

# **Coventry Children's Services Improvement Plan**

**Ofsted Assurance Focused Visit 12-13 May- Areas for Improvement**



The Children's Services Improvement Plan is a short plan to focus on the areas of improvement following the Ofsted Assurance Focused Visit held on 12-13 May 2021. The actions are divided into three sections: Children who need help and protection; Children looked after and achieving permanence; Leadership, management and governance. The delivery lead will be responsible for driving the completion of the action (in conjunction with relevant colleagues/partners) and for providing a progress update on a monthly basis, using the RAG ratings below.

 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.

| No.  | Actions  | RAG Action complete | By When              | Delivery Lead                              | Performance measure  | How will we know it's working well for children?   | RAG Performance measure and impact | Progress |
|--|--|---------------------|----------------------|--|--|--|------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Children who need Help and Protection</b>   |  |                     |                      |  |  |  |                                    |          |
| <b>1.0 Ofsted Area for Improvement:</b> <i>The timeliness of decision making for children to enter the Public Law Outline (PLO), and their circumstances being purposefully progressed once within it.</i> |  |                     |                      |  |  |  |                                    |          |
| <b>Objective:</b> Ensure that there is early consideration of pre-proceedings work before to avoid the need for care proceedings and threshold application is consistent and timely.                       |  |                     |                      |  |  |  |                                    |          |
| 1.1  | To deliver a Workshop to raise the understanding of the Public Law Outline and timeliness of pre-proceedings to be delivered in Practice Week. |                     | <b>3 August 2021</b> | Strategic Lead, Help and Protection /Legal | Increase in understanding of the PLO<br><br>Increase in number of children/families in pre-proceedings<br><br>Percentage increase in | Children and young people experience earlier permanency decisions.<br><br>An increase in children and young people being able to live within their families, without |                                    |          |

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|     | Target audience:<br>SWs/ TMs/ IROs/<br>Conference Chairs         |                     |                                   |                                     | number of care applications that have had a period in pre-proceedings | <p>the need to enter foster care.</p> <p>Where pre-proceedings result in step down, there will be increased numbers of children and young people are not subject to care proceedings.</p> <p>Where pre-proceedings result in a care application, children and young people should have a clear permanency plan on issue and should experience shorter care proceedings.</p> |                                    |          |
| 1.2 | Launch PLO Toolkit at PLO workshop on 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2021. |                     | <b>3<sup>rd</sup> August 2021</b> | Strategic Lead, Help and Protection | Performance data will indicate that Children and young people are     | Children and young people experience  |                                    |          |

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|     | <p>This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PLO Flowchart</li> <li>• guidance on writing effective pre-proceedings letters</li> <li>• good practice examples</li> </ul> |                     |         |               | <p>entering pre-proceedings in a timely way.</p> <p>Pre-proceedings letters dip-sampled will evidence quality meets good.</p> | <p>earlier permanency decisions.</p> <p>An increase in children and young people being able to live within their families, without the need to enter foster care.</p> <p>Where pre-proceedings result in step down, there will be increased numbers of children and young people are not subject to care proceedings.</p> <p>Where pre-proceedings result in a care application, children and young people should have a clear permanency plan on issue and</p> |                                    |          |

| No. | Actions  | RAG Action complete | By When                               | Delivery Lead                      | Performance measure   | How will we know it's working well for children?  | RAG Performance measure and impact | Progress |
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|     |  |                     |                                       |                                    |   | should experience shorter care proceedings.   |                                    |          |
| 1.3 | <p>Consider all children and young people subject of a child protection plan for over 9 months for a Legal Planning Meeting</p> <p>Ensure recommendation from a child protection conference/looked after review to convene an LPM should be timebound and actively progressed by conference chair/IRO.</p> |                     | <b>At every 2nd Review Conference</b> | Quality Assurance Service Managers | <p>Review Conference minutes to evidence consideration of whether risk is reducing in a timely way for the child and should an LPM be held.</p> <p>Recommendation from a child protection conference/looked after review to convene an LPM should be timebound and actively progressed by conference chair/IRO.</p> | All children and young people subject of a child protection plan for over 9 months will experience escalation when risk is not reducing in a timely manner. |                                    |          |

