



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

12th January 2017

Subject: Progress on Children's Services Improvement Plan in response to Ofsted Single Inspection and the Review of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board

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 14 December 2016. The report is based on data from November 2016, unless stated otherwise. The next Improvement Board will be held on 25th January 2017.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Scrutiny Board (2) are recommended to:
- 1) Consider the outcome of the Ofsted Monitoring visit and actions going forward
 - 2) Note the initial feedback from the DfE Review
 - 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. The Ofsted report identified a number of priority actions and areas for improvement. In response to the Ofsted report, a Children's Services Improvement Board was established and an Improvement Plan published. The Improvement Plan has been refreshed to take account of the priorities and focus for 2016/17. A one page summary of the improvement Plan is attached in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 An Ofsted Monitoring Visit was undertaken on 8th and 9th November 2016, the focus of the visit was on practice within the 'help and protection' judgement with Ofsted doing a deep dive analysis (case tracking) in to six cases selected by Ofsted and one good example case selected by the service. The visit also included a visit to MASH/RAS. The letter on the outcome of the monitoring visit was published on 8th December 2016, to see contents of the letter please click [here](#).
- 3.4 The Department for Education issued an Improvement Notice on 30th June 2014. The Improvement notice is reviewed every six months. The two year review was held on 30th November 2016 and focused on quality of practice; the effectiveness of the children's services system and partnership working. The formal feedback letter from the Minister on the outcomes of the review is expected early January 2017.

3.5 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 The Outcomes of the Ofsted Monitoring visit

4.1 The Children's Services Improvement Board on 14 December 2016 considered the outcomes of the Ofsted letter and discussed the initial feedback from the DfE visit. Progress against the Improvement Plan will be reported at the next Children's Services Improvement Board on 25 January and Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board in February 2017.

4.2 The two day monitoring visit included seven cases tracked by inspectors; audit of cases by Coventry Children's Services; interviews with Social Workers about specific cases selected; case sampling in the Initial Contact service and case sampling in the MASH.

4.3 The monitoring visit highlighted strengths and areas for improvement:

4.4 Strengths

- Acknowledged caseloads have reduced to manageable levels
- Significant work has been undertaken to stabilise the workforce
- Quality Assurance work is enabled by a good quality audit format
- Thresholds for intervention are understood in the MASH
- Decision making in the MASH demonstrates an understanding of risk and the need for a timely response when children and families need help
- Well-developed information sharing process between agencies in MASH are helping to ensure that informed decisions underpin future action

4.5 Areas for improvement

- In assessments of need issues of risk are identified and understood but too many cases seen have not been acted upon in a timely way to ensure that children are safe
- Plans and interventions are not sufficiently robust and do not lead to improved outcomes in cases seen
- Managerial oversight is evident there is insufficient challenge to the lack of progress and drift in cases
- Chairs of child protection conferences are not providing sufficient challenge to lack of progress in cases and in some instances are not recognising increased risk as a result
- Further work is required to ensure that the initial contact service consistently applies threshold appropriately
- The new audit format is not yet making sufficient difference to the overall quality of practice

4.6 Ofsted Inspectors also highlighted analysis needed in assessments and that Plans are not always SMART and do not always drive outcomes. Identification of risk and analysis is not consistent and interventions are not timely and focused.

4.7 In response to the Ofsted visit a number of immediate actions are being addressed:

- A workshop for managers across the service to ensure managers understand the feedback and messaging and the actions they need to take was held on 14 December 2016
- A review of initial contact service following its recent introduction will be completed

- Work with threshold decision makers to ensure contacts diverted to CAF are appropriate
- Met with Police colleagues to discuss the partnership issues identified during the visit
- Reviewed working practices in relation to domestic abuse perpetrators
- Established further training for additional cohorts of managers on auditing for impact
- Commissioned further training on assessments, risk analysis and outcome based planning
- Assurance activity in response to risk management
- Established a rapid programme of development for conference chairs

5 Next Steps

- 5.1 The feedback confirmed what the service already knew and what the service need to do moving forward. Although it was only a small sample by Ofsted, this external feedback has helped to identify the areas the service need to target as the service move to a relentless focus on improvement.
- 5.2 The Managers Workshop held on 14 December has helped to identify the actions Children's Services needs to take, the actions will be incorporated into an action plan to respond to the areas for further development. The Action Plan will be shared with Improvement Board members and the DfE.
- 5.3 The Executive Director of People and Director of Children's Services will be meeting with Ofsted in the New Year to discuss next steps and moving forward.

