
- Significant time spent on information sharing as opposed to evaluation/analysis of the risks.
- The language/terminology used by professionals could be simplified so that parents can understand it.
- There should be a practitioner with adequate and proportionate working knowledge of the case to be present at conference meetings.

## **12. Audits undertaken in September and October 2017**

This section summarises the key findings arising out of the collation of children's services quality assurance activity undertaken during September and October 2017.

In September 15 managers completed 'looked after children' audits and 6 managers completed early help audits. The Looked After Children cases were randomly selected from the Looked After children and Neighbourhood teams. The early help cases were a mix of level 2 and level 3, all led by early help professionals in Coventry City Council teams.

In total, 21 cases were audited, 11 (52%) were judged as 'meets good', 10 (48%) were judged as 'does not meet good'. In these cases outcomes fell short of our expectations.

In October 9 managers completed audits on Section 47 (Child Protection) cases with a focus on domestic abuse, and 9 managers completed audits on child in need and child protection cases with a focus on neglect. 14 managers completed early help audits. All cases were randomly selected from these cohorts.

In total, 32 cases were audited and judgements were made using the 3 point score of 'exceeds good', 'meets good' and 'does not meet good'. 12 (37.5%) were judged overall as 'meets good' and 20 (67.5%) were judged as 'does not meet good'. No cases were judged 'exceeds good'.

## **12.1 Areas of progress**

- In the majority of cases risks were correctly identified, responded to and reduced in a timely way and safeguards put in place to keep children safe. Significant progress had been made by the professionals and parents to improve the outcomes for the children.
- There was good evidence of the involvement of children, young people, and family members being appropriately involved in the assessment, planning and intervention process. In cases where children were too young to express their views, representation was sought from either a guardian or advocate.
- Joint working with professionals and partner agencies was considered good with professionals sharing information ensuring the safety of the child was the main focus.
- Looked after reviews had been regular and Independent Reviewing Officer's robust in scrutinising the care planning process to ensure the support for the child or young person was making good progress.
- There was good evidence of the involvement of children, young people, and family members being appropriately involved in assessments and Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings.
- In a number of cases, consideration had been given to issues of diversity and the likely impact on the child. Information was provided in assessments and reflected in their care plans. In one case, the worker worked jointly with professionals to understand the family's cultural background and in doing so, was able to help the family sensitively understand the assessment and the help provided by the service.

## **12.2 Areas requiring improvement**

- In most cases, assessments were either incomplete, out of date or did not include an up to date chronology and therefore did not reflecting the child's whole story. Without an up to date chronology there is not a complete picture that tells the young person's or child's story and without an up to date assessment, it is unclear how the intervention has supported the child or young person and what progress has been made.
- Decision making has not been timely or effective and in some cases contain limited evidence of management oversight. Not only does this make it difficult to assess the level of reflective decision making but can also lead to drift and delay. In one case the decisions made for the child have not protected them from further abuse.
- The majority of care plans did not contain SMART timescales. This means there is no way of measuring whether the plan has been effective or not.
- The identified risks to the child or young person were unclear and in one case, there has not been any clear analysis or critical thinking in identifying the risk. Therefore, it is unclear how the intervention has supported the child or young person and what progress has been made.
- There was limited evidence of involving either the mother, father or young person in the care planning process.

- In a number of cases there was limited evidence to suggest that any consideration has been given with regards to diversity and its impact. Without considering and exploring the child's diversity, opportunities will be missed to provide the full support needed by the child.
- Review of care plans have not been regular, scrutinised or challenged robustly.

### 13 **Audits undertaken in November 2017 and Audit Schedule**

In November, 12 supervision case files audits were undertaken and a 174 dip samples of contacts coming into the MASH. These have now been completed and draft reports are being taken to the Children' Services Leadership Team Meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January.

The table below outlines the audit schedule until the 31<sup>st</sup> of March, 2018.

Month	Audit Activity
December 2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Local Authority Designated Officer (allegations against professionals) – case file audit.</li> <li>2. Looked After Children in long-term foster care – case file audit.</li> <li>3. Early Help – observations of practice by managers.</li> </ol>
January 2018	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Early Help cases – case file audit.</li> <li>2. Children with disabilities – case file audit.</li> <li>3. Child in Need review – observation by Operational Leads.</li> <li>4. Looked After Children review – observation by Strategic Leads &amp; Director of Children's Services.</li> </ol>
February 2018	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adoption – case file audit.</li> <li>2. Private fostering – case file audit.</li> <li>3. Care Leavers – case file audit.</li> </ol>
March 2018	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Children in need – re-audit of case files.</li> <li>2. Early Help - re-audit of case files.</li> <li>3. Young carers – case file audit.</li> </ol>

## 14 Conclusion

The themes from audit activity have been identified both in relation to areas of progress and those requiring improvement. Where audits have identified deficits in practice and a number are repeat themes it has allowed senior managers in collaboration with the Operational Leads, Team Managers and Principal Social Worker to develop action plans which will facilitate learning. This learning will take place through: action learning sets, discussions at the Practice Improvement Forums, manager's briefings, formal training, reflective supervision and informal/formal workshops. This will have an impact on the quality of practice; repeat audits in certain areas will then evidence improvement. This is particularly important where there are repeat themes and the need to evidence that practice learning has had an impact through re-auditing to demonstrate outcomes are improving for children. Audit themes and activity including re-auditing are linked to the Coventry Children's Services Improvement Plan - Getting to Good.

Continuing interrogation of data will also help to evidence where practice is improving and conversely where there might continue to be challenges. Indicators alone, however, are not an accurate barometer of the quality of practice more an early warning sign or confirmation of improvement.

Once audits have been completed, reports are produced detailing the findings, both in terms of areas for improvement and existing strengths. Recommendations are also attached to the report. Reports are sent to Director of Children's Services, Strategic Lead's and the Principal Social Worker. Front and middle managers take part in developing action plans which address the areas for improvement within their service area. Action plans are monitored through quality assurance meetings. This does not, however, replace individual performance clinics in each service area, which are normally held fortnightly. This approach will be rigorously applied to all audits going forward.

It is evident that practice is improving from a low base. Only through audit and by identifying the issues in practice will it be possible to drive up standards, improve practice and make a difference to children's lives.

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Coventry City Council

## Briefing note

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**To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)**

**11 January 2018**

**Subject: Progress on Children's Services Improvement Board**

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### **1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 To inform the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) of the progress with the Children's Services Improvement Plan reported to the Children's Services Improvement Board on 18 October 2017. The report is based on data from September 2017, unless stated otherwise. The next Improvement Board will be held on 10 January 2018.

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Scrutiny Board (2) are recommended to:
- 1) Consider the progress made to date.
  - 2) Receive regular updates from the Children's Services Improvement Board that will include further progress relating to the children's services improvement plan
  - 3) Identify any further recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member

### **3 Information/Background**

- 3.1 The Ofsted Inspection of Coventry's Children's Services and the review of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), published in March 2014, judged services and the LSCB to be inadequate. AS a result the Department for Education issued an Improvement Notice on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014. The two year review was held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016 and focused on quality of practice; the effectiveness of the children's services system and partnership working. Ofsted re-inspected Children's Services on 6<sup>th</sup> -30<sup>th</sup> March 2017, the outcome of the inspection was published on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2017, Children's Services were judged as "requires improvement to be good". Services for Children are no longer inadequate.
- 3.2 The Department for Education (DfE) removed Children's Services from intervention on 13 June 2017, the service is no longer subject to an improvement notice. Supervision and support will be provided by the DfE for the next 12 months, which will include two reviews. The first six month DfE review will be held on 23 January 2018, followed by a further review in June/July 2018.
- 3.3 To oversee the improvement journey and as a response to the inadequate rating a Children's Service Improvement Board was established. An experienced Improvement consultant and retired Her Majesty Inspector (HMI), chairs the Children's Services Improvement Board. The Board includes elected Members, Council representatives and representatives from partner agencies in the City as well as a representative from the Department for Education. Progress is reported to the Improvement Board every six weeks.

- 3.4 The Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive have both given public commitment that Children's Services remains a key priority for the Council. This includes prioritising funding for Children's Services to maintain its capacity to improve. The Council, alongside partner organisations continue a relentless focus on securing improvements in services for children, young people and families to ensure they are safeguarded and achieve positive outcomes.

#### **4 Children's Services Strategic Plan**

- 4.1 In response to the Ofsted Inspection, a Children's Services Strategic Plan was published on 20th September 2017. The plan is attached at Appendix 1 and is available via the website link below:  
[http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/25349/childrens\\_services\\_strategic\\_plan\\_-\\_getting\\_to\\_good\\_2017-2018](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/25349/childrens_services_strategic_plan_-_getting_to_good_2017-2018)
- 4.2 It is clear there is a commitment from politicians, partners and staff to make a real difference to ensure that children are at the heart of everything we do. The plan sets out how partners in Coventry will work together to achieve this ambition and maintain the pace and energy to implement, embed and sustain the improvement that we have set ourselves.
- 4.3 The Progress against the actions in the new improvement plan demonstrates the progress made in the first three months. This is supported by highlight reports for actions that have been completed demonstrating evidence and impact and how this has been embedded.
- 4.4 The Children's Services Strategic Plan published in September 2017 is showing some slippage with the published timescales due to staff changes in service area/ teams. The revised dates will be re-published in the New Year.

#### **5 Review of the Children's Services Improvement Board**

- 5.1 The Independent Chair of the Improvement Board has recommended some further changes to the role of the Improvement Board for the new phase of improvement.
- 5.2 The changes include strengthening the Implementation Group and holding members of the group to account for delivering the improvement plan and reporting up to the Improvement board on issues that need strategic direction. The Implementation Group have met twice in November and December to review progress and Highlight reports submitted to Improvement Board.
- 5.3 The current phase of improvement is a logical time to strengthen relationships with other boards – such as LSCB, Corporate Parenting Board, and the Shadow Board. The revised changes aim to give the Improvement Board a more strategic focus. The improvement is needed to maintain a role and these changes will help shape this further.
- 5.4 The recommendations were noted and agreed by Board members.

