

**MEETING**

**CHILDREN, EDUCATION, LIBRARIES & SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE**

**DATE AND TIME**

**TUESDAY 18TH JULY, 2017**

**AT 7.00 PM**

**VENUE**

**HENDON TOWN HALL, THE BURROUGHS, LONDON NW4 4BQ**

**TO: MEMBERS OF CHILDREN, EDUCATION, LIBRARIES & SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE (Quorum 3)**

Chairman: Councillor Reuben Thompstone  
Vice Chairman: Councillor Bridget Perry

Councillor Pauline Coakley-Webb  
Councillor Alison Cornelius  
Councillor Val Duschinsky  
Councillor Kath McGuirk

Councillor Helena Hart  
Councillor Anne Hutton  
Councillor Nagus Narenthira

**Substitute Members**

Rebecca Challice  
Adam Langleben

Tom Davey  
Ammar Naqvi

Anthony Finn  
Stephen Sowerby

**Co-opted Members**

Denis Carey  
Marilyn Nathan

Kevin McSharry  
Gladys Vendy

In line with the Constitution's Public Participation and Engagement Rules, requests to submit public questions or comments must be submitted by 10AM on the third working day before the date of the committee meeting. Therefore, the deadline for this meeting is Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July at 10AM. Requests must be submitted to Abigail Lewis 020 8359 4369 [abigail.lewis@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:abigail.lewis@barnet.gov.uk)

**You are requested to attend the above meeting for which an agenda is attached.  
Andrew Charlwood – Head of Governance**

Governance Service contact: Abigail Lewis 020 8359 4369 [abigail.lewis@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:abigail.lewis@barnet.gov.uk)

Media Relations contact: Sue Cocker 020 8359 7039

**ASSURANCE GROUP**

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3.	DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS	
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# Decisions of the Children, Education, Libraries & Safeguarding Committee

17 May 2017

Members Present:-

AGENDA ITEM 1

Councillor Reuben Thompstone (Chairman)

Councillor Bridget Perry (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Rebecca Challice

Councillor Alison Cornelius

Councillor Helena Hart

Councillor Adam Langleben.

Councillor Anne Hutton

Councillor Kathy Levine

Councillor Val Duschinsky

Also in attendance (as Co-opted Members)

Marilyn Nathan

Darren Warrington

Gladys Vendy

Kevin McSharry

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Kath McGuirk

Denis Carey

## 1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Chairman noted that an error had been made in relation to Councillor McGuirk's declaration at the last meeting and that it should be noted her daughter is a teaching assistant and not herself.

The Chairman also said that the work programme needed to be populated

## 2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

Councillor Langleben substituted Councillor McGuirk. Councillor Langleben gave apologies for being late.

Apologised received from Mr Denis Carey.

## 3. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillor	Item	Nature	Detail
Anne Hutton	10 (1.6)	Non-pecuniary	That the Councillor is a Trustee for Barnet Carers Association.
Reuben Thompstone	11	Non-pecuniary	That the Councillor taught a number of the

			students from the Barnet Youth Assembly.
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**4. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)**

None.

**5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS (IF ANY)**

A representative from Hendon School came up to the table to speak in relation to the question and said they were happy with the response received from officers.

**6. MEMBERS' ITEMS (IF ANY)**

None.

**7. WHAT MAKES BARNET FAMILY FRIENDLY - VERBAL PRESENTATION**

Children from Underhill and Dollis Junior School attended the meeting and made a presentation to the Committee regarding what they believed would make Barnet a Family Friendly Borough.

Strategic Director for Children and Young People thanked the children for attending the meeting and for their presentations, he said he would take the topics that had been raised back to officers in the Council to look into how they could possibly be implemented. Strategic Director for Children and Young People also announced that the Youth Zone would soon be opening in Barnet.

**8. REPORT OF THE UK YOUTH PARLIAMENT MEMBERS**

The Committee invited the Voice of the Child Coordinator to the table to present the report.

Councillor Hutton queried why there were now only two members of the youth parliament, when four had previously been elected. Voice of the Child Officer explained that two of the young people had unfortunately been unable to continue to commit to the parliament for various reasons.

The Youth Parliament Members addressed the Committee and spoke about their experiences over the past year. Both said that had really enjoyed the opportunity and were looking forward to working on their projects over the coming year.

Voice of the Child Officer said he was very proud of the Youth Members for giving up their time and for being so passionate about their manifestos to improve the situation for children in Barnet.

The four newly elected members of the Youth Parliament introduced themselves to the Committee and spoke about their manifestos.