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| 1.4 | <p>Ensure monthly performance oversight is undertaken, focusing on pre-proceedings work and outcomes.</p> <p>Provide data to all Strategic Leads on a monthly basis to monitor progress against the expectations.</p> |                     | <p>1<sup>st</sup> Monday of each month, commencing <b>5<sup>th</sup> July 2021</b></p> <p>Report to CSLT in July and October 2021</p> | <p>Strategic Lead, Help and Protection</p> <p>Case Progression Officer</p> | <p>Performance targets are to be set once benchmarking with stat neighbors and neighboring local authorities is known.</p> | <p>A clear rationale for any children for whom immediate issue of care proceedings is required is to be clearly recorded on the child's file.</p>  |                                    |          |
| 1.5 | <p>Increased use of Family Group Conference prior to pre-proceedings to identify wider family and community support at the earliest opportunity.</p>  |                     | <p><b>1 April 2021</b></p>  | <p>Operational Leads</p>   | <p>Increased proportion of children and young people benefit from an FGC and an earlier stage in their journey.</p>        | <p>Children and Young People are engaged in a solution-focused approach, enabling them to have a voice at the earliest stage of their journey.</p> |                                    |          |
| 1.6 | <p>Finalize Pre-proceedings letters as part of the Legal Planning Meeting</p>   |                     | <p><b>1 April 2021</b></p>  | <p>Strategic Lead, Help and Protection</p>                                 | <p>Pre-proceedings meetings to be held within 2 weeks of the LPM</p>   | <p>Children will experience permanence decisions at the</p>  |                                    |          |

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|     | (LPM) to ensure that pre-proceedings meetings are held within 2 weeks of the LPM.                         |                     |                           |   | where pre-proceedings are agreed.  | earliest opportunity.  |                                    |          |
| 1.7 | Ensure Practice guidance in the completion of pre-proceedings letters is developed.                       |                     | 18 June 2021              | Strategic Lead, Help and Protection/Legal | Performance data will indicate that Children and young people are entering pre-proceedings in a timely way.<br><br>Pre-proceedings letters dip-sampled will evidence quality meets good. |  |                                    |          |
| 1.8 | Ensure all Viability and full Connected Person Assessments to be completed by the Connected Persons Team. |                     | 5 <sup>th</sup> July 2021 | Operational Lead, Fostering               | Performance Measures to be confirmed<br><br>Viability assessments to be allocated within 5 days and completed within 5 days of   | Children and young people will be afforded a timely opportunity to live within their extended family or network. |                                    |          |

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|     |   |                     |              |  | allocation. Full connected assessments are to be presented to the Fostering Panel within 12 weeks of allocations.  |  |                                    |          |
| 1.9 | Proactively review children within pre-proceedings at key milestones; every 6 weeks and ensure decision making is clearly evidenced on the child's records for escalation or step-down. |                     | 1 April 2021 | Operational Leads – Area Teams, Horizon, CDT, LAC Perm | <p>Management oversight will be evident on the child's records identifying clear decision-making and management grip.</p> <p>Pre-proceedings will be timely and completed within 18 weeks.</p> <p>Performance data to evidence progress in this area, target to be set as in 1.4</p> | Children will experience permanence decisions at the earliest opportunity. |                                    |          |

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| 1.10 | Complete compliance audit of new pilot and report to Children's Services Leadership Team(CSLT).             |                     | <b>Pilot commenced 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021</b><br><br>Compliance audit to be completed by September 2021 | Strategic Lead, Help and Protection<br><br>Case Progression Officer                        |                     | Learning from these audits will improve the timeliness of court proceedings. |                                    |          |
| 1.11 | Audit of children's records where further assessments were required to be repeated within care proceedings. |                     | <b>30 September 2021</b>  | Strategic Lead, Help and Protection<br><br>Strategic Lead, Looked After Children, Practice |                     | Learning from these audits will improve the timeliness of court proceedings. |                                    |          |
| 1.12 | PLO Training plan to be informed by outcome of audit work and workshops.                                    |                     | Ongoing monitoring of PLO Training plan   | Strategic Lead, Help and Protection<br><br>Strategic Lead, Looked After Children, Practice |                     | Children will experience permanence decisions at the earliest opportunity    |                                    |          |

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|             |  |                     |                        | Legal  |  |   |                                    |          |
| <b>1.13</b> | To deliver a lunchtime webinar to share examples of where pre-proceedings has and has not been applied and the impact this has had upon children and families. (webinar to be recorded and uploaded to practice hub) |                     | 23 September 2021      | Principal Social Worker<br>Case Progression Officer                                    | Contribute to increase use of pre-proceedings  | Children will experience permanence decisions at the earliest opportunity.  |                                    |          |
| <b>1.14</b> | A monthly interface meeting between Area Teams, CDT and Horizon will permanency teams (LAC/Permanence and Through Care)  |                     | <b>31 October 2021</b> | Strategic Lead, Help and Protection<br>Strategic Lead, Looked After Children, Practice | Monthly meeting will be scheduled and taken place<br>Note of meeting will be captured and circulated | Transfers between the teams will improve in timeliness, consistency of practice<br>Children and their families will need to repeat their story less often |                                    |          |