#### **6 Re-design of Children's Services**

- 6.1 The Children's Services re-design has been implemented. Work has been undertaken with partners to remodel the early help offer for families through the development of family hubs. On the 2nd October eight family hubs opened as the first stage of their development.
- 6.2 The family hubs are located in buildings that were previously used as children's centres and bring together City Council Services such as targeted youth support, children's centre service offer, family support and the children and families first teams. The service are working closely with partners to determine how relevant services can operate out of, and be delivered from, the family hubs. This includes health visiting, police, school nursing, voluntary organisations, midwifery and a range of other

services. The next stage will be to begin the process of building the family hub workforce and designing and delivering a new way of working for families in Coventry.

- 6.3 Work is also in progress to reshape social work teams to align them with the family hub areas bringing together under one management structure both early help and social care functions to ensure a better joined up and more flexible service in the future. The Referral and Assessment service will be absorbed into the area teams so that families are not subject to a change of social worker after their initial contact and assessment. This phase commenced in November. The ICT/MASH will continue to function.
- 6.4 Recruitment to the Operational Lead posts within the new structure has been successfully completed, 12 appointments have been made. Some of the leads are in post and the remaining 5 will commence in January 2018, together the new leads bring a wealth of experience and expertise and will be significant in the next phase of our improvement journey.

## **7 Communication**

- 7.1 The e-newsletter continues to be produced focusing on Children's Services. This is issued to all staff in Children's Services, all partners, senior managers and Members to ensure everyone is aware of the progress made so far, what has still to be achieved and the role all employees can play in supporting the service in 'getting to good.' In addition to this, the Director of Children's Services holds open sessions for all staff and gets out and about visiting teams and talking to staff.

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# Children's Services Strategic Plan

Getting to Good

2017-2018

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# Foreword by Voices of Care

**We are pleased to be contributing to the overarching children's services strategic plan. It's important that we continue to build on how we have worked together until now to achieve even greater success for children and young people in Coventry.**

We will continue to provide challenge where needed so that we can positively influence every aspect of young people's lives. We would like to have regular reports on achievements so that we can track whether we are being listened to. These are some of the areas that we would like you to focus on:

- All children within the Coventry care system including care leavers, should have access to good quality life story work. Foster carers, residential staff, social workers and PAs should all understand what 'good quality' looks like and how to achieve it.
- We feel it is helpful where social workers set out their expectations of us and we identify our expectations of them. We think all Coventry social workers should follow this model - it works well where each person identifies and agrees three expectations for the other to work too.
- We agree that there needs to be more of an emphasis on supporting the emotional and mental good health of children and young people. This should include awareness raising of where and how such services can be accessed.
- We suggest that practical skills for independence should be learnt from a younger age whilst still in fostering or residential care.
- Relationships with social workers and IROs are often very good, however we feel communication with individual children about their care plans needs to be further developed.



We all want Coventry to be the best place it can be for children and young people in care and our recommendations are sent to you with that wish in mind.

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Voices of Care (Children in Care Council)



# Introduction



# Introduction

## From the Lead Member

I am pleased to present this overarching Children's Services Strategy to you at this important juncture and phase of our improvement journey. It takes time as well as a shared commitment to improve children's outcomes and this plan sets out how partners in Coventry will work together to achieve this ambition. We are determined to maintain the pace and energy to implement, embed and sustain the improvements that we have set ourselves and will not stop until we succeed.

We have much to be proud of in Coventry but also still a lot to do. It's a challenging environment in public services and we must work harder to maximise opportunities for innovation and creativity.

I want to thank our partners, our staff and our young people who have helped to shape this plan and who plan and deliver services. Your hard work is appreciated – let's make Coventry a great place for all our children and young people.



## From the Director of Children's Services

I am passionate about improving services for children. It is clear there is a commitment from politicians, partners and staff to make a real difference to ensure that children are at the heart of everything we do. Coventry City Council is committed to protecting vulnerable children and families in need of support and protection. This is a key part of our work in delivering the overall vision for the city: **'We want Coventry children and young people to: have supportive families; live safe from harm; achieve their potential; be healthy; and have positive and fulfilling lives.'**

I am pleased with the recent Ofsted judgement that Children's Services **"require improvement to be good"**. This shows the progress we have made and marks a key success in our improvement journey and demonstrates the significant improvements made. We are not complacent and still have a lot to do, but I am confident that we will continue to drive forward practice improvements and deliver service changes with energy and pace.

The leadership team are providing renewed focus on improvement and strategic direction for Children's Services. The trajectory for improvement is clear and evident. There is an explicit commitment to ensure that Children's Services reaches a position where it is continuously achieving good outcomes for the children and young people in Coventry.



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Councillor Ed Ruane

Lead Member for Children's Services

Our Children's Services Single Improvement Plan – Getting to Good 2017/18 supports the over-arching Children's Services Strategic Plan in conjunction with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) priorities, the Early Help Strategy, Children and Young People Plan, Corporate Parenting Strategy, Transformation Strategy, and Workforce Strategy. The Single Improvement Plan identifies the actions that will assist Coventry City Council and its partners to raise our aspirations further and achieve our goal to achieve "good" outcomes for our children.

The transformational changes taking place are significant, a number of short term and long term projects are in progress and will be delivered over the next two years. This will support our commitment to our children and ensure that they receive the right help, in the right way, at the right time.



**John Gregg**  
Director of Children's Services

## The Children's Services Senior Leadership Team 2017



**Paul Smith**  
Strategic Lead  
Looked After Children



**Neil MacDonald**  
Strategic Lead  
Quality Assurance  
& Performance



**John Gregg**  
Director of Children's  
Services



**Lee Pardy-McLaughlin**  
Principal Social Worker



**Jane Brooks**  
Strategic Lead  
Help & Protection



# Background

In January 2014 Coventry City Council was judged inadequate by Ofsted and was issued with an Improvement Notice in June 2014. An action plan was developed and submitted to Ofsted and the Department for Education (DfE). An Improvement Board has overseen improvement activity and has challenged Children's Services and partners to improve.

A re-inspection of Children's Services took place in March 2017 which identified that progress had been made and that Children's Services is no longer inadequate. Children's Services have now been judged overall as "require improvement to be good", marking a key success in Coventry City Council's improvement journey. The specific judgements are as follows:

- **Help and Protection - Requires Improvement**
- **Looked After Children – Requires Improvement**
- **Adoption - Requires Improvement**
- **Care Leavers – Good**
- **Leadership, Management and Governance – Requires Improvement**
- **Overall Effectiveness – Requires Improvement**

The LSCB was not subject to a further review by Ofsted as this was a re-inspection of the local authority, however the LSCB was subject to a Local Government Association (LGA) peer review in December 2016. The outcome of the peer review was that the LSCB was found to be broadly meeting all its statutory responsibilities.

The Leader of the Council and Chief Executive have both given public commitments that Children's Services remains a key priority for the Council. Agreement has been

made to continue to prioritise the funding of Children's Services to maintain its capacity to improve. To support this Council priority, the Council and its partners will continue to operate a Children's Services Improvement Board.

Chaired by an experienced improvement consultant and retired Ofsted HMI the Children's Services Improvement Board will meet every 12 weeks to report on progress made against the improvement plan. The chair will continue to be commissioned for up to 5 days per month to work alongside Children's Services and partners to support the new senior leadership team. A representative from the DfE Intervention Unit and the Ofsted regional Senior Her Majesty's Inspector have been invited to attend as participant observers at the Board.

The Implementation Group which is represented by all partners has been re-focused and will meet two weeks following a Board to implement the actions that need to be taken forward. The Shadow Board, made up of front line practitioners, will continue and be represented at the Improvement Board.

As both the LSCB and Children's Services reach maturity and are able to operate effectively, transitional arrangements will allow the LSCB to take back its responsibility for the governance of the multi-agency strategic safeguarding partnership. Until that time, the LSCB will continue to report to the Improvement Board. It is proposed that both the Improvement Board chair and LSCB chair continue to report to the DfE on a quarterly basis following each meeting.

Further external audit and scrutiny, and peer reviews will support Children's Services continued improvement. There is an explicit intention to ensure that Children's Services reaches a position where it is continuously achieving good outcomes for the Children of Coventry and ongoing support and challenge is welcomed.



# Our Vision

# Our Vision



## Children are at the heart of everything we do – they are involved as key partners in planning and decision-making

To contribute to this we will include children, young people, parents and carers in discussing and agreeing the changes to the way we deliver our services.

Using the Signs of Safety practice framework and incorporating a social pedagogic approach into our direct work we will prioritise making our recording, reports and communication accessible to children, young people and parents or carers so that they can understand our worries and concerns and are able to express views and contribute to decisions about their lives.

How well we are achieving this aspiration will be measured through participation, feedback and audit. In our revised structure, we will ensure there is capacity and resource to support child and parent participation in quality assuring services.

We will use the views and perceptions of children, young people, parents and carers to tell us if and to what extent they feel our services have enabled them to take responsibility for and be in control of their lives.

We will also invest in developing our existing corporate parenting activities to encourage and support colleagues from across the Council and Members to become directly involved with looked after children and care leavers. Focusing on ensuring they experience the stability and security they need and support which is aspirational so that they are resilient, ambitious and confident when they leave care.



## High quality, child-centred and effective self-help and support – providing the right service, at the right time in the right way

Our new model of delivery will focus activity on children who are not reaching important milestones or who are part of populations where there are significant health or social inequality gaps and will over time enable the transfer of resources from specialist services to our and our partner's early help and prevention offer.