The Chairman congratulated them all on their positions and on the excellent topics they had chosen as manifestos for the year.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. **The Committee noted the report on the progression of the existing UK Youth Parliament members and recognised the campaigns of the new UK Youth Parliament members.**
2. **That the Committee unanimously agreed the actions that the Council would take to meet the manifesto commitments.**

## **9. LAUNCH OF THE UNICEF PARTNERSHIP AND THE CHILD RIGHTS PROGRAMME**

Voice of the Child Officer presented the report. He explained that there were 6 badges that would be implemented and assessed upon which would be produced with the help of children and young people. He explained that 1.10 of the report outlined the measures that would be taken during the partnership and the aim was to become London's most family friendly Borough by 2020.

The Chairman enquired when a follow up report would be received. Voice of the Child Officer said that the partnership was being governed by the Children's Partnership board. My Munday said that it would be possible to update the CELS Committee annually, and this meeting in particular could be a good platform for this each year.

Following consideration of the item, the Chairman moved to the recommendations which were unanimously agreed.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. **That the Committee noted the report and supported the objectives for the partnership with UNICEF.**
2. **That the Committee agreed to promote the Family Friendly Barnet vision through the UNICEF Children's Rights Partner (CRP) programme.**

## **10. BARNET'S YOUTH VOICE OFFICER AND REPORT UPON IMPACT**

Voice of the Child Officer introduced the report and gave an update on all the consultation and engagement activities that were due to take place.

The Chairman thanked Voice of the Child Officer for such a comprehensive report.

Following consideration of the item, the Chairman moved to the recommendation.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

**That the Committee noted the report upon the activity and the impact of Family Service's participation and engagement activity.**

## **11. REPORT OF THE 2016-2017 BARNET YOUTH ASSEMBLY**

A member of the Barnet Youth Assembly spoke on her motion on mental health education that she had put forward at one of the meetings. She felt the response to the motion did not go far enough to help schools tackle mental health. She suggested students from secondary schools could be trained to peer educate and mentor and that this could possibly be funded by the Council.

Strategic Director for Children and Young People informed the Committee that two new initiatives had been established called Thrive and Couth which aimed to provide counselling and support for young people suffering with mental health issues.

Following discussion of the item, the Chairman moved to the recommendations outlined in the cover report. The Committee unanimously agreed to the recommendations.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- 1. The Committee noted the report.**
- 2. That the Committee endorsed the successful motion raised by the Youth Assembly, as outlined in Appendix 1.**
- 3. That the Committee noted and commented on, where applicable, the officers response to the successful motions.**

## **12. CHILDREN, EDUCATION, LIBRARIES & SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chairman updated the Committee that the meeting in June 2017 has been suspended.

The Chairman noted that the work programme needed to be worked on and would be revised for the next meeting.

## **13. ANY OTHER ITEM(S) THAT THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT**

None.

The Vice-Chairman thanked the Chairman for his hard work over the last year.

The meeting finished at 20.52pm.

<b>AGENDA ITEM 7</b>	
 <p><b>CHILDREN, EDUCATION, LIBRARIES &amp; SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE</b></p> <p><b>18 July 2017</b></p>	
<b>Title</b>	<b>Barnet Ofsted Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers</b>
<b>Report of</b>	Strategic Director for Children and Young People
<b>Wards</b>	All
<b>Status</b>	Public
<b>Urgent</b>	No
<b>Key</b>	No
<b>Enclosures</b>	<p><b>Appendix 1: Ofsted Inspection report</b></p> <p><b>Appendix 2: Ofsted guidance for inadequate local authorities</b></p> <p><b>Appendix 3: Department for Education guidance for inadequate local authorities</b></p> <p><b>Appendix 4: Draft Ofsted Improvement Action Plan</b></p> <p><b>Appendix 5: Draft LSCB Improvement Action Plan</b></p>
<b>Officer Contact Details</b>	<p>Chris Munday</p> <p>Strategic Director for Children and Young People</p> <p>Chris.Munday@barnet.gov.uk</p>

<b>Summary</b>
<p>Ofsted, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, inspect and regulate services that care for children and young people, and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages.</p> <p>Ofsted undertook a Single Inspection Framework (SIF) of the London Borough of Barnet's services for children in need of help and protection, children in need of help and care leavers during April and May 2017. As part of this inspection there was also a review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).</p> <p>Overall children's services in Barnet have been judged by Ofsted to be inadequate. The Local Safeguarding Children Board was also judged inadequate. The Council fully accepts the findings of the report.</p>

Issues about the quality of children’s social care services in Barnet were identified and presented to Members of CELS in September 2015 and July 2016. As a result the Council established a Social Work Improvement Board and began a major improvement programme working with Essex County Council as Improvement Partners.