6 The initial feedback from the DfE Review

- 6.1 The DfE visit included three Focus groups with staff; managers and partners. The initial feedback from the focus groups was very positive and there was evidence of progress and recognition that the service have moved on, particularly in the area of compliance. Support and work with partners is strong, with a committed political leadership and new Childrens Services leadership in place. The service are working to address quality of practice and recognise that this is an area that needs developing to ensure consistency across all services.
- 6.2 The formal letter from the minister is expected in the New Year.

7 Performance Overview

- 7.1 A performance overview of November performance is highlighted in **Appendix 2**.

8 Communication

- 8.1 The e-newsletter continues to be produced focusing on Children's Services ahead of Ofsted re-inspection. 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 achieving a better Ofsted result. In addition to this, the Director of Children's Services completes a regular blog, hold open sessions for all staff and gets out and about visiting teams and talking to staff.

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Appendix 1

Children's Services Improvement Plan on a page 2016-17

Theme	What we want to achieve	Our priorities for 2016-17
1 Early Help & Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ An enhanced transformed Early Help Service ❖ Full Multi Agency Engagement in CAF ❖ MASH is embedded & information shared effectively ❖ Children and young people who go missing and are vulnerable to CSE are protected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Getting the Early Help Strategy working so we can step cases down safely ➤ Implementing the "Steps to Change" outcome impact tool ➤ Working with partners to review the Front Door and contacts into the MASH ➤ Increased intelligence of children who go missing vulnerable to CSE
2 Quality and Effectiveness of Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Improve timeliness and recording of Assessments ❖ Ensure children are safeguarded ❖ Recruit and retain an effective workforce ❖ Learning and Development impacting positively on practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reduce the number of assessments that have an outcome of "no further action" ➤ Maintain a relentless focus on consistency and quality of practice ➤ Continue an active programme of recruitment for experienced social workers ➤ Promote and deliver an effective retention offer ➤ Develop a Social Work Academy
3 Quality Assurance and Audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Learning from regular audits and demonstrating improved practice ❖ Learning from User Feedback ❖ Regular accurate Performance Information ❖ Strengthen care planning function of Independent Reviewing Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue to improve the quality of practice through the audit and review cycle ➤ Launch Children's Services Health Check and repeat annually ➤ Consolidate and expand the use of performance data at strategic and operational levels ➤
4 Leadership and Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Accountability and oversight by Chief Executive and Council Leadership ❖ Effective Management Oversight of Cases ❖ Effective Supervision and reflective practice ❖ Manageable Caseloads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Maintain the challenge function of the Children's Services Improvement Board ➤ Re-design Children's Service and deliver on transformation projects ➤ Implement a Children's Services Strategy for 2016-2018 ➤ Continue to monitor social work caseloads to ensure appropriate and manageable
5 Services for LAC, Care Leavers and Permanency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Improved service outcomes for LAC and care leavers ❖ Health of LAC ❖ Increase the number of children adopted ❖ Increase recruitment of foster workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implementing the Corporate Parenting Strategy and Placement Sufficiency Strategy ➤ Working with commissioning colleagues and partners to ensure health assessments and dental checks are completed ➤ Continue to improve timeliness of adoption ➤ Continue with the Foster placements campaign

Appendix 2

Performance Overview – November 2016

'Green' indicates improvement, 'Amber' indicates a small change whilst 'Red' represents a decline against the previous month or YTD figure.

CAFs	Oct 2016	Nov 2016
Open CAFs	1695	1722
CAFs open to other agencies	486 (28.8%)	482 (28.0%)
% Action Plans completed NFA	201 (78.8%)	175 (75.1%)
% Referral to Social Care	14 (5.5%)	31 (13.3%)

The number and proportion of CAFs open to other agencies reduced marginally in November and continues to remain below the target of 40%. There was also a small proportional decline with regards to CAFs closed with Action Plans completed, but this remains above target of 70%. November also saw an increase in the number and proportion of cases referred to Social Care, though again, this remained under the 15% target.