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| <p><b><u>2.0 Ofsted Area for Improvement:</u></b> <i>The quality of supervision, management oversight and case notes so that the rationale for decisions made are clearly recorded.</i></p> <p><b><u>Objective:</u></b> To improve the quality of supervision and ensure that practitioners understand the distinction between supervision and management oversight and all decisions are recorded on the file.</p> |   |                     |                     |                         |  |  |                                    |          |
| 2.1   | <p>To deliver 4 workshops/sessions with team managers, taking a restorative approach, to cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supervision-frequency and consistency</li> <li>• the distinction between oversights and supervision</li> <li>• making supervision reflective and recording this</li> </ul> |                     | <b>31 July 2021</b> | Principal Social Worker | <p>To deliver 4 workshops</p> <p>Evidence on files.</p> <p>Links to Practice Improvement subgroup.</p> | <p>Management oversight and supervision training will be recorded so the rationale for decisions for children are clear on file.</p> <p>Social Workers are clear on the priority actions for children to reduce drift and delay in progress.</p> |                                    |          |

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|            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supervising direct work with children</li> <li>• representing the child's story through supervision</li> <li>• tracking delays through SMART actions and review</li> <li>• outcomes and scaling</li> </ul> |                     |                          |                         |   |  |                                    |          |
| <b>2.2</b> | Gather feedback and share key messages from workshops with CSLT.  |                     | <b>31 August 2021</b>    | Principal Social Worker | Improved quality of recorded decision making for children | Relevant policy or procedure changes to support management decision making considered and taking effect. |                                    |          |
| <b>2.3</b> | Review and re-align Practice Standards, Supervision Policy and Recording Guidance to ensure   |                     | <b>30 September 2021</b> | Principal Social Worker | Improved quality of recorded decision making for children | Infrastructure which supports managers to make   |                                    |          |

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|     | documents support Team Managers with recording and decision making.  |                     |                                  | Family Valued Programme Manager                            |   | good decisions for children   |                                    |          |
| 2.4 | Deliver the Core Series Training   |                     | <b>From July – December 2021</b> | Children's Services Workforce Trainer                      | Mandatory training for all practitioners  | Good quality direct work, chronologies and assessments of children support decision making for children |                                    |          |
| 2.5 | Review and re-write the definition for management oversight and supervision with clear examples for both to ensure decisions are clear and explicit on the child's file. |                     | <b>6 September 2021</b>          | Principal Social Worker                                    | Improved quality of recorded decision making for children                           | Where there is consistency in the recording of decision making based upon agreed practice standards.    |                                    |          |
| 2.6 | To produce guidance on the use of language for practitioners.  |                     | <b>30 September 2021</b>         | Principal Social Worker<br>Family Valued Programme Manager | Decision making which drives relationship-based practice with children and families | Relationship with practitioners lead to improved outcomes as children's needs and circumstances         |                                    |          |

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|  |   |                     |   |  |   | are best understood  |                                    |          |
| <b><u>3.0 Objective:</u></b> To improve the quality and timeliness of assessments for children at risk of exploitation through the performance dashboard |   |                     |   |  |   |  |                                    |          |
| 3.1  | Review the current manual system for recording child exploitation and pull through the data to ensure this is reported via the dashboard. |                     | <b>31 August 2021</b>                   | Operational Lead,<br>Responsive Services | Timeliness of assessments   | Children and young people will receive timely assessments.   |                                    |          |
| 3.2  | Deliver Exploitation awareness raising workshops to practitioners and managers.   |                     | <b>July 2021 (during Practice Week)</b> | Operational Lead,<br>Responsive Services | All practitioners and managers have a good awareness of exploitation and have confidence in progressing children and young people through the appropriate pathways. | Children and young people will receive timely assessments<br><br>Child/Young Person Risk assessment to be completed on all cases of Exploitation for medium/high levels of risk. |                                    |          |

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| 3.3  | Develop guidance for practitioners in assessing children and young people who are low risk. |                     | 30 September 2021 | Operational Lead, Responsive Services   |   | Low risk guidance for CE to be developed.   |                                    |          |
| 3.4  | Continue to promote Exploitation Consultation sessions.                                     |                     | 31 August 2021    | Operational Lead, Responsive Services   |   | Children and young people will receive timely assessments                                 |                                    |          |
| 3.5  | Identify Best practice examples and share across service.                                   |                     | 30 September 2021 | Operational Lead, Responsive Services team Managers/ Operational Leads at Team Meetings |   | To improve the quality and timeliness of assessments for children at risk of exploitation |                                    |          |
| <b>4.0 Objective:</b> To improve awareness of missing and ensure all processes are streamlined and understood by practitioners and partners. |   |                     |                   |   |   |   |                                    |          |
| 4.1  | Raise Awareness across Children's Services of the missing procedures.                       |                     | 31 July 2021      | Operational Lead, Responsive Services   | All practitioners and managers are clear about expectations when children | Children and young people receive a consistent and effective response                     |                                    |          |