## Reflective and responsive to change – meeting the assessed diverse needs of our vulnerable children population

Our service model and consequently our business processes and workforce profile will reflect the Coventry child's journey of need and our service or care pathways will be aligned to this. Improving the capacity and capability for local 'conversations' about and with children and families by pro-active triage of children in need of social work support and intervention.

This activity will require clarity on what we need to deliver, what we need to develop or improve, and what we need to cease doing as part of managed business planning and commissioning cycles.

We will measure how far colleagues are able to utilise the LSCB thresholds to meet the needs of individual children, reducing re-referral rates and improving the consistency of relationship between social work services staff and children and families.

# Our Vision

We will continue to actively quality assure our services, checking that signs of risk or harm are recognised and acted upon through partnership working. We will ensure that interventions provided are timely and result in specific actions, including family interventions and planned care changes.

We will continue to challenge and test the value and efficacy of our services and practice in order to achieve the outcomes we want for children and young people whilst meeting our required financial targets.



**Working with families – to equip them with the knowledge and skills to enable them to raise their children in a loving, healthy and safe environment**

Our aim is that every child who needs one has a trusted Lead Professional who works intensively with them and their families to solve problems and change behaviours.

We will use the Signs of Safety practice framework and incorporate a social pedagogic approach into our direct work and reviews so that children, young people and parents or carers can understand what our worries and concerns are and be at the centre of developing solutions.

We will measure how our planned interventions keep children safe and supported within the child protection and youth offending systems, and how far our services and arrangements support looked after children and care leavers to live in stable family settings and achieve and exceed initial expected health and education outcomes.

We will monitor how consistently our staff use evidence based managed interventions and tools to achieve planned or better outcomes, for children living at home, including reducing the need to come into care and for those with long term care plans.



**Our services are outcome-driven - we are clear about the impact we have on children and young people**

In our model, services are delivered around children and their families – supporting them to live in family and community settings, reducing disruption to their familial or social relationships and education.

We will build on our current preventative, safeguarding and edge of care service provision to focus explicitly on improving the capability and capacity of parents and carers and the support offered by family and community networks to promote positive life experiences for children and young people.

Our services will continue to focus on commissioning and facilitating positive experiences of care for children and young people which enable them to develop the skills and confidence to achieve and exceed their aspirations and which provide them with consistent relationships with significant trusted adults throughout their care placement and into young adulthood.

We will measure how sustainable the outcomes from our plans are, for example in reducing the incidence and level of harm for both individual children and for specific vulnerable populations.



**Children will be supported at home wherever possible but if they can't they are able to live in or near Coventry in the most appropriate caring home**

We will develop our Placements Sufficiency Strategy, in partnership with providers, with the aim of increasing the availability of local family placements for those children that need them and providing the wrap around support some children need to live safely and to make individual progress.

Our model will provide specific pro-active support for older looked after young people and care leavers ensuring that a significant adult network is available to support them into and beyond adulthood.



**We aim to provide 'top class' early help and early years support – optimising the best start in life for children as part of an 'extended' universal offer**

We have developed accessible local hubs to provide quick and straightforward advice as well as direct services to children and families. These will be aimed at supporting families to help themselves and to give colleagues from community and voluntary agencies advice on the possible next steps they could take to help children or young people through universal or multi-agency responses.

Working with Council colleagues and partners we will measure how well the most deprived 10% of the children's population and key groups, including children with disabilities, access and are able to use our services and the progress we make in reducing inequality in outcomes across the city.



**We will continue to strengthen partnership working at operational and strategic levels so that we are even more trusting, effective and mature**

Supporting vulnerable children and young people is not something we can do in isolation either as individual workers or a standalone organisation - working as part of a 'whole system' will enhance, multiply and add value to our own service offer.

We will measure our ability to deliver and develop services in partnership, through the Children and Young People Plan, the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the LSCB delivery plan.



**We will build our committed workforce – creating an environment which supports stability and continuing professional development and allows good social work and support to children to flourish**

Our Workforce Development Strategy has supported and improved the recruitment and retention of Social Workers and we will develop our training and development offer, focusing on improving and assuring the capability of staff to engage children, young people and families in order to assess, make judgements and decisions and to 'hold risk' whilst creating solutions with families and colleagues.

We will develop a workforce structure and career progression arrangements which reflect our revised model and recognise the value



# Our Vision

and contribution of practice wisdom and skill to deliver the best outcomes to children and young people.

We will improve and assure the supervision of staff, promoting critical reflective practice which supports judgement and decision making and promotes emotional resilience amongst staff.




**We aim to provide a high performing services where outcomes compare favourably with other similar local authorities**

We will measure our achievements and progress through our performance framework, benchmarking and using the external scrutiny of the LSCB, the Children's Services Improvement Board and Ofsted.



**Children are at the heart of everything we do**

 **1**

They are involved as key partners in planning and decision-making.

**High quality, child-centred and effective services**

 **2**


We deliver high quality, child-centred, effective help and support to children and young people, their parents/carers and family. Providing the right intervention at the right time and in the right way. We provide integrated services and seamless clear pathways from early help to specialist support.

**Reflective and responsive to change**

 **3**

Our services reflect and respond to the changing needs of Coventry's diverse population of children and young people.

**Working with families**

 **4**


We work with families to equip them with the understanding and skills they need to raise their children in a loving, happy, healthy and safe environment, which enables them to become confident and responsible adults.

**Outcome-driven and impactful:**

 **5**


Services are outcome-driven and we are clear about the impact that we are having on children.

**Services around children and families**

 **6**

Children are supported to live at home whenever possible. When they cannot remain with their families, they are able to live in or near Coventry in the most appropriate caring home. Services wrap around the child so as to minimise any disruption to children's lives.

**Top class, early help**

 **7**

We deliver top class services for early help and early years, to optimise prospects of the best start in life for all children.

**Mature partnerships**

 **8**

Our partnerships are mature, trusting and effective at both strategic and operational level. In our partnership work, the focus remains on the child. Partners actively contribute to enhance the local authority offer.

**Committed workforce**

 **9**

Our workforce is stable, skilled, motivated and committed to delivering excellent services to children and young people in Coventry. They feel supported to make decisions, assess and hold risk and to develop creative and innovative solutions.

**High performing**











 **10**

The outcomes we achieve for children and young people compare favourably with high performing local authorities.

# Our Vision

## Our vision in practice and how it links to our plans and strategies



Vision principles	<b>Children are at the heart of everything we do</b>  <b>1</b>	<b>High quality, child-centred and effective services</b>  <b>2</b>	<b>Reflective and responsive to change</b>  <b>3</b>	<b>Working with families</b>  <b>4</b>	<b>Outcome driven and impactful</b>  <b>5</b>	<b>Services around children and families</b>  <b>6</b>	<b>Top class, early help</b>  <b>7</b>	<b>Mature partnerships</b>  <b>8</b>	<b>Committed workforce</b>  <b>9</b>	<b>High performing</b>  <b>10</b>
Related plans and strategies	Corporate Parenting Strategy 2016-2019  Children and Young People Plan 2016	Early help Strategy 2016  Quality Assurance Continuous Improvement Framework 2016	Children's Services Workforce Strategy 2017  Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2016-2019	Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2016  Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2019	Children and Young People Plan 2016  Transformation Strategy 2016-2018	Corporate Parenting Strategy 2016-2019  Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2016	Early Help Strategy 2016  Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Plan 2016/17	Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Plan 2016/17  Children and Young People Plan 2016	Children's Services Workforce Strategy 2017  Learning and Development Plan 2017/18	Corporate Plan 2016-2024  Corporate Workforce Strategy 2017-2020
Links to Boards	Corporate Parenting Board	Early Help Board  MASH Board	Workforce Development Board	Health and Wellbeing Board	Children's Strategic Partnership Board	Corporate Parenting Board	Early Help Board	Local Safeguarding Children Board  Children's Strategic Partnership Board	Children's Services Workforce Development Board	Strategic Management Board  People Leadership Team  Children's Services Leadership Team



# Key Children's Services Improvement Priorities

# Key Improvement Priorities

The Children's Services Improvement Plan responds to recommendations from the Ofsted re-inspection in March 2017. It also includes areas for development that the service need to strengthen and improve further on.

The overarching key improvement priorities featured throughout the Improvement Plan relate to workforce development, quality of front line practice and partnership working.

## Workforce Development

Children's Services recognises that the workforce is its most valuable resource. A key element in delivering high quality services is improving the effectiveness of the recruitment of permanent social work staff across all teams and strengthening the service's ability to retain high quality experienced staff. Support, training and development of the workforce are fundamental to service innovation and improvement and help make Coventry a great place to work and live.

The new leadership team is providing a renewed focus on improvement and strategic direction. A re-design of Children's Services is being implemented in September 2017, which will ensure that children and young people have safe home and community environments, through the right intervention, at the right time and in the right way.

The service will continue to embed the workforce changes and develop staff to ensure a sustainable workforce is maintained providing services with good outcomes for children.

## Quality of Front Line Practice

Quality assurance activity is established and has, until recently, focused largely on compliance. There is a shift to ensure that learning from audit activity is systematically used to lift the quality of practice, and at the same time promoting the application of sound professional judgment at the forefront.

New and revised practice forums for managers and front line practitioners provide a vehicle for discussions for sharing good practice so that all staff understand what 'good' looks like.

A programme of leadership coaching and mentoring has been established to strengthen management grip of front line practice.

## Partnership Working

At a strategic level, partnership working in Coventry is strong, as evidenced by good multi-agency engagement in the LSCB, Children's Services Improvement Board, Health and Well-being Board and Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. Joined up, strategic thinking and planning are ensured by regular meetings between the chairs of key multi-agency Boards and the officers who support them.