Although there is emerging evidence of practice improvement, especially since the appointment of Practice Leaders in October, this is not sufficiently consistent and there needs to be, as Ofsted recommend (Ofsted Recommendation 1- Page 8), *a continued and sustained focus on improving core social work practice strategically and operationally, to equip practitioners and managers to deliver good-quality services to children and their families.*

The focus of the draft Improvement Action Plan is to enhance our practice leadership and core social work skills, ensuring that there is more understanding of the lived experience of children and young people and on improving their outcomes. This is to be achieved at pace. Given the recent improvement we can, and should remain ambitious about the quality of services we deliver. Our aim is to be re-inspected as a good service within the next two years. This is and will remain a top priority for the Council.

This report includes key findings from the inspection report as well as an overview of the draft ‘written statement of action’ (draft Improvement Action Plan) which the authority is required to complete and submit. The report also includes the immediate actions which have been undertaken since the Ofsted Inspection.

This report summarises guidance from Ofsted and the Department for Education in relation to Local Authorities which have received an overall judgement of inadequate. Ofsted will undertake a series of activities including an action planning visit, a programme of quarterly monitoring visits and a re-inspection once the period of monitoring has ended. The authority is also subject to intervention by the Department for Education (DfE) until services are improved.

<b>Recommendations</b>
<b>1. That the Committee note the findings of the Ofsted Single Inspection Framework carried out between 24 April and 18 May 2017 as set out in paragraph 1.13 and Appendix 1</b>
<b>2. That the Committee note the guidance from Ofsted in relation to Local Authorities which have received an overall judgement of inadequate as set out in paragraph 1.17 to 1.24 and Appendix 2</b>
<b>3. That the Committee note the guidance from the Department for Education in relation to Local Authorities which have received an overall judgement of inadequate as set out in paragraph 1.25 to 1.27 and Appendix 3 (pages 53 - 57) and note that a commissioner for Children’s Services will be appointed for an initial three-month period.</b>
<b>4. That the Committee agree the draft Improvement Action Plan for consultation set out in Appendix 4 and delegate to the Strategic Director for Children and Young People in consultation with the Chief Executive and Lead Member authorisation to complete and submit the plan within the 70 day requirement for Ofsted.</b>
<b>5. That the Committee note the draft LSCB Improvement Action Plan for consultation set out in Appendix 5.</b>

**6. That the Committee agree that each Children, Education, Libraries & Safeguarding Committee meeting will have a standing item on the progress of implementing the Improvement Action Plan.**

**1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED**

1.1 Ofsted, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, inspect and regulate services that care for children and young people, and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages.

1.2 Ofsted undertook a Single Inspection Framework (SIF) between 25 April and 18 May 2017. The SIF inspection reviewed the following:

- **Children who need help and protection.** These are children and young people who are, or who are likely to be, at risk of harm or who are the subject of concern and are identified and protected. This includes preventative services to reduce the likelihood of harm escalating and statutory social work services for those where there are significant levels of concern about children's safety and welfare. It also includes children and young people who are missing from education or being offered alternative provision.
- **Children looked after and achieving permanence.** These are children and young people looked after.
  - **Adoption.** Children who are unable to return home or to their birth families and who need a permanent alternative home. Adoption services cover the recruitment and assessment of foster carers and support for children, young people, families and carers to develop safe and secure relationships.
  - **Experiences and progress of Care Leavers.** Young people aged 16 to 25 who are preparing to leave care or who have left care. The services provide young people with opportunities, support and help to enable them to move successfully to adulthood.
- **Leadership, Governance and Management.** This addresses the effectiveness of leaders and managers and the impact they have on the lives of children and young people and the quality of professional practice locally.

1.3 The overall judgement of the inspection is that Barnet's Children's Service is inadequate. The overall effectiveness judgement is derived from performance in each of the key judgements. An inadequate grade in either the arrangements to help and protect or look after children and young people will always result in an overall effectiveness judgement of inadequate.

1.4 The grading for each part of the SIF are as follows:

<b>1. Children who need help and protection</b>	Inadequate
<b>2. Children looked after and achieving permanence</b>	Inadequate
2.1 Adoption performance	Requires Improvement

	2.2 Experiences and progress of care leavers	Requires Improvement
<b>3. Leadership, management and governance</b>		Inadequate
<b>4. Local Safeguarding Children Board</b>		Inadequate

### **Main Concerns from the Ofsted inspection**

1.5 Since Ofsted introduced a new SIF in 2012, 136 local authority children's services have been inspected. Of these 33 have been judged inadequate, 62 require improvement, and 39 are good and 2 are outstanding.

