



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

27th April 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 19 April 2017. The report is based on data from February 2017, unless stated otherwise. The next Improvement Board will be held on 7 June 2017.

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, including feedback from Ofsted and the DfE
- 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 at **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 Monitoring visit also included a visit to MASH/RAS. The letter on the outcome of the monitoring visit was published on 8th December 2016.

- 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 has been received.
- 3.5 Ofsted re-inspected Children's Services on 7th -30th March 2017, the outcome of the inspection will be published later in the year.
- 3.6 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 Ofsted re-inspection of Children's Services

- 4.1 The Ofsted re-inspection of Children's Services commenced on 7th March 2017.
- 4.2 The focus on inspection was on practice, evidence and impact and did not include a review of the LSCB this time. The scope included:
- Children and young people who are receiving or who need early help
 - Children and young people who are referred to the local authority and are assessed(or not)
 - Children and young people who become the subject of a child protection plan or have been the subject of a plan and need continuing support
 - Children who receiving support through a child in need plan
 - Children looked after (with a plan for adoption, to return home, special guardianship or residence order, living with a foster family) and children accommodated
 - Care Leavers
- 4.3 The purpose of the inspection was to:
- Evaluate the effectiveness of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers
 - Ascertain the extent to which the help, care and protection given to children and young people does noes protect them
 - Whether services support families and improves the quality of lives and futures of children and young people
 - Assess the quality of work to support children looked after and care leavers to meet their potential
 - Examine the quality and impact of supervision and management oversight
- 4.4 The inspection lasted 4 weeks, overall feedback was provided by Inspectors on 30th March 2017 to senior managers and elected members. The final report will be reported to a future Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board.

5 Short term priorities

- 5.1 Progress relating to the short term priorities in response to the two-day Ofsted visit was shared with board members.

5.2 Summary of Short term priorities Improvement Progress:

- ❖ The External Audit review has been completed and final report circulated
- ❖ The coaching programme has commenced
- ❖ Two additional Child Protection (CP) Chairs and two additional Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO's) have been appointed
- ❖ Master classes have commenced initially through the workshops at the recent putting practice first conference
- ❖ Continuing to embed signs of safety as the overarching practice framework

- 5.3 The external review has been completed. Cases were selected using the Ofsted methodology and covered: contacts and referrals, assessments, early help, S47 enquiries, child protection, CiN, LAC and leaving care. In addition a sample of cases that were audited 6 months ago were also included in the sample to see if practice has improved. The audits covered the last 6 months activity.
- 5.4 The coaching programme has commenced. Managers from the IRO service and neighbourhood teams are on the programme.
- 5.5 Two additional Child Protection (CP) Chairs and two additional Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO's) have been appointed. Capacity issues for both areas will be picked up as part of the service redesign within Children's Services.
- 5.6 Master classes have commenced initially through the workshops at the recent putting practice first conference, a masterclass was delivered in March, and are also scheduled for April and May. Culminating in a whole of week of events and learning for practitioners at the end of June entitled Putting Practice First.
- 5.7 Signs of safety continues to be embedded as the overarching practice framework and is being rolled out with partners.

6 Improvement Plan Progress

6.1 Data relating to the information contained in the paragraphs below can be found at the Performance Overview in **Appendix 2**

6.2 Early Help and Partnership Working

- ❖ Steady decline in contacts
- ❖ The impact of CAF Co-ordinators across the city is highlighting that families are seen at the earliest opportunity
- ❖ MASH assessments remain steady
- ❖ Improved process for dealing with domestic violence contacts

- 6.3 Since the initial contact service launched in September 2016, there has been a steady decline in contacts, conversations with partner's agencies is starting to see a reduction as other agencies become more familiar with thresholds.
- 6.4 A report on CAF's held by Health was presented to Improvement Board members on 19th April 2017.
- 6.5 CAF Coordinators across the city are responsible for case oversight every half term for all open CAF's held by schools. Although too early to fully evidence impact, this is resulting in less drift in the system and creating more capacity for diversions from the initial contact service and grasping families at the earliest opportunity.