The engagement and commitment of partners across the city has led to the implementation of a range of developments which are helping to improve outcomes for children. This work will continue to strengthen decision making and outcomes for children.



# Coventry Children's Services Single Improvement Plan

# Coventry's Children's Services Single Improvement Plan – Getting to Good 2017/18

The Children's Services Single Improvement Plan is divided into three sections: Children who need help and protection; Children looked after and achieving permanence; Leadership, management and governance. The delivery lead agency highlighted in bold will be the responsible overall lead in driving the completion of the action (in conjunction with the relevant partners) and for providing a progress update on a quarterly basis, using the RAG ratings below. Delivery leads will also present highlight reports to the Improvement Board to evidence actions and targets completed for all areas that progress to a GREEN status.

 Actions underway but no significant change in the target and performance measure.
  Actions underway with evidence of significant shift and direction of travel in target and performance indicator.
  Targets and measures met.

## Children Who Need Help and Protection

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
<b>1. Ofsted Recommendation:</b> Improve the quality of chronologies to ensure they provide relevant detail relating to children's histories and the impact of previous interventions. <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that practitioners take account of the importance of the full history of the family and significant events and use this to inform purposeful interventions.					
1.1	Issue practice guidance to early help and social care staff about how to write a good chronology, using exemplars.	August 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>		Audit of chronologies shows improvement. Supervision is used to check compliance.  All cases (including early help) have chronologies.
1.2	Deliver improvement workshops/training for early help and social work practitioners on developing good chronologies.	March 2018	<b>Coventry City Council</b>	3 workshops held	Audit of chronologies shows improvement.
<b>2. Ofsted Recommendation:</b> Review the authority's arrangements for privately fostered children and ensure that those arrangements and associated practice comply with statutory guidance. <b>Objective:</b> For all partners to be able to identify and refer private fostering arrangements to children's social care. For social care practitioners to understand the law, their roles and responsibilities and improve the quality of interventions.					

## Children Who Need Help and Protection

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
2.1	Develop a Private Fostering Communication Plan to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertising campaigns.</li> <li>• Professional training and information sessions.</li> <li>• Leaflet production and distribution to libraries, GP surgeries etc.</li> <li>• A list of key contacts within private schools, language schools etc.</li> </ul>	October 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b> Health Police Schools Housing Probation NPS/CRC Independent sector	Increase in private fostering notifications.	Communication delivered to all staff by partner agencies. Numbers of staff trained in each agency increases. Reports of activity, performance and outcomes included in Private Fostering annual report from each agency.
2.2	Improve quality of private fostering assessments and statutory visits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver workshops for multi-agency staff on private fostering issues</li> <li>• Develop and issue practice guidance to support practitioners learning and understanding of private fostering</li> <li>• Undertake audits of assessments to check that they address safeguarding issues</li> <li>• Identify a lead manager for Private Fostering</li> <li>• Undertake audits of cases to check management oversight and sign off of assessments, visits and plans.</li> </ul>	March 2018	<b>Coventry City Council</b> Health Police Schools Housing Probation NPS/CRC Independent sector	100% of visits in timescales. 3 workshops held. 30 audits undertaken.	Audits of the quality of practice shows improvement.  Compliance with Private Fostering National Minimum Standards.
2.3	Review private fostering procedures and ensure that all staff are familiar with them.	September 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>		Audit activity shows improvement in quality of assessments.  Compliance in procedures being followed.
2.4	Produce an annual report on private fostering that includes a self-assessment against the private fostering National Minimum Standards.	April 2018	<b>Coventry City Council</b> Health Police Schools Housing Probation NPS/CRC Independent sector		Annual report shows clear trajectory for improvement.  Partner contribution to the annual report.



# Coventry's Children's Services Single Improvement Plan – Getting to Good 2017/18

## Children Who Need Help and Protection

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
<p><b>3. Ofsted Recommendation:</b> Strengthen arrangements to ensure that the management of allegations of professional abuse is robust and effectively safeguards children.</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To ensure that allegations against professionals are addressed swiftly and protect children from harm.</p>					
3.1	Review systems and processes for the oversight of allegations against professionals, and develop a dataset to monitor progress.	October 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>		Changes and new systems introduced. Performance dataset and dashboard in use.
3.2	Recruit to the permanent role of Risk Management Co-ordinator (incorporates Designated Officer function).	October 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>		Audit activity shows improvement in timeliness and quality of investigations.
3.3	Implement a tracking process for referrals and throughput of cases and actions being completed in timescale.	October 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>		Audit activity shows improvement in timeliness and quality of investigations.
3.4	Quarterly reports presented to Children's Services Leadership Team setting out issues and themes.	October 2017 – Quarterly	<b>Coventry City Council</b>		Quarterly reports informs areas for learning and improvement.
<p><b>4. Areas for Development:</b> Understanding of, and work with children at low risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is less consistent. (Para 25) / A small number of young people with CSE concerns that are placed away do not benefit from seeing their families frequently enough. (Para 50)</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To ensure that young people with a low risk of CSE are provided with early intervention support. To ensure that proper consideration is given before placing a young person with CSE risks away from family networks.</p>					
Page 49	Develop an early help offer for addressing low level CSE concerns in conjunction with partners.	December 2017	Coventry City Council Health <b>Police</b> Schools Housing Probation NPS/CRC Independent sector		Clear operating model in place for low level CSE work.

## Children Who Need Help and Protection

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
4.2	Ensure that the new delivery plan for CSE includes an action to implement and monitor the response to low level CSE concerns.	July 2017	Coventry City Council Health <b>Police</b> Schools Housing Probation NPS/CRC Independent sector		Clear operating model in place for low level CSE work.
4.3	Develop practice guidance that enables staff to develop a consistent approach to working with high and medium risk cases across all social care teams.	October 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>		Consistent service for all young people at risk of CSE.
4.4	The Horizon teams to undertake case learning sessions with LAC social workers about the impact of out of City placements for young people at risk of CSE.	October 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>	Reduction of young people with CSE concerns placed out of city. 2 case learning sessions held.	Consistent service for all young people at risk of CSE.
4.5	Review the sharing of information arrangements for CSE in respect of suspected perpetrators, and the opportunities for protective interventions.	December 2017	<b>Probation NPS</b> Coventry City Council Police Probation/CRC		Clarity about information shared in respect of perpetrators of CSE.
<p><b>5. Areas for Development:</b> Children's views do not feature in plans, plans do not respond to changing circumstances. (Para 17)</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To ensure that children's views are prominent in plans and they reflect any changes in circumstances.</p>					
5.1	Issue guidance to staff about the need to capture children's views in plans and include links to good practice exemplars. Embed within plans as interactive guidance where appropriate.	November 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>		Exemplars in place and being accessed.

# Coventry's Children's Services Single Improvement Plan – Getting to Good 2017/18

## Children Who Need Help and Protection

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
5.2	Guidance to be issued to remind staff that plans should be reviewed at every review or when circumstances change.	November 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>		Audits show improvement.
<b>6. Areas for Development:</b> Interventions are sometimes too adult focused. (Para 21) <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that the purpose of interventions clearly spell out what impact they have on improving outcomes for the child/young person.					
6.1	Issue guidance to staff that emphasises the need to ensure that when interventions are sought, the purpose is clear in terms of what outcome it is achieving for the child. Embed within plans as interactive guidance where appropriate.	September 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>		Audits show improvement.
<b>7. Areas for Development:</b> Social workers do not regularly attend or make referrals to Channel Panel. (Para 28) <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that social workers know when and how to make a referral to the Channel Panel.					
7.1	Share the criteria and process for making referrals to Channel Panel with staff.	September 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>	Increase in referrals to Channel Panel.	Social workers understand how to make referrals to the Channel Panel.
<b>8. Areas for Development:</b> Homelessness. <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that partners understand what good practice looks like in addressing homelessness issues with 16-17 year olds.					
8.1	Undertake a multi-agency audit/panel on homelessness 16-17 year olds cases/ referrals and ensure that learning from audit is embedded into practice.	January 2018	<b>LSCB</b> Coventry City Council Health Police Schools Housing	10 audits undertaken. No young person placed in B&B.	Audit shows improved practice. Compliance to 16 to 17 year old homelessness protocol.

## Children Who Need Help and Protection

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
<b>9. Areas for Development:</b> Forced Marriage. <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that partners understand what good practice looks like in addressing cases of forced marriage.					
9.1	Undertake a multi-agency audit/panel of forced marriage cases/referrals and ensure that learning from audit is embedded into practice.	February 2018	<b>LSCB</b> Coventry City Council Health Police Schools Housing	5 audits undertaken.	Audit shows improved practice.
<b>10. Areas for Development:</b> Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that partners understand what good practice looks like in addressing cases of female genital mutilation.					
10.1	Undertake a multi-agency audit/panel of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) cases/referrals and ensure that learning from audit is embedded into practice.	March 2018	<b>LSCB</b> Coventry City Council Health Police Schools Housing	5 audits undertaken.	Audit shows improved practice.
<b>11. Areas for Development:</b> Domestic Violence Strategy / Guidance about multiple domestic violence referrals. <b>Objective:</b> To have a clear domestic violence strategy that sets out how Coventry addresses the issue. To ensure that our response to referrals about domestic violence is proportionate and takes the family history into account.					
11.1	Review the domestic violence strategy and plan for Coventry.	December 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b> Health Police Schools Housing Probation NPS/CRC Independent sector	Number of domestic violence referrals/repeat referrals. Number of Common Assessment Framework (CAF) with domestic violence as the primary presenting need.	Domestic violence interventions used in Coventry are evidence based and demonstrate a reduction in domestic violence re-referrals.