1.6 The Ofsted inspection report is included at Appendix 1. The report goes into detail about the inspection's finding against each part of the SIF and includes 19 recommendations. The Council fully accepts the findings of the inspection and is committed to taking action to rectify the issue identified. The main themes that Ofsted identified are as follows:

- 14 of the 19 recommendations relate to two key areas:
  - enhancing our practice leadership
  - enhancing our core social work skills

Within these areas more understanding is needed of the lived experience of children and young people and on improving outcomes
- The other recommendations relate to specific areas of work:
  - Improving our approach to homeless young people ensuring they are supported
  - Enhancing our Private Fostering awareness raising and assessment processes
  - Expanding and improving our life-story work to ensure all children in permanent placements have an understanding of their past.
  - Establishing more workshops for care leavers on areas like money management helping them to prepare for independence.
  - Improving our approach to connected carers

### **Improving Children's Social Care Services in Barnet**

1.7 The Council accepts the findings and recommendations of the Ofsted Inspection report in full.

1.8 Barnet fully accepts the need to improve and had begun to take proactive action well ahead of the Ofsted inspection, this is noted by Inspectors (Page 28 – Ofsted Inspection Report).

*'Since April 2016, senior leaders have focused on creating the right infrastructure and staffing requirements to support wholesale practice improvement. Improvements include the creation of additional social work posts and teams to reduce caseloads, significant investment in improving the local authority's electronic recording systems and more accurate performance management reporting. In October 2016, there was*

*further investment in senior practice leadership to enable a focus on quality of practice and children's experiences. The very recent improvements are a result of this. However, there is recognition that there is much more work to do to ensure that all managers and staff embed a culture of positive social work practice across the organisation.*

*Senior leaders and elected members demonstrate a clear understanding of areas for development within children's social care, and a commitment to improving services for children and families in Barnet. The local authority has secured ongoing financial support and expertise across the council to support improvements. Collaboration with its collegiate partner and strengthened governance arrangements, including the social work practice improvement board chaired by the chief executive officer, monitor and scrutinise performance in areas already identified for improvement and development.'*

1.9 The objectives of Practice Improvement Plan 2016-17 were to build a sustainable foundation from which social work can improve, key achievements to date are included in the draft Improvement Action Plan, some of which are:

- A more stable workforce, turnover rate reduced from 39% (Sept 2015) to 12.76% (March 2017) as part of a focus on recruitment, development and retention of social workers and social work managers in frontline practice
- More manageable workload social care workloads with a reduction from 37.5 (January 2016) to 12.7 (April 2017) in the Duty and Assessment team and from 18.7 to 14.6 in Intervention & Planning team over the same time period
- Creation of more and smaller social care teams to allow team managers to know both staff and families well. There was a reduction in the ratio of managers to social workers from 1:13 in April 2016 to 1:6 in April 2017 and additional management capacity in MASH.
- Improvements in appropriate practical support - removal of inefficient WISDOM system and configuring the Early Help system to enable partners to access. Over 130 IT issues were resolved including key changes to systems and forms in response to needs.
- The Chief Executive, along with partners of the LSCB, commissioned a review of the LSCB to understand the effectiveness.

1.10 Family Services has developed a draft Improvement Action Plan for consultation (see Appendix 4) based on inspection findings and recommendations. This Action Plan builds on the improvement programme already established, but focuses more rigorously on practice leadership, core social work skills and understanding of the lived experiences for children and young people.

1.11 Family Services will continue to work with Essex as collegiate partners in delivering the programme.

1.12 Securing sustainable improvement is a long-term endeavour, research describes a two to three year journey of working together to create a strong, stable and well-functioning service.

### **Findings from Ofsted Inspection Report (Appendix 1)**

1.13 The Summary for Children and Young People from the Ofsted report states (Page 10 – Ofsted Inspection Report):

- *Too many services for children and young people in Barnet are poor. Senior leaders know this and have started to do something about it by making changes and focusing on recruiting good-quality staff to work with children and young people, but it is taking too long. This means that some children and young people in Barnet are not kept safe from harm.*
- *Senior leaders, all managers and social workers do not find out enough about what it is like to be a child or young person living in Barnet who needs help or protection. Social workers do not always respond at the right time to help children.*
- *When professionals tell social workers that children and young people need help, social workers do not always act quickly enough to help them.*
- *In almost all cases, social workers do not make enough effort to find out what children and young people want or need. This means that plans to help children and young people in need are not very good. It is not clear what is going to happen, or by when, to improve children's and young people's lives.*
- *Not all social workers are good at working out the risk of dangers to children and young people. They do not always make sure that children and young people are receiving the right services from the right people.*
- *Social workers' managers do not guide them to make sure that they are getting things right. When they do, they do not always write this down so that they can check that it has happened.*
- *The majority of children and young people in care live with someone who knows them well, listens to them, looks after them well and keeps them safe. Children and young people told inspectors that they are happy where they are living and that their achievements are celebrated.*
- *Social workers do not always bring children into care soon enough.*
- *Young people who go missing from care receive a poor service, because social workers do not find out enough about the risks to them. This means that young people who go missing are not always kept safe enough from dangers, such as gangs or adults sexually exploiting them.*
- *Once it is agreed that children in care are to be adopted, they receive a good service.*
- *Young people leaving care receive a better service from members of staff who know them well, find out what their basic needs are and put clear plans in place to meet their needs.*