- 6.6 Since November 2016 MASH assessments have remained steady around 400 - 480. Dip sampling around thresholds is finding that the right cases are being sent through to RAS for assessment.
- 6.7 A report and presentation was delivered to board members on the improved process for dealing with domestic violence contacts with the multi-agency partnership. The new process is now completed electronically, resulting in more efficient and timely sharing of information sharing and extends to wider professional who have current knowledge of the family.

7 Quality and Effectiveness of Practice

- ❖ The re-referral rate has reduced
- ❖ The number of children subject to CP plan for more than 2 years has reduced year on year.
- ❖ The Children's Services Workforce Strategy has been refreshed
- ❖ 61 Social Worker offers in the last 12 months (as at February 2017)

- 7.1 Since October 2016, the re-referral rate has reduced from 27.2% to 20.5%. A number of re-referrals relate to domestic violence, quality of practice Dip sampling issues such as substance misuse, mental health and domestic violence are being completed to improve practice.
- 7.2 The number of children subject to a child protection plan is currently 518 as at February 2017. The number of children subject to CP plan for more than 2 years has reduced year on year.
- 7.3 The Children's Services Workforce Strategy has been refreshed and a new Action Plan developed to deliver priorities for 2017.
- 7.4 A recruitment plan has been produced to outline recruitment activity for the year. A Jobs Fair in March was held in Birmingham to recruit further social workers to vacancies. Shortlisting is currently taking place and interviews are scheduled for early May 2017.
- 7.5 From June 2017 an assessment centre model/framework will be implemented to recruit social workers in the future.

8 Quality Assurance and Audit

- ❖ 161 cases have been audited
- ❖ Final report completed outlining strengths and development areas

- 8.1 The external audit commenced in January and was completed at the end February 2017. A further audit will be completed in six months to evidence the progress and improvements made. 161 cases have been audited.

9 Leadership and Governance

- 9.1 The permanent leadership team are providing continued renewed focus on improvement and strategic direction for Children's Services. Strategic leads are driving forward practice improvements and service changes are being delivered at pace within the improvement plan to deliver the changes the service need to address. The Improvement Plan was reviewed by the Leadership team in March.

10 Services for LAC, Care Leavers and Permanency

❖ Timeliness of adoption is improving

10.1 Timeliness for all aspects of adoption has improved from a low base. More work is needed to reach DfE target levels, through a recent Exchange Day has yielded a number of positive matches.

11 Performance Overview

11.1 A performance overview of February performance is highlighted in **Appendix 2**.

12 Communication

12.1 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 holds open sessions for all staff and gets out and about visiting teams and talking to staff. This has included briefings with frontline staff recently.

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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 – February 2017

'Green' indicates improved performance, 'Amber' indicates a small negative change whilst 'Red' represents a more sizable decline against the previous month or YTD figure.

CAFs	Jan 2017	Feb 2017
Open CAFs	1771	1832
CAFs open to other agencies	486 (27.4%)	477 (26.0%)
% Action Plans completed NFA	117 (64.6%)	81 (67.5%)
% Referral to Social Care	43 (23.8%)	13 (10.8%)

The overall number of CAFs open at the end of February increased to 1832, though the number and proportion of CAFs open to other agencies decreased to 477 (26.0%). More CAFs were closed with Action Plans completed (67.5%). The number of CAFs referred to Social Care notable decreased, representing 10.8% of all CAFs closed.

Contacts	Jan 2017	Feb 2017
Number of Contacts	1482	1256
Completed within timescales	46.8%	49.1%

Fewer Contacts were received 1256 in February. The proportion completed within timescale increased to 49.1%, though this is still very much below the set target of 90%.