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|     |  |                     |                          | (in conjunction with Operational Leads across service)   | and young people go missing.  | when they go missing.<br><br>Children and young people are encouraged to engage in return home interview in order that we can capture their voice and use this to influence their care planning. |                                    |          |
| 4.2 | Review current processes to consider streamlining of meetings to reduce duplication and introduce choice for young people in whom completes their RHI. |                     | <b>30 September 2021</b> | Operational Lead, Responsive Services<br><br>Strategic Lead, Looked After Children, Practice<br><br>Operational Lead, Through Care | Missing process to minimize duplication and focus effort on reducing missing episodes | Clear, effective plans will focus on reducing missing episodes for children and young people.  |                                    |          |

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| 4.3 | Include Return Home Interview performance on the dashboard.   |                     | 1 July 2021       | Operational Lead,<br>Responsive Services<br><br>Performance Lead | There will be increased automated oversight of the timeliness and completion of RHIs, enabling better management oversight and grip.                      | Children and young people receive a consistent and effective response when they go missing. |                                    |          |
| 4.4 | Deliver workshops to introduce the new form, develop practitioners understanding of expectations of timeliness and consistency of practice to be upheld when undertaking Return Home Interviews with children and young people. |                     | 30 September 2021 | Operational Lead,<br>Responsive Services                         | The timeliness and consistency of practice in RHIs will improve, providing better understanding of the reasons that children and young people go missing. | Children and young people receive a consistent and effective response when they go missing. |                                    |          |

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| 4.5   | Enhance Youth Work offer across the service.      |                     | <b>30 September 2021</b> | Operational Lead, Responsive Services                                       |                     | Children and young people with an identified need to youth work intervention to reduce their missing episodes will receive support. |                                    |          |
| 4.6   | Confirm Youth Work offer to children looked after |                     | <b>30 September 2021</b> | Operational Lead, Responsive Services<br><br>Operational Lead, Through Care |                     | Consistent approach for all children looked after at risk of missing episodes   |                                    |          |
| 4.7   | Ensure accurate data around missing episodes      |                     | <b>31 July 2021</b>      | Operational Lead, Responsive Services                                       |                     | Ensure children only recorded as missing when this is the case allowing focus to be on those children that are missing              |                                    |          |
| <b>Children looked after and achieving permanence</b> |   |                     |                          |   |                     |   |                                    |          |

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| <p><b>5.0 <u>Ofsted Area for Improvement:</u> Decision making and the recording of rationale with respect to children's placements.</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To ensure that all children and young people placed have a clear decision recorded for each move or activity.</p> |  |                     |              |   |                     |   |                                    |   |
| 5.1  | To ensure all supported accommodation placements are reviewed by the strategic lead.   |                     | 30 June 2021 | Strategic Lead,<br>Looked After Children,<br>Practice   |                     | Children and young people placed have a clear decision recorded for each move or activity |                                    |   |
| 5.2  | To ensure all new supported accommodation placements are signed off by strategic lead.<br><br>(Add to the List of Delegated responsibility document) |                     | 30 June 2021 | Strategic Lead,<br>Looked After Children,<br>Practice<br><br>Strategic Lead,<br>Looked After Children,<br>Corporate Parenting |                     | Children and young people placed have a clear decision recorded for each move or activity |                                    |   |
| 5.3  | To ensure Management oversight is added to the file for all placement moves.   |                     | 21 June 2021 | Strategic Lead,<br>Looked After Children,<br>Practice   |                     | Children and young people placed have a clear decision recorded for each move or activity |                                    | Template developed to be added to recording standards |

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| 5.4  | Young people placed in supported accommodation when this was not care plan to be reviewed at resource panel on a monthly basis. |                     | 1 July 2021       | Strategic Lead, Looked After Children, Corporate Parenting  |                     | Children and young people placed have a clear decision recorded for each move or activity |                                    | Will follow review taking place – commission will also support with this |
| 5.5  | Undertake further work on improving Pathway Plans.  |                     | 30 June 2021      | Strategic Lead, Looked After Children, Practice   |                     |   |                                    |  |
| 5.6  | Review transitional planning with Adult Services to agree any changes to the current age for transition.                        |                     | 31 October 2021   | Head of Service, Adults Social Care<br><br>Strategic Lead, Looked After Children, Corporate Parenting |                     |   |                                    |  |
| <b>6.0 Objective</b> To ensure direct work with children and young people improves practice. |   |                     |                   |   |                     |   |                                    |  |
| 6.1  | Liaise with young people and participation team to update direct work   |                     | 30 September 2021 | Principal Social Worker   |                     | Children and young people receive a consistent and effective practice.                    |                                    |  |