1.14 Local Safeguarding Children's Board, an independently chaired multi-agency group, was inspected by Ofsted at the same time as the Local Authority and key findings from this report are as follows:

- The Barnet Safeguarding Children's Board is not effective in discharging all of its statutory functions. Monitoring of frontline practice has been poor and insufficient.
- The board does not have robust scrutiny of statutory requirements, such as the arrangements for children in private fostering or the monitoring of the quality of multi-agency safeguarding training.
- The learning and improvement framework is not fully implemented, as there is no programme of multi-agency audits.
- The processes to review child deaths work well, and there is an effective multi-agency rapid response to unexplained deaths.

1.15 A draft Improvement Action Plan which responds directly to the improvement recommendations in the Ofsted report and the LSCB review has been developed for consultation (Appendix 5). The objectives are;

- Leadership, management and governance arrangements will deliver strong, strategic local leadership that measurably improves outcomes for vulnerable children.
- Professional relationships between the partner organisations will mature and develop so that partners are able to hold each other to account.
- Accountabilities are embedded and will result in confident, regular evaluation and improvement in the quality of help, care and protection that is provided.
- Children, young people and families will clearly benefit from improvements that are made and the impact of their feedback is well evidenced.
- Effective and continuous learning improves professional practice.
- The views and experiences of children, young people and their families are at the centre of service design and influence development and strategic thinking.

### **Actions taken by the Local Authority since the Ofsted Inspection**

1.16 Following the initial Ofsted report immediate actions were taken:

- Implemented the new senior leadership structure agreed by General Functions Committee in March 2017, with a key focus on practice leadership
- Secured investment to manage demand and improve quality (£5.7m)
- Changed the line management arrangements for MASH, DAT and Intervention and Planning Services to ensure consistency in decision making and with a future aim of reducing points of transition for families thereby promoting a seamless system of child protection
- Developed a robust framework for multi-agency working, information sharing and accountability in the MASH by introducing daily MASH meetings and a new framework for multi-agency audits

- Introduced robust checks and balances to the quality and frequency of management oversight at the front door of children's services
- Implemented a new assessment pro-forma that promotes robust child focused assessment and analysis of information gathered
- Developed a new chronology template and delivered lunchtime workshops to staff on chronologies
- Completed appraisal targets with all front line managers and staff that set out clear expectations for practice quality and management oversight which is congruent with the DfE child and family social work knowledge and skills framework
- Permanently employed a strategic lead for children at risk of CSE/Missing to ensure robust monitoring, strategic multi-agency and inter-agency interface and practice leadership
- Audited and improved reporting, tracking and monitoring systems of children missing from care
- Improved tracking and case management of children subject to PLO to ensure robust and timely decision making
- The fostering workflow has been reviewed and configured on LCS to improve recording
- Developed and implemented a refreshed 16/17 year old homelessness protocol
- Developed a framework for a robust quality assurance programme of activities that has a clear and purposeful link to the workforce development programme, identified areas for improvement and performance data
- Live audit activity (observations of practice) have started
- Provided a Corporate parenting report on the impact of the care leaver pledge to Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel (CPAP)

**Ofsted monitoring and re-inspection of local authority children's services judged inadequate (Appendix 2)**

- 1.17 Ofsted will undertake a series of activities including an action planning visit, a programme of quarterly monitoring visits and a re-inspection once the period of monitoring has ended.
- 1.18 Ofsted will visit the local authority for an action planning meeting. This will happen between 25 and 35 days after the local authority receive the report. This meeting will cover the inspection judgements and recommendations, including implications for statutory partners, and review the draft post-inspection action plan.
- 1.19 The local authority has to submit a 'written statement of action' (the action plan) to the Secretary of State and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) within 70 working days of the receipt of the inspection report (16 October 2017). Ofsted will review the action plan and confirm to the Directors of Children's Services whether the action plan reflects the inspection findings and recommendations.

## **Monitoring of inadequate local authorities**

- 1.20 Ofsted will carry out quarterly monitoring visits which will evaluate the progress the local authority has made against the recommendations in the inspection report.