# Coventry's Children's Services Single Improvement Plan – Getting to Good 2017/18

## Children Who Need Help and Protection

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
11.2	Review the guidance about responses to domestic violence referrals and triggers for intervention, drawing on recent SCR findings.	September 2017	LSCB <b>Coventry City Council</b> Health Police Schools Housing Probation NPS/CRC Independent sector	Number of domestic violence referrals/ repeat referrals. Number of CAF's with domestic violence as the primary presenting need.	Domestic violence interventions used in Coventry are evidence based and demonstrate a reduction in domestic violence re-referrals.
<b>12. Areas for Development:</b> Emergency Duty Team (EDT). <b>Objective:</b> To identify further improvements that might be required in the emergency duty service.					
12.1	Undertake a review of the EDT service.	March 2018	<b>Coventry City Council</b>		Review identifies areas for improvement.
<b>13. Areas for Development:</b> Reduce the number of out of hour's admissions to care. <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that admissions to care that take place out of hours are only those that are truly emergency situations when there is no possibility of the child remaining within the family network.					
13.1	Undertake a workshop with the EDT service to review the interventions available to them and behaviours required of professionals that would assist them to focus on addressing emergency out of hours cases for accommodation only.	January 2018	<b>Coventry City Council</b>	A reduction in out of hour's admissions to care.	Early help interventions are used to stabilise families out of hours.
<b>14. Areas for Development:</b> Demand management and workflow. <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that managers can track progress of assessments using a check point system so that timely throughput is maintained.					
14.1	Introduce a system for check points for single assessments to enable better monitoring of the throughput of casework. Integrating this into Protocol as appropriate.	October 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>	Duration of cases from referral at check points.	Audits show improvement in timeliness and quality of assessments.

## Children Who Need Help and Protection

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
<b>15. Areas for Development:</b> Strategy Meetings/Discussions. <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that partners understand their role in strategy meetings/discussions and play a full part.					
15.1	Undertake workshops in the neighbourhood teams about the importance of partner engagement in strategy meetings/discussions.	December 2017	Coventry City Council	3 workshops held.	Attendance of partners at strategy meetings/discussions improve.

## Children looked after and achieving permanence

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
<b>16. Ofsted Recommendation:</b> Ensure that the progress of prospective adopters is tracked effectively so that the potential for children to be placed without delay is minimised. <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that there are no delays in the adoption process with a particular focus on improving the learning and development offer for adopters, ensuring that all children and young people benefit from early preparation for permanence, and learning from adoption breakdowns.					
16.1	Develop a comprehensive tracking process for the adoption service, (building on the permanence tracking for looked after children). Integrating this into Protocol as appropriate	September 2017	Coventry City Council	Adoption scorecard.	Adoption scorecard shows improvement in all areas.
16.2	Undertake a review of all adopters who are waiting in excess of a year for a placement for learning and next steps.	October 2017	Coventry City Council		Learning shared with staff.  Reduction in adopters waiting for placements.

# Coventry's Children's Services Single Improvement Plan – Getting to Good 2017/18

## Children looked after and achieving permanence

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
16.3	Practitioners to undertake direct work with children and young people in order to explain the process of life story work and prepare them for the next stage, ensuring the child's view is captured. Managers to check that social workers are undertaking this work.	March 2018	Coventry City Council		All looked after children are well prepared for permanency. Effective supervision challenges poor performance.  Quality Assurance by Independent Reviewing Officer/Agency Decision Maker/panel arrangements.
16.4	Undertake learning and development activity on effective practice in preparation for permanence and life-story work.	March 2018	Coventry City Council	4 events held.	All social workers for looked after children are confident to do this work with children.
16.5	Review content of adopter training to include learning from disruptions and adopter and adoptee (if appropriate) feedback.	October 2018	Coventry City Council	Reduction in the time from placement for adoption to application.	Increase in prospective adopter's confidence tested through survey.
16.6	Reports from learning from disruptions to be completed within a month and provided to the Adoption Panel within a month of completion.	June 2017 – May 2018	Coventry City Council	Disruption reports completed within 1 month.  Learning reports to the Adoption Panel within 1 month of completion. Numbers of adopter disruptions.	Learning from disruptions is shared with staff.  There is a reduction in adopter disruptions.
16.7	Managers to sign off all adoption support plans to ensure that they are comprehensive and up to date and reflective of the placement.	July 2017	Coventry City Council		Audits shows compliance and improvement.

## Children looked after and achieving permanence

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
16.8	Continue to participate in the development of the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA).	November 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>		Improved performance against the adoption leadership board targets (ALB). Regional Adoption Agency in place by 1 November 2017.
16.9	Oversee the development of a quality assurance framework for the work of the Regional Adoption Agency.	November 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>		Quality assurance framework in place.
<p><b>17. Areas for Development:</b> Many children enter care in an unplanned way or too late. (Page 15)  <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that the right edge of care interventions are in place to enable children and young people to remain within the family network.</p>					
17.1	Undertake a review of all early help and edge of care interventions available for children and young people, with a particular focus on teenagers.	January 2018	<b>Coventry City Council</b>	A reduction in the number of children and young people in care.	Review identifies areas for improvement, good practice and learning.  All children will enter care in a planned way unless it is an emergency situation.
<p><b>18.0 Areas for Development:</b> Knowledge about looked after children is not always reflected in case records or assessments. (Para 37)  <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that record keeping is purposeful and reflects the child and young person's experience.</p>					
18.1	Issue guidance to staff enforcing the need to ensure that case records are up to date and accurate. Provide managers with regular reports of record keeping beyond agreed outlier threshold.	August 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>	Last activity on a case.	Audits show improvement.



# Coventry's Children's Services Single Improvement Plan – Getting to Good 2017/18

## Children looked after and achieving permanence

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
<b>19. Areas for Development:</b> Care plans do not address the full range of children's needs. (Para 37) <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that care plans are comprehensive and address all the assessed needs of the child and young person.					
19.1	Exemplars of good practice care plans to be shared with staff to illustrate the need for care plans to address the full range of needs. Embed within plans as interactive guidance where appropriate.	September 2017	Coventry City Council		Exemplars in place and being accessed.  Audits show improvement in plans being SMART and driving improved outcomes for children.
<b>20. Areas for Development:</b> Too few locally based foster placements and recruitment yet to deliver desired impact. (Para 39) <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that there are enough local foster carers in Coventry for our looked after children population.					
20.1	Fully implement Transformation Board project plan that includes reviewing and streamlining timescales for foster carer recruitment, marketing, and increasing capacity of existing in house foster carers.	April 2018	Coventry City Council	100 new carers recruited.	There is a reduction in the use of Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) foster carers that supports children remaining locally, maintaining their school place and living in a stable placement.
<b>21.0 Areas for Development:</b> Family group conferences are not used frequently enough to identify potential carers within the network. (Para 34) <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that family group conferences are used promptly to identify alternative carers if the child or young person cannot return home to parents.					
21.1	As part of the arrangements to establish a permanency planning tracking process for looked after children, the Family Group Conference Manager to be part of the Stage 1 Panel where all new admissions to care and edge of care cases are reviewed.	July 2017	Coventry City Council	Number of FGCs undertaken.	The use of family group conferences are assisting in more children remaining at home with their families.

## Children looked after and achieving permanence

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
21.2	The Family Group Conference service to attend the front line staff practice forum to discuss their role and how to access their service.	September 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>	Number of FGCs undertaken.	The use of family group conferences are assisting in more children remaining at home with their families.
21.3	Details of the Family Group Conference Service to be included in the Menu of Services that is going to be placed on the Documents Library for staff to access information about.	July 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>	Number of FGCs undertaken.	The use of family group conferences are assisting in more children remaining at home with their families.
<p><b>22. Areas for Development:</b> Together and apart assessments do not give sufficient consideration to the nature and type of attachments that brothers and sisters have to one another and the significant adults in their lives. (Para 45)</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To ensure that social workers have the skills to undertake good quality together and apart assessments taking account of the impact on attachment.</p>					
22.1	Staff from the adoption service provide mentoring support and team discussions with social workers working with looked after children so that their skills are shared.	November 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>	2 workshops held.	Social workers undertake good quality assessments.  Audits show improvement.
<p><b>23. Areas for Development:</b> Not all children in long term foster care benefit from life story work and the quality is not good enough. (Para 51)</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To ensure that all children and young people in foster care understand their life history and journey so that it contributes to achieving emotional security.</p>					
23.1	Undertake workshops with social work teams about life story work for children and young people in long term foster care.	December 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>	6 workshops undertaken.	Audits shows improvement.

# Coventry's Children's Services Single Improvement Plan – Getting to Good 2017/18

## Children looked after and achieving permanence

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
<b>24. Areas for Development:</b> Delays in completion of Initial Health Assessments for a minority of children. (Para 48) <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that all looked after children have a health assessment within 28 days of coming into care.					
24.1	Health services to review reasons for timescales not being met and put a strategy in place to address this. Report to Corporate Parenting Board. Improve information sharing with Health to ensure they have all the information they require to set appropriate appointments.	March 2018	<b>Health</b> Coventry City Council	Initial Health Assessments (IHA) undertaken within 28 days.	Report to Corporate Parenting Board shows improvement in IHAs undertaken on time.
<b>25. Areas for Development:</b> Results of Strengths and Difficulties' (SDQ) are not shared with health agencies. (Para 51) <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that the outcome of SDQ scores are used to inform purposeful interventions for children and young people.					
25.1	Undertake a review Tri-x procedures to include guidance about how to complete SDQs and ensure that they are fed into plans.	October 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b> Health		New procedures in place.  The findings from SDQs are used in care planning.
25.2	Undertake workshops with staff about how to use SDQs effectively.	November 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b> Health	4 workshops held.	The findings from SDQs are used in care planning.
<b>26. Areas for Development:</b> Foster to adopt needs greater promotion. (Para 60) <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that more children and young people benefit from foster to adopt placements.					
26.1	The fostering service to promote the recruitment of foster to adopt carers at the regional event.	June 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>	8 foster to adopt applicants recruited.	Increase in foster to adopt placements.
26.2	Develop practice guidance about what foster to adopt is about.	June 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>		Increase in foster to adopt placements

## Children looked after and achieving permanence

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
<b>27.0 Areas for Development:</b> Later life letters are not always completed. (Para 62) <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that all children and young people receive their later life letters in a timely way.					
27.1	The timely completion of later life letters to be included on the adoption tracker and closely monitored by managers.	June 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>	Later life letters started within 10 days of Placement Order.  The letter to be received after the Adoption Order is made and no later than 10 working days after the adoption ceremony.  3 workshops held on later life letters.	All adopters receive later life letters in a timely way.  Good practice guidance issued.
<b>28. Areas for Development:</b> Adoption Panel Advisor could support social workers more in developing their knowledge of good practice. (Para 66) <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that the learning from the adoption process held by the Adoption Panel Advisor is shared with social workers so that practice is enhanced.					
28.1	The Adoption Panel Advisor to undertake workshops at the Practice Improvement Forum and the Frontline Staff Practice Forum about sharing good practice.	December 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>	2 workshops held.	Good practice exemplars in place and being used.
28.2	Learning from the 6 monthly reports from the Adoption and Fostering Panels to be shared in the children's services bulletin.	September 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>		Good practice exemplars in place and being used.