MASH Assessments	Jan 2017	Feb 2017
Referral to Social Care	377 (77.7%)	330 (77.3%)
Diverted to eCAF	75 (15.5%)	63 (14.8%)

The proportion of MASH Assessments resulting in a Referral to Social Care decreased slightly to 77.3%, as did the proportion diverted to eCAF dropped slightly to 14.8%.

Domestic Violence (Contacts)	Jan 2017	Feb 2017
Number of Contacts	505	390
Completed within timescales	54.1%	58.2%

Fewer DV Contacts were received in February (390). Timeliness of completion improved to 58.2%, up from 54.1% in January.

Referrals & Re-Referrals	Jan 2017	Feb 2017
Referrals	451	469
Re-Referrals	20.4%	20.5%

The proportion of Re-Referrals remained virtually unchanged at 20.5%. The YTD figure of 24.4% remains off the target of <15%, though this is an improvement on 28.7% seen in 2015/16. The target of <15% needs revisiting as it is not in line with statistical neighbours.

Children Seen	2015/16	2016/17(YTD)
% seen within 5 working days of Contacts resulting in a Referral	33.8%	48.8%
% seen as part of Children & Families Assessment	96.3%	98.5%

The proportion of children seen within 5 working days of Contacts resulting in a Referral has increased from 33.8% in 2015/16 to 48.8%, but is still below the target of 90%. The proportion of children seen as part of the C&F Assessment has remained high at 98.5% and is above the 98% target. This indicator needs to be revisited.

Section 47s	Jan 2017	Feb 2017
S47s	192	191

Section 47 timeliness	86.5%	81.2%
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The number of Section 47s completed remained virtually unchanged. However the proportion completed within timescale reduced to 81.2%. The YTD performance of 90.9% dropped a little but is still higher than the 90% target.

ICPCs	Jan 2017	Feb 2017
Children subject to ICPC	38	34
ICPC timeliness	89.5%	97.1%

The number of children subject to ICPC reduced to 34 in February. ICPC timeliness increased to 97.1%, close to the 98% target.

Child Protection	Jan 2017	Feb 2017
Child Protection Plans	493	518
% repeat plans	18.2%	20.5%

The number of children subject to a child protection plan increased to 518 by the end of February. The YTD proportion of repeat plans is 18.5%, a slight improvement on the figure of 19.9% for 2015/16.

Looked After Children	2015/16	2016/17 (YTD)
% new LAC previously in care	23.9%	15.2%
% children seen within 1 week of entering care	81.0%	91.2%
% children 3 or more placements	14.1%	11.2%

Short-term placement stability has reduced from 14.1% in 2015/16 to 11.2% YTD. The proportion of children re-entering care remains at 15.2%, close to the target of 15%. The proportion of children seen within 1 week of entering care has improved to 91.2% YTD.

Care Leavers	2015/16	2016/17 (YTD)
% care leavers in suitable accommodation	82.2%	95.0%
% in Employment, Education or Training	44.3%	57.1%

The proportion of care leavers in suitable accommodation has improved to 95.0% YTD, compared with 2015/16. The proportion of the same cohort in employment, education or training has also increased from 44.3% in 2015/16 to 57.1% YTD; highlighting improved performance.

Missing Children	Jan 2017	Feb 2017
% RHIs completed	68.4%	75.8%
% of completed RHIs within timescale	87.0%	97.9%

The proportion of RHIs completed increased from 68.4% in January to 75.8% in February, though the YTD figure is 51.9%. The proportion of completed RHIs completed within timescale increased to 97.9%. YTD this figure is 80.2%, a sizable increase from 45.4% in 2015/16.

Caseloads

The total number of open cases increased from 3,252 in January to 3,372 in February. This remains lower than the 3,695 cases open in March 2016, but is above the overall target of 3,000 open cases. Caseloads are largely within service expectations. A short-term issue in RAS has meant a significant rise in caseloads as a result of sickness absence, resignations and maternity leave. Temporary appointments and agency staff have been recruited and this will reduce caseloads which should be reflected in the March figures.