## **Re-inspection of inadequate local authorities**

- 1.21 Ofsted decides whether to undertake a post-monitoring single inspection or a full single inspection. This decision is based upon information and performance data gathered during monitoring visits, the local authority's evaluation of its improvement journey and the view of the DfE. However local authorities found to be inadequate across all or most areas are likely to receive a full repeat single inspection.
- 1.22 Ofsted will usually re-inspect a local authority judged inadequate at its last inspection within two years of it submitting its action plan.
- 1.23 If the re-inspection determines that the local authority remains inadequate, the monitoring process will start again. Alternatively, the Secretary of State may appoint a Children's Services Commissioner to review whether services should be removed from council control.
- 1.24 Where Ofsted returns a "requires improvement" judgement on a previously inadequate council, central government will continue to provide supervision and support for 12 months to ensure that improvements are sustained.

## **The Department for Education's intervention policy (Appendix 3, pages 53 - 57)**

- 1.25 The authority is subject to intervention by the Department of Education (DfE) until services are improved.
- 1.26 Whenever Ofsted finds children's social care services to be inadequate, the DfE will provide expert scrutiny to diagnose problems and support the council to produce an effective improvement plan. A children's commissioner will be appointed to Barnet by the DfE for an initial three-months to give advice to ministers about the council's progress on improvements.
- 1.27 The DfE will review the local authority's progress towards improvement every six months.

## **2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Authorisation to complete and submit the draft Improvement Action Plan is recommended as the local authority is required to submit a 'written statement of action' to the Secretary of State and HMCI (to be submitted by 16 October 2017).
- 2.2 A standing item at CELS on the progress of implementing the draft Improvement Action Plan is recommended to enhance scrutiny by elected members in order to

support and challenge continuous improvement. This is recommended so that the local authority is effective as the lead agency for the protection and care of children and young people and as a corporate parent.

### **3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED**

- 3.1 The completion, submission and coordinated implementation of the draft Improvement Action Plan are integral to driving the continuation of the Family Services' journey to ensure improved outcomes for children and families. The alternative option of maintaining the status quo will not make the desired improvements or improve outcomes at the pace required.

### **4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION**

- 4.1 The draft Improvement Action Plan following consultation, will be submitted to the Secretary of State and HMCI.
- 4.2 The delivery of the draft Improvement Action Plan will continue to be overseen by the Family Service's Social Work Improvement Board, chaired by the Chief Executive. There will also be monthly updates and reporting. Officers responsible for delivery will provide monthly updates to senior managers and the Improvement Team. There will be regular updates to members through both CELS and the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel.
- 4.3 A framework to measure the progress of the action plan is being developed. This will consist of a set of performance indicators which will provide an overview of practice across the service and a quality assurance framework to ensure improvements in practice have been implemented and embedded.

### **5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION**

#### **Corporate Priorities and Performance**

- 5.1 The implementation of the action plan and continuation of the improvement programme is a key mechanism through which Family Services will deliver the Family Friendly Barnet vision.
- 5.2 This supports the following Council's corporate priorities as expressed through the Corporate Plan for 2015-20 which sets out the vision and strategy for the next five years based on the core principles of fairness, responsibility and opportunity, to make sure Barnet is a place;
- Of opportunity, where people can further their quality of life
  - Where people are helped to help themselves, recognising that prevention is better than cure
- 5.3 Family Services are working with partners to make Barnet the most family friendly borough to ensure a great start in life for every child and prepare young people well

for adulthood. Building resilience through purposeful social work practice, enabled by appropriate tools and a high quality workforce so that families are able to help themselves and prevent problems from escalating.

**Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

5.4 A Business Planning 2017 – 2020 report which was presented to Policy and Resources committee on 27 June 2017 approved an additional £5.7 million for Family Services in 2017/18. This additional budget includes investment to improve practice as well as allocations for costs of inflation and growth pressures.

Demand	Age group	2017/18
		£'000
Demographics – placements	0-17	733
Health Visitors - links to MASH, Signs of Safety, Child Protection	0 - 5	270
UASCs – placements	0-25	260
Special Guardianship Orders	0-17	173
Children and Social Work Bill - staffing in Leaving Care	0-25	125
Disability - staffing and placement costs from adults	0-25	1556
<b>Improvement</b>		
Increase in gang activity and serious youth crime	0-17	117
Youth homelessness	0 -17	100
REACH service	0-17	510
CIC caseload - lifestory, missing (1TM, 3 SW)	0-17	190
Practice Improvement and Quality staffing		354
Business Support in Performance Hubs		183
Inspection planning		120
MASH Management		90
MASH Social Work capacity		129
<b>Others</b>		
Pay inflation		195
Contract inflation		400
Benefits package		200
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£5,705</b>

## **Social Value**

- 5.5 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. Before commencing a procurement process, commissioners should think about whether the services they are going to buy, or the way they are going to buy them, could secure these benefits for their area or stakeholders.