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|            | toolkit and align with a Coventry context and re-share with managers.  |                     |                          |  |                     |  |                                    |          |
| <b>6.2</b> | Share good direct work examples through Practice Development Forum's.  |                     | <b>Monthly</b>           | Principal Social Worker  |                     | Children and young people receive a consistent and effective practice. |                                    |          |
| <b>6.3</b> | Create a short clip for Team Managers to play in team meetings for discussion and reflection upon impact of direct work in practice. |                     | <b>July-August 2021</b>  | Principal Social Worker  |                     | Children and young people receive a consistent and effective practice. |                                    |          |
| <b>6.4</b> | Undertake an audit of Direct Work through dip sampling.  |                     | <b>30 September 2021</b> | Principal Social Worker<br><br>Children's Services Workforce Trainer |                     | Children and young people receive a consistent and effective practice. |                                    |          |

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| <b>Leadership, Management and Governance</b>   |   |                     |  |   |  |   |                                    |          |
| <b>7.0 Objective:</b> To ensure learning from quality assurance activity drives and improves practice through Practice Improvement Monthly meetings. |   |                     |  |   |  |   |                                    |          |
| 7.1  | Strengthen links between Quality Assurance and the Social Work Academy through the workforce development training subgroup to review learning from quality assurance activity and ways to influence practice development, alongside reviewing the impact of this learning and development activity linked to individual audits and supervision. |                     | <b>30 September 2021</b> ; to be tested through quality assurance activity with a timescale of <b>31 December 2021</b> | Strategic Lead, Quality Assurance<br>Principal Social Worker<br>Operational Lead, Quality Assurance | Learning is embedded through OL/TM sharing learning, webinar's and re-audit of areas for development.<br><br>Links to management oversight and supervision workstream. | Children and young people will benefit from improvements in the standard and consistency of practice by practitioners in Children's Services. |                                    |          |
| 7.2  | Review PDF and how audit findings and learning are shared across CS's to maximize impact  |                     | <b>30 September 2021</b>   | Principal Social Worker   | Learning is embedded and practice impacted.  | Children and young people will benefit from improvements in the standard and consistency of   |                                    |          |

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|     | of learning, including areas of good practice and areas for improvement.   |                     |                          | Operational Lead, Quality Assurance   |  | practice by practitioners in Children's Services.   |                                    |          |
| 7.3 | Review QA case file audit tool in line with Signs of Safety, restorative practice and relational practices, making the case file audit process more collaborative with practitioners and a learning and development process. |                     | <b>30 September 2021</b> | Strategic Lead, Quality Assurance<br>Principal Social Worker<br>Operational Lead, Quality Assurance | Learning is embedded   | Children and young people will benefit from improvements in the standard and consistency of practice by practitioners in Children's Services. |                                    |          |
| 7.4 | Revise casefile audit tool to further complement and support evidence of good practice as well as impact and outcomes for children; the tool needs to help us gain the clearest and most balanced understanding of           |                     | <b>30 September 2021</b> | Strategic Lead, Quality Assurance<br>Principal Social Worker<br>Operational Lead, Quality Assurance | Increase in the proportion of audits graded meets good for impact and outcomes for children/good practice evident. | Children and young people will benefit from improvements in the standard and consistency of practice by practitioners in Children's Services. |                                    |          |

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|     | what difference/improvement our involvement has made for the child/family concerned and what else could be realistically done to achieve this/make further difference and improvement.                                |                     |                   |                         | Positive child and family feedback is in the majority. |   |                                    |          |
| 7.5 | Establish a Practice Board to support the development of practice using our four lenses quality assurance approach, as set out in Coventry Children's Services quality assurance and continuous improvement framework |                     | 13 September 2021 | Principal Social Worker |  | The action enables Practice board to be established, with the impact for children to be more measurable by January 2022 through business as usual processes which test the measures practice board focuses on, drawing on quality assurance activity to confirm a shift in practice. This will include improvement in |                                    |          |

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|     |         |                     |         |               |                     | performance quantitative data, increase in positive family feedback and an increase in the proportion of audits rated meets good for impact and outcomes for children and good practice is evident |                                    |          |