# Coventry's Children's Services Single Improvement Plan – Getting to Good 2017/18

## Children looked after and achieving permanence

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
<p><b>29. Areas for Development:</b> The quality of pathway plans requires further improvement to improve their focus and provide clearer detail about the range of support that young people can expect. (Para 72)</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To ensure that care leavers' pathway plans set out clearly what support they will get to meet their identified goals and aspirations.</p>					
29.1	Workshops to be undertaken with the leaving care service about what a good quality pathway plan looks like.	October 2017	Coventry City Council	2 workshops held.	Good practice exemplars in place and being used.
<p><b>30. Areas for Development:</b> The Local Authority is slow in ensuring that all care leavers receive a summary of their health histories. (Para 80)</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To ensure that care leavers have a full record of their care history when moving into adulthood and preparing for independence.</p>					
30.1	Health services to review reasons for timescales for health histories not being met and put a strategy in place to address this. Report to Corporate Parenting Group.	October 2017	Health	Number of care leavers with health passports.	All care leavers have health passports.
<p><b>31. Areas for Development:</b> Independence support packages for care leavers are sometimes arranged late and do not focus enough on the emotional challenges and coping strategies they may need to employ when living alone. (Para 81)</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To ensure that there is a clear pathway of emotional health and wellbeing support for care leavers as they prepare for independence.</p>					
31.1	Review timeliness of independence support packages for care leavers.	December 2017	Coventry City Council		Pathway plans show early planning on independence.
31.2	Commission an offer and develop a pathway of emotional and mental health support to care leavers.	December 2017	Health		Emotional and mental health offer in place and being accessed.

## Children looked after and achieving permanence

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
<b>32. Areas for Development:</b> Corporate Parenting Strategy. <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that the corporate parenting strategy sets out what partners are promising to do to fulfil their corporate parenting functions, and what specifically is required to progress the leaving care service from 'good' to 'outstanding'.					
32.1	Develop a new Corporate Parenting Strategy for looked after children and care leavers.	November 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>		All agencies playing an active role in supporting looked after children and care leavers.
32.2	Develop a route map of how to progress the 'good' inspection rating in the leaving care service to 'outstanding', drawing on the experience of other local authorities.	December 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>		Route map in place to get to 'outstanding'.  Audits show improvement.
<b>33. Areas for Development:</b> LAC school attendance. <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that looked after children achieve at school and participate in activities just as well as other children.					
33.1	Undertake a review of systems and approaches to improve school attendance of looked after children.	November 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b> Schools	LAC attendance at school.	LAC attendance at school improves.
<b>34. Areas for Development:</b> Foster carer records on Protocol. <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that full records about foster carers are available in one place on an electronic system.					
34.1	Develop a plan for the inclusion of all foster care records to be available on Protocol.	December 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>		Foster care records on Protocol.

# Coventry's Children's Services Single Improvement Plan – Getting to Good 2017/18

## Children looked after and achieving permanence

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
<p><b>35. Ofsted Recommendation:</b> Ensure that the Local Safeguarding Children Board supports partners to understand and consistently apply appropriate thresholds to levels of need at every stage of the child's journey, including the early help pathway.</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To ensure that all partners play their part in identifying and addressing need before problems escalate through early help support and make the right referrals to social care.</p>					
35.1	<p>Undertake a review of the current CAF system, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The roles and responsibilities of all partner agencies, such as Health, Housing, Schools and Adult Services, in fully identifying needs and assessing families that may need help as a shared responsibility.</li> <li>Current criteria for CAF levels 2 and 3.</li> <li>Format of the CAF assessment.</li> <li>Impact of interventions.</li> </ul>	November 2017	<p>Coventry City Council</p> <p><b>LSCB</b></p> <p>Health</p> <p>Police</p> <p>Schools</p> <p>Housing</p> <p>Probation NPS/CRC</p> <p>Independent sector</p>		Review identifies improvements.
35.2	Simplify the early help assessment process and ensure that the revised arrangements use common language throughout about children's needs, and incorporate a signs of safety methodology.	March 2018	<p><b>Coventry City Council</b></p> <p>Health</p> <p>Police</p> <p>Schools</p> <p>Housing</p> <p>Probation NPC/CRC</p> <p>Independent sector</p>	<p>Increase in early help assessments by all partners.</p> <p>Decrease in referrals to social care.</p> <p>50% reduction in number of step down cases referred back to social care within the last 6 months.</p>	

## Children looked after and achieving permanence

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
35.3	All agencies to ensure that they increase their lead professional role in undertaking early help assessments.	March 2018	<b>LSCB</b> Coventry City Council Health Police Schools Housing Probation NPS/CRC Independent Sector	Increase in early help assessments by all partners.	Clear guidance for staff and partners about the changes. Audit of quality of assessments show SMART planning in place. Audits of the early help system show improvement in identifying needs and addressing them. Quality Assurance of Commissioned early help services.
35.4	Review of the Initial Contact Service.	August 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>	90% of contacts to social care processed within 24 hours.	Effective resourced structure in place. Audit activity shows improvements in quality of practice and management oversight.
35.5	Strengthen partnership arrangements in the front door: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All partners to comply with completion of the Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF).</li> <li>• All referrals to include consent (unless significant harm) prior to sending to the MASH.</li> <li>• Undertake workshops with partners about threshold application.</li> <li>• Undertake multi-agency audits of threshold application.</li> <li>• Establish a task and finish group that examines demand and outcomes of referrals.</li> <li>• Review Threshold Document.</li> </ul>	February 2018	<b>LSCB</b> Coventry City Council Health Police Schools Housing Probation NPS/CRC Independent sector	100% consent sought on referrals (unless significant harm).  90% MARFs received following a referral.  100% compliance in Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub checks completed on time. 5 audits undertaken per month. 4 workshops undertaken.	Referrals are timely and evidence clear threshold and decision making.



# Coventry's Children's Services Single Improvement Plan – Getting to Good 2017/18

## Children looked after and achieving permanence

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
35.6	<p>Strengthen social care response in the front door:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managers to record rationale for decision making on Protocol.</li> <li>Monitor and share 'poor' and 'good' referrals with partners and use them for learning.</li> <li>Feedback/outcomes to referrers to be issued in a timely way.</li> <li>Implement signs of safety methodology format in the MASH.</li> <li>Review sample of assessments and child protection enquiries that led to no further action for learning.</li> </ul>	November 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>	Reduction in no further action following referrals and child protection enquiries.	Referrals are timely and evidence clear threshold and decision making.
35.7	Undertake a review of referrals to the front door that result in no further action as part of a demand management project.	November 2017	<b>LSCB</b> Coventry City Council Health Police Schools Housing Probation NPS/CRC Independent sector	Reduction in no further action following referrals.  Increase in early help assessments.	Referrals are timely and evidence clear threshold and decision making.

**36. Ofsted Recommendation:** Ensure that the introduction of the risk management methodology across the authority includes partners and the authority at all stages.

**Objective:** To ensure that the signs of safety methodology is understood and used across Coventry to support children and families.

## Children looked after and achieving permanence

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
36.1	All identified partners receive training in Signs of Safety.	May 2018	<b>LSCB</b> Coventry City Council Health Police Schools Housing Probation NPS/CRC Independent sector	80% attendance at training sessions.  100% partnership staff are trained to undertake early help assessments using signs of safety	Training programme in place. Audit activity shows compliance to quality of assessments.  Effective supervision challenges poor performance.  Early help support is embedded to drive consistency in practice across the city.
36.2	Appoint a Signs of Safety Implementation Manager working to the Principal Social Worker.	October 2017	<b>LSCB</b> Coventry City Council		Signs of Safety understood across the partnership.
36.3	Undertake audits of early help assessments to test that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early help assessments are timely, regular and thorough.</li> <li>• Step up and step down plans identify how work will be continued.</li> <li>• Early help assessments are timely and evidence clear thresholds and decision making.</li> </ul>	April 2018	<b>Coventry City Council</b> Health Police Schools Housing Probation NPS/CRC Independent sector	Reduction in children in need cases by 10%  50% reduction in number of step down cases re-referred back to social care within 6 months.  120 audits undertaken.	Audit of early help assessments show improvement.