## **Legal and Constitutional References**

- 5.6 Local authorities have specific duties in respect of children under various legislation including the Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004.. They have a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need in their area and, provided that this is consistent with the child's safety and welfare, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families by providing services appropriate to the child's needs. They also have a duty to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing services appropriate to the child's needs, provided this is consistent with the child's safety and welfare. They should do this in partnership with parents, in a way that is sensitive to the child's race, religion, culture and language and that, where practicable, takes account of the child's wishes and feelings.
- 5.7 Part 8 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides the statutory framework for Ofsted inspections. Section 136 and 137 provide the power for Ofsted to inspect on behalf of the Secretary of State and requires the Chief Inspector to produce a report following such an inspection. Following receipt of the report, the local authority must prepare a written statement of (1) action which they propose to take in light of the report and (2) the period within which they propose to take that action.
- 5.8 Responsibility for Functions, Annex A, in the council's constitution states that the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee has the responsibility for powers, duties and functions relating to Children's Services. In addition to this, the committee has responsibility for overseeing the support for young people in care and enhancing the council's corporate parenting role.

## **Risk Management**

- 5.9 The nature of services provided to children and families by Family Services manage significant levels of risk. An inappropriate response or poor decision-making around a case could lead to a significant children's safeguarding incident resulting in significant harm. Good quality early intervention and social care services reduce the likelihood of children suffering harm and increase the likelihood of children developing into successful adults and achieving and succeeding. The implementation of the draft Improvement Action Plan based on inspection findings and recommendations reduce this risk and drive forward improvements towards good quality services.

## Equalities and Diversity

- 5.10 The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies **to have due regard** to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
  - advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
  - foster good relations between people from different groups
- 5.11 The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services
- 5.12 Equalities and diversity considerations are a key element of social work practice. It is imperative that help and protection services for children and young are sensitive and responsive to age, disability, ethnicity, faith or belief, gender, gender, identity, language, race and sexual orientation. Barnet has a diverse population of children and young people. Children and young people from minority ethnic groups account for 52%, compared with 30% in the country as a whole. The proportion of children and young people with English as an additional language across primary schools is 44% (the national average is 18%).
- 5.13 Social workers recording and planning in relation to inequalities and disadvantage is inconsistent and therefore the action plan addresses the additional work which needs to be done to ensure that children's diversity and identity needs are met.

## Consultation and Engagement

- 5.14 Consultation and engagement with children and young people is central to social work practice and service improvement. Barnet has a range of mechanisms to engage and consult with children, young and their families. This includes youth forums such as Barnet Youth Board and Youth Assembly; young commissioners to co-design services and Children in Care Council to improve the support children in care receive.
- 5.15 The draft Improvement Action Plan looks to improve children's participation to ensure that all decisions and planning that affects them is influenced by their wishes and feelings. The plan also includes actions to strengthen how the views and experiences of children, young people and their families influence service design. This feedback will also help monitor the impact of improvement activity.
- 5.16 There will also be engagement, consultation and communication with staff and partner agencies about the inspection result and draft Improvement Action Plan.
- 5.17 The draft Improvement Action Plan will need to be delivered with partner agencies to ensure action is undertaken in a joined up effective way.

## Insight

- 5.18 A large amount of insight was collected and used during the Ofsted Inspection. This insight data has been used to develop the action plan. Insight data will continue to be regularly collected and used in monitoring the progress and impact of the action plan and shaping ongoing improvement activity.

## 6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1 Item 8, Policy and Resources Committee, 27 June 2017:  
<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=692&MId=8736&Ver=4>
- 6.2 Item 10, Children, Education, Libraries & Safeguarding Committee, 12 July 2016  
<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=697&MId=8685&Ver=4>
- 6.3 Item 11, Children, Education, Libraries & Safeguarding Committee, 21 September 2015:  
<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=697&MId=8258&Ver=4>

# London Borough of Barnet

## Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers

and

## Review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board<sup>1</sup>

Inspection date: 25 April – 18 May 2017

Report published: 7 July 2017

<b>Children's services in Barnet are inadequate</b>		
<b>1. Children who need help and protection</b>		Inadequate
<b>2. Children looked after and achieving permanence</b>		Inadequate
	2.1 Adoption performance	Requires improvement
	2.2 Experiences and progress of care leavers	Requires improvement
<b>3. Leadership, management and governance</b>		Inadequate

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<sup>1</sup> Ofsted produces this report under its power to combine reports in accordance with section 152 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. This report includes the report of the inspection of local authority functions carried out under section 136 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the report of the review of the Local Safeguarding Children Board carried out under the Local Safeguarding Children Boards (Review) Regulations 2013.

## Executive summary

There are widespread and serious failures in the services provided to children and their families in Barnet. Inspectors identified a legacy of widespread poor practice and ongoing systemic failures and services that neither adequately ensure the safety, nor promote the welfare of children and young people.