Contacts	Oct 2016	Nov 2016
Number of Contacts	1520	1317
Completed within timescales	61.6%	67.8%

Fewer Contacts were received in November compared with October. This was complimented with an increase in Contact timeliness to 67.8%; though 64% timescales achieved YTD is still well below the 90% target.

MASH Assessments	Oct 2016	Nov 2016
Referral to Social Care	260 (77.2%)	300 (79.4%)
Diverted to eCAF	36 (10.7%)	54 (14.3%)

The proportion of MASH Assessments resulting in a Referral to Social Care increased slightly, though there was an increase in the number and proportion diverted to Early Help.

Domestic Violence (Contacts)	Oct 2016	Nov 2016
Number of Contacts	480	471
Completed within timescales	70.2%	70.7%

The number of DV Contacts fell slightly. Timeliness remained at 70%. YTD timeliness is 74.3%, below the 90% target. Referrals to Social Care remained at 10%, in line with the YTD figure.

Referrals & Re-Referrals	Oct 2016	Nov 2016
Referrals	366	405
Re-Referrals	27.8%	21.0%

The number of Referrals increased in November, but continues to reduce YTD. Re-Referrals reduced to 21% in November and have reduced to 26.7% down from 28.7% YTD.

Children Seen	2015/16	2016/17(YTD)
% seen within 5 working days of Contacts resulting in a Referral	33.8%	54.1%
% seen as part of Children & Families Assessment	96.3%	98.5%

The percentage of children seen within 5 working days of those Contacts progressed to Referral has continued to improve YTD. The percentage of children seen as part of C&F Assessments YTD remains high at 98.5%.

Section 47s	Oct 2016	Nov 2016
S47s	182	149
Section 47 timeliness	92.3%	93.3%

The number of Section 47s completed YTD continues to reduce, whilst timeliness continues to remain over the 90% target.

Short Breaks	Oct 2016	Nov 2016
% Short-Breaks (S20) who received a CIN Review in 6 months prior to month-end	77.8%	65.5%

The proportion of children of S20 Short-Breaks subject to a CIN Review has dropped below 70%.

ICPCs	Oct 2016	Nov 2016
Children subject to ICPC	43	48
ICPC timeliness	86.0%	72.9%

ICPC timeliness in November was 72.9%. This is the lowest the figure has been in the rolling 13-month period. 84.1% YTD also represents a decline on 2015/16 and is further away from the 98% target.

Child Protection	Oct 2016	Nov 2016
Child Protection Plans	517	510
% repeat plans	25.6%	14.3%

The number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan continues to fall following the year-high figure of 559 in September. Repeat plans dropped November and remains at 18.0% YTD, a slight from on 2015/16.

Looked After Children	2015/16	2016/17
% new LAC previously in care	23.9%	15.2%
% children seen within 1 week of entering care	95.2%	95.8%
% children 3 or more placements	14.1%	9.9%

The percentage of children entering care who have previously been in care has reduced considerably YTD. The percentage of children seen within 1 week of entering care has also improved YTD, as has the figure for short-term placement stability, which is now below the set target of 10%.

Care Leavers	2015/16	2016/17
% care leavers in suitable accommodation	82.2%	93.5%
% in Employment, Education or Training	44.3%	55.5%

There has been an increase in the percentage of relevant and former care leavers in suitable accommodation, as well as in the percentage of the same cohort in education, employment or training.

Missing Children	Oct 2016	Nov 2016
% RHIs completed	47.7%	50.7%
% of completed RHIs within timescale	90.4%	76.5%

The proportion of RHIs completed improved in November to 50.7%, though the proportion of RHIs completed within timescale fell to 76.5%. YTD figures are an improvement on figures for 2015/16.

Caseloads

The number of open cases at month-end dropped to 3,031; bringing the figure close to the target of 3,000 and representing the lowest figure in the last 12 months. Caseloads have naturally decreased, to approximately 19 within Neighbourhood teams, though the RAS caseload has risen to 19, having sat at 15 the previous month.