# Coventry's Children's Services Single Improvement Plan – Getting to Good 2017/18

## Children looked after and achieving permanence

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
<p><b>37. Ofsted Recommendation:</b> Improve the quality of children's assessments and the focus of plans, so that all children at every stage of their journeys have their needs fully recognised and met.</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To ensure that all children and young people at every stage of their journey have their needs fully recognised and met, through good quality assessments and plans.</p>					
37.1	Review all children and young people who are subject to child protection plans at the 9 month point to ensure timely and effective care planning.	August 2017 – monthly	Coventry City Council	100% of CP escalations resolved in time.	Children and young people are safeguarded with no drift and delay.
37.2	Pilot new arrangements for reviews of child in need cases.	October 2017	Coventry City Council	Number of open CiN cases.	Children and young people are safeguarded with no drift and delay. Audit of child in need cases shows improvement in practice.  Reduction in the number of CiN cases.
37.3	Review CiN procedures and processes.	October 2017	Coventry City Council		Children and young people are safeguarded with no drift and delay.  Audit of child in need cases shows improvement in practice.
37.4	Implement model for effective case/permanence tracking (legal planning and new admissions panel, case progression meetings and permanence tracking panel).	July 2017	Coventry City Council	Reduction in time taken Public Law Outline.  Formal pre-proceedings within 12 weeks.	Robust tracking in place.  Children and young people achieve emotional and legal security at the earliest point.

## Children looked after and achieving permanence

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
37.5	Ensure assessments are carried out for all children and young people (LAC, CP, CiN) where there is a change to their needs or care plan.	May 2018	<b>Coventry City Council</b>	Assessments completed within the last 6 months.	Care plans updated to reflect assessed need.
37.6	Develop a multi-agency neglect strategy and implementation plan.	December 2017	<b>LSCB</b> Coventry City Council Health Police Schools Housing Probation NPS/CRC Independent sector		Neglect is identified and acted on early.  Assessments in neglect cases are evidenced based.  Audits show improvement.
37.7	Ensure that the graded care profile tool is used by all partners to assess neglect in neglect cases.	May 2018	<b>LSCB</b> Coventry City Council Health Police Schools Housing Probation NPS/CRC Independent sector	Numbers of graded care profiles completed by agency. Number of staff trained in each agency.	Neglect is identified and acted on early.  Assessments in neglect cases are evidenced based.  Audits show improvement.
<p><b>38. Ofsted Recommendation:</b> Continue to monitor and develop services through the work of the Improvement Board so that all children in Coventry receive the help and support that they need and their outcomes improve.</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To ensure that the Improvement Board drives improvement with pace and holds partners to account by monitoring progress and impact through the Children's Services Improvement Plan.</p>					
38.1	Review the membership, frequency, remit, and forward plan for the Improvement Board.	June 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b> Independent Chair		All partners take ownership for implementing the actions in the Improvement Plan.

# Coventry's Children's Services Single Improvement Plan – Getting to Good 2017/18

## Children looked after and achieving permanence

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
38.2	All agencies to produce highlight reports of recommendations in the Improvement Plan that are rag rated Green to demonstrate the evidence that the targets and measures have been achieved and progress is embedded and sustainable.	June 2017 - at each Improvement Board for recommendations ragged Green.	<b>LSCB</b> Coventry City Council Health Police Schools Housing Probation NPS/CRC Independent sector		Highlight reports demonstrate improved outcomes.
38.3	Develop a succession plan with the LSCB and the Corporate Parenting Board in preparation for the cessation of the Improvement Board.	May 2018	<b>Coventry City Council</b> Independent Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board LSCB		Clear succession plan in place.
38.4	Develop Practice Standards for Children's Services.	October 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>		Practice Standards in place and being applied by Practitioners.  Briefing on Practice standards to all staff.
<p><b>39. Ofsted Recommendation:</b> Ensure that managers, chairs of child protection conferences and IROs improve their practice, by robustly chairing children's meetings and challenging any delays in their plans being progressed.</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To ensure that managers and chairs robustly challenge any drift and delay that impacts on outcomes for children, including through formal escalation processes.</p>					
39.1	Managers, CP Chairs and IROs to provide rigorous challenge and scrutiny to ensure that plans are SMART, and include realistic timescales for actions.	March 2018	<b>Coventry City Council</b>		SMART plans in place.  Case progression demonstrates compliance.  Evidence of challenge. Audit activity shows improvement.

## Children looked after and achieving permanence

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
39.2	Develop a consistent style and approach to chairing CP conferences and LAC reviews.	March 2018	Coventry City Council		Clear standards/crib sheets in place to drive consistency.  Children and young people and families understand what is expected of them.
39.3	Develop and implement a pilot signs of safety methodology approach to the looked after children reviewing process.	December 2017	Coventry City Council	Participation of children and young people in their reviews.	Evaluation of pilot identifies improvements. Views of children and young people are positive about their reviews
<b>40. Areas for Development:</b> Advocacy services are not used enough. (Para 90) <b>Objective:</b> To enable all children to have access to an advocate if they need one.					
40.1	Commissioners to ensure that Barnardo's action plan to increase visibility of the advocacy service is closely monitored on a quarterly basis.	March 2018	Coventry City Council	Number of advocates being accessed	Increase in use of advocates.
40.2	Report of the development of the advocacy service to be presented to the Corporate Parenting Board.	November 2017	Coventry City Council	Number of advocates being accessed.	Report to Corporate Parenting Board demonstrates improvement.
40.3	Barnardo's to be asked to attend the Front Line Practice Improvement Forum to promote the availability of the service to staff.	October 2017	Coventry City Council	Number of advocates being accessed.	Increase in use of advocates.
40.4	Details of the advocacy service to be included in the Menu of Services that is going to be placed on the Documents Library for staff to access information about.	July 2017	Coventry City Council	Number of advocates being accessed.	Increase in use of advocates.

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## Children looked after and achieving permanence

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
<b>41. Areas for Development:</b> Many staff are relatively inexperienced, 50% have less than 2 years' experience. (Para 98) <b>Objective:</b> To have a workforce that is experienced and stays in Coventry as well as attracting fresh recruits who can grow and develop.					
41.1	Review the programme of recruitment and training for newly qualified social workers (NQSW) and map impact of numbers of staff, protected caseloads and skill sets in each team.	November 2017	Coventry City Council		Balance of staffing experience in teams.
41.2	Develop and share good practice exemplars of supervision using signs of safety methodology with staff.	June 2017	Coventry City Council		Good practice exemplars in place and being used.
41.3	Undertake audits of supervision as set out in the Quality Assurance Plan.	October 2017	Coventry City Council	30 audits completed.	Audits show improvement.
41.4	Develop a plan for the retention of staff.	October 2017	Coventry City Council	Numbers of permanent social workers.	Retention plan in place. A reduction in permanent social workers leaving Coventry City Council.
41.5	Implement the Social Work Academy for NQSW to promote and support transition from student to assessed and supported year of assessment.	September 2017	Coventry City Council	Percentage of agency staff. Turnover rate of social workers.	Recruitment and Retention

## Children looked after and achieving permanence

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
<b>42. Areas for Development:</b> Not all LAC and care leavers are aware of the commitments in the Pledge. (Para 100) <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that all looked after children have the Pledge explained to them so that they understand the promises that are made.					
42.1	Develop a Welcome Pack that includes information about the Pledge for looked after children.	August 2017	Coventry City Council		All LAC and care leavers receive the Welcome Pack.  Feedback from children and young people is positive.
42.2	Through the Voices of Care, ensure that information about the Pledge is shared and discussed with looked after children.	August 2017	Coventry City Council		Feedback from children and young people is positive.
42.3	Produce a highlight report for the Corporate Parenting Board about progress on the impact of the Pledge and any feedback received from children and young people.	September 2017	Coventry City Council		Feedback from children and young people is positive.
<b>43. Areas for Development:</b> Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and links with commissioning intentions are unclear. (Para 95) <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that the changing needs of children and families are properly reflected in joint working with Public Health.					
43.1	Organise a workshop between Public Health and the Senior Leadership Team to ascertain synergies with public health and children's services priorities in the light of the transformation and re-design programme.	December 2017	Coventry City Council	1 workshop held.	Clear priorities identified and understood.



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## Children looked after and achieving permanence

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
<b>44. Areas for Development:</b> Annual complaints report does not cover issues in sufficient depth. (Para 101) <b>Objective:</b> To be able to demonstrate that learning from complaints is preventing the same complaints being made over and over again.					
44.1	The senior leadership team to review future content that needs to be covered in the quarterly and annual complaints reports.	October 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>	Number of complaints. Number of compliments.	Clear themes and learning identified that informs action planning as business as usual.
44.2	Undertake a review of the complaints process to ensure that it is compliant with statutory requirements.	October 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>	Number of complaints. Number of compliments.	Clear themes and learning identified.
<b>45. Areas for Development:</b> Strengthen quality assurance activity. <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that Coventry children's services is a learning organisation and can show improvements in practice through its quality assurance activity.					
45.1	Introduce a system to track audit activity and learning from monthly audit programme.	May 2018	<b>Coventry City Council</b>	Overview reports of audits completed.	Audits show improvement. Findings from audits shared with staff.
45.2	Strengthen audit processes, including moderation and inclusion of all managers undertaking monthly audit activity.	May 2018	<b>Coventry City Council</b>	10% of audits moderated each month.	IROs, CP chairs and early help managers included in monthly audit programme.

## Children looked after and achieving permanence

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
45.3	Include the following areas in the children's services annual audit programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulation 24 (placement with friends and family) viability assessments.</li> <li>• Special Guardianship Order assessments and support plans.</li> <li>• No Recourse to Public Funds cases.</li> <li>• Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children cases.</li> <li>• Fostering compliance with National Minimum Standards.</li> <li>• Adoption compliance with National Minimum Standards.</li> <li>• Residential home compliance with National Minimum Standards.</li> </ul>	May 2018	<b>Coventry City Council</b>	Number of overview reports of audit themes completed each month. 150 audits completed.	Audits show improvement.  Findings from audits shared with staff.
<b>46. Areas for Development:</b> An agreed response to addressing gang issues. <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that an early response is developed to the emerging gang problem so that it can be prevented from escalating.					
46.1	Develop a strategy for responding to gangs in Coventry.	May 2018	<b>Police</b> Coventry City Council		Awareness of the extent of the Gangs issue in Coventry.  Interventions are evidenced based.
<b>47. Areas for Development:</b> Performance Management. <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that managers have access to management information that supports their practice and is used to measure impact.					
47.1	Develop performance dashboards for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early help activity.</li> <li>• Children in need activity.</li> </ul>	September 2017	<b>Coventry City Council</b>		Performance dashboards in place and used to scrutinise practice.

# Coventry's Children's Services Single Improvement Plan – Getting to Good 2017/18

## Children looked after and achieving permanence

No.	Actions	By when	Delivery lead	Performance measure	We will know it's working when
47.2	Undertake a review of performance management datasets and systems (including Protocol) to ensure that they are fit for purpose and produce meaningful reports.	September 2017	Coventry City Council		Performance management datasets are used by managers to focus on improving practice and outcomes for children and young people.
<b>48. Areas for Development:</b> Leadership Development Programme. <b>Objective:</b> To ensure that managers have the skills to be the leaders of the future.					
48.1	Commission an intensive period of Coaching and Mentoring for First line managers, middle managers CP Chairs and IROs.	March 2018	Coventry City Council		<p>Independent Reviewing Officers/Child Protection Chairs service provide appropriate challenge to ensure robust care planning for children in care, promoting legal and emotional security.</p> <p>Frontline practitioners and managers to understand what 'good' looks like and can articulate this in their work.</p> <p>Managers have a strong grip on performance and use data to inform practice.</p> <p>Culture of high support, high challenge, high expectations.</p>
48.2	Commission a Social Work practice leaders development programme to complement the Corporate Leadership Programme.	October 2017	Coventry City Council		<p>Managers have a strong grip on performance and use data to inform practice.</p> <p>Culture of high support, high challenge, high expectations.</p>
48.3	Ensure that all leaders and aspiring managers are offered the opportunity to participate in the corporate leadership programme	May 2018	Coventry City Council		<p>Managers have a strong grip on performance and use data to inform practice.</p> <p>Culture of high support, high challenge, high expectations.</p>



Please see page 2 onwards for background to items

<b>29<sup>th</sup> June 2017 – formal/ informal meeting</b>
Ofsted Inspection Report Informal briefing of the Board
<b>13<sup>th</sup> July 2017 – 10am</b>
Young Carers Improvement Board Report Work programme briefing note
<b>14<sup>th</sup> September 2017</b>
LSCB Interim Annual Report Children’s Services Redesign
<b>12<sup>th</sup> October 2017</b>
Quality of Social Workers Regional Adoption Agency
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017</b>
Home to School Transport Exclusions, Alternative Provision and Elective Home Education
<b>11<sup>th</sup> January 2018</b>
Private Fostering Case File Audits Improvement Board Report – 18 <sup>th</sup> October 2017
<b>14<sup>th</sup> February 2018</b>
Ofsted Progress and Improvement Board Report – 10 <sup>th</sup> January 2018 Coventry Youth Partnership
<b>1<sup>st</sup> March 2018</b>
Task and Finish group – Retention of Social Workers - recommendations Children’s Services Redesign Parenting Strategy
<b>29<sup>th</sup> March 2018</b>
- -
<b>26<sup>th</sup> April 2018</b>
Improvement Board Report – 11 <sup>th</sup> April 2018
<b>Date to be determined</b>
One Strategic Plan updates Education Performance including vulnerable groups Review of the Education Service redesign School Funding SCR – Baby L SCR – Child F School based police panels World Class Schools Quality Award Special Education Places
<b>Next year</b>
Extended Learning Centre Home to School Transport
<b>Standing Items</b>
Serious Case Reviews Schools Ofsted Reports

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer</b>
<b>29<sup>th</sup> June 2017 – formal/ informal meeting</b>	Ofsted Inspection Report	Following the Ofsted inspection in March, the inspection report is published on 13 <sup>th</sup> June. This is an opportunity for Members to consider the outcomes of the inspection and the subsequent action plan.	Gail Quinton John Gregg Cllr Ruane
	Informal briefing of the Board	To cover the work areas of the Board plus. Looking at the Council's Corporate parenting requirements and how the Council is meeting them.	
<b>13<sup>th</sup> July 2017 – 10am</b>	Young Carers	Referred from the Corporate Parenting Board, to look at support offered to children and young people who are carers, especially those that are children in need, child protection or who come into care because of the health of their parents.	Paul Smith Jon Reading Cllr Ruane Cllr Abbott
	Improvement Board Report	A standing item as agreed by Council reporting progress against the areas identified in the improvement notice, to include follow up from the DfE visit	John Gregg Cllr Ruane
	Work programme briefing note	A follow up from the informal meeting to agree the work programme for the year	Gennie Holmes
<b>14<sup>th</sup> September 2017</b>	LSCB Interim Annual Report	Members requested to see the interim annual report of the LSCB following their consideration of the Annual Report at their meeting in January 2017	David Peplow Cllr Ruane
	Children's Services Redesign	Following on from the meeting in July, Members requested a full briefing on the changes proposed through the redesign.	John Gregg Cllr Ruane
<b>12<sup>th</sup> October 2017</b>	Quality of Social Workers	A 6 month follow up report from the meeting on 27 <sup>th</sup> April	Lee Pardy- McLaughlin Cllr Ruane
	Regional Adoption Agency	With the creation of a regional adoption being headed by Warwickshire County Council, Members requested further information on implementation and timescales. A Cabinet report for 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2017 will be considered at the meeting.	John Gregg Cllr Ruane

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer</b>
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017</b>	Home to School Transport	A new policy was introduced in April and September introducing new guidelines for home to school transport. Parents have been concerned and requested an item at scrutiny	Jeanette Essex Kirston Nelson Cllr Maton
	Exclusions, Alternative Provision and Elective Home Education	Members requested a report on how children who are home schooled are supported by the LEA and also to discuss whether pupils excluded from school are being home schooled by parents	Kirston Nelson Cllr Maton
<b>11<sup>th</sup> January 2018</b>	Private Fostering	Following the recommendations in the Ofsted report Members requested to look in more detail at private fostering arrangements – possible Task and Finish Group	John Gregg Paul Smith Cllr Ruane
	Case File Audits	Case File are regularly audited for quality assurance purposes. This report will summarise progress. If available it should include audit information on supervision.	John Gregg Neil MacDonald Cllr Ruane
	Improvement Board Report – 18 <sup>th</sup> October 2017	Regular report – to include the refreshed Improvement Plan	John Gregg Cllr Ruane
<b>14<sup>th</sup> February 2018</b>	Ofsted Progress and Improvement Board Report – 10 <sup>th</sup> January 2018	Following the recommendations in the Ofsted report, Members want to look at progress, particularly at how risk is managed, including with partner agencies such as health and schools	John Gregg Cllr Ruane
	Coventry Youth Partnership	To discuss the new Coventry Youth Partnership.	Cllr Ruane Rashid Byatt – Positive Youth Foundation
<b>1<sup>st</sup> March 2018</b>	Task and Finish group – Retention of Social Workers - recommendations	A report to consider the recommendations identified by the task and finish group to support the retention of social workers.	Gennie Holmes John Gregg
	Children’s Services Redesign	Following on from the meeting in September, Members requested a full briefing on how the implementation of Family Hubs has been effective, including partners.	John Gregg Cllr Ruane
	Parenting Strategy		Harbir Nagra

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer</b>
<b>29<sup>th</sup> March 2018</b>	-		
	-		
<b>26<sup>th</sup> April 2018</b>	Improvement Board Report – 11 <sup>th</sup> April 2018		
<b>Date to be determined</b>	One Strategic Plan updates	Progress on the information provided	Kirston Nelson Cllr Maton
	Education Performance including vulnerable groups	A regular report, looking at school performance, in particular progress of vulnerable groups	Kirston Nelson Cllr Maton
	Review of the Education Service redesign	Following a meeting where the proposals for a new structure for the Educations service were considered, Members requested a progress report following implementation.	Kirston Nelson Cllr Maton
	School Funding	To look at changes to school's funding formula once finalised.	
	SCR – Baby L	For Members of the Board to consider how the recommendations from the SCR have been implemented	John Gregg David Peplow Cllr Ruane
	SCR – Child F	The Board will consider recommendations from a serious case review.	Cllr Ruane David Peplow
	School based police panels	A report on how the police are supporting improving behaviour in schools and tackling anti-social behaviour in partnership	Kirston Nelson Cllr Maton
	World Class Schools Quality Award	President Kennedy School have been awarded this and the Board would like to know more about the process and what it means for the pupils.	Cllr Maton Kirston Nelson President Kennedy pupils
	Special Education Places	To consider the provision and demand for special school places across the city	Kirston Nelson Cllr Maton
<b>Next year</b>	Extended Learning Centre	To look at how the changes made to the provision at the Extended Learning Centre – to come to Board in September 2018	Jeanette Essex Kirston Nelson Cllr Maton



<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer</b>
	Home to School Transport	A follow up report covering on applications, decisions and appeals and amendments to the process. To come to Board in June 2018	Jeanette Essex Kirston Nelson Cllr Maton
<b>Standing Items</b>	Serious Case Reviews	The Board will consider recommendations from serious case reviews when they are published.	Cllr Ruane
	Schools Ofsted Reports	Members requested information on how schools with poor Ofsted reports are being supported, using Stoke Park as a case study. If any school in Coventry is rated Inadequate by OFSTED, the resulting action plan will be considered as an item for Scrutiny	Kirston Nelson Cllr Maton

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