Threshold decisions are inconsistently made and misunderstood at all levels of intervention. Partners in the multi-agency safeguarding hub do not effectively share information or ensure timely decision making. This causes delay for too many children, some of whom remain at risk of significant harm. Strategy discussions and child protection investigations are of poor quality, with insufficient information sharing between partner agencies to ensure rigorous risk analysis. This results in the risks to children not being fully understood or evaluated. Large numbers of poor-quality assessments result in inappropriate planning, and many children subsequently need a reassessment before they can receive more specialised help and support.

Ineffective analysis of risk and assessment of children's needs, including for children looked after, result in poor care planning that is not focused on outcomes and is unresponsive when children's circumstances change or deteriorate. Poor-quality case recording and oversight of casework by managers, child protection chairs and independent reviewing officers lead to ineffective case work direction. This contributes to drift and delay in the provision of appropriate services for children and their families. There is some effective early help to families. However, early help services are not sufficiently well coordinated or focused.

Since the local authority was last inspected in 2012, there has been a significant deterioration in the quality of service provision. The breadth and depth of this decline were recognised by the current director of children's services. He commissioned an independent diagnostic review of children's services in January 2016. This work confirmed widespread systemic weaknesses in practice.

Following the diagnostic review, action was taken to address concerns. Senior leaders have successfully gained corporate support and resources to make improvements, and demonstrate a sound understanding of the areas for development and a commitment to improving services for children and families in Barnet. Most notably, the authority entered into a collegiate partnership with a local authority that is able to share relevant social work knowledge and expertise. From April 2016, changes to the senior leadership team and a social work improvement board have been established to oversee a broad programme of planned activities to address ongoing deficiencies in service provision and to drive improvement. In October 2016, there was further investment in senior practice leadership to enable a focus on quality of practice and children's experiences. There is evidence of some recent improvements that have been made as a result of these strategies. However, to date, these have been ineffective in improving core standards of social work practice for children and their families.

Oversight of practice by heads of service and team managers is weak. The evaluation of practice is often too positive and minimises the risk to children. Managers do not provide sufficient guidance or direction to improve practice for children or keep children's progress at the centre of their practice. Heads of service and operational directors rarely record their involvement in decision making.

The local authority and partners have prioritised the strategic response to child sexual exploitation and multi-agency working for children at the highest risk. This is overseen by the multi-agency sexual exploitation panel and by the newly created multi-agency REACH team for children at risk of gang affiliation and related violence. However, operationally, the response to children, including those looked after, at risk of sexual exploitation and those who go missing is not consistently effective. The action taken to understand and reduce the risk to them is often delayed and insufficient. Recent improvements in the completion of return home interviews are enabling better engagement with children, but this is still inconsistent.

Multi-agency arrangements are stronger for some areas of service that are led by the council's community safety service. The response to radicalisation is effectively coordinated, and there are high levels of awareness and effective systems. Services for children privately fostered do not meet minimum standards, and responses to homeless 16- to 17-year-olds are too variable, with some children's needs not met.

Decisions for children to become looked after are not always timely. Some children who are experiencing significant neglect remain in the pre-proceedings phase of the Public Law Outline for too long before care proceedings commence. Permanence is not considered early enough or achieved swiftly for many children. Social workers see the majority of children looked after regularly, although not always alone. Most children live in stable homes with carers who meet their needs, although some children are living with connected carers in unassessed situations for too long. Children told inspectors that they are listened to and are happy where they are living. Too few children have a record of their life story. Once children are looked after, corporate parenting is stronger, achieving improvements in the housing provision for care leavers and the timeliness of initial health assessments. Children's achievements are recognised and celebrated.

Adoption is achieved without delay for small numbers of children, and adopters are positive about the service that they receive. The quality of adoption reports for adults and children is not consistent. The information and language used in life-story work are not always appropriate for the age of individual children to understand their histories.

The care-leaving service is in touch with almost all care leavers, and knows and supports them well. Almost all care leavers have suitable accommodation, but although the majority of care leavers are engaged in learning or employment, too many are not. Not enough care leavers know what the local authority pledges to do for them or what their entitlements are, or have ownership of their pathway plans.

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## The local authority

### Information about this local authority area<sup>2</sup>

#### Previous Ofsted inspections

- The local authority operates two children's homes. Both were judged to be good in their most recent Ofsted inspection.
- The last inspection of the local authority's safeguarding arrangements for the protection of children was in January 2012. The local authority was judged to be good.
- The last inspection of the local authority's services for children looked after was in January 2012. The local authority was judged to be good.

#### Local leadership

- The director of children's services (DCS) has been in post since May 2015.
- The DCS is also responsible for culture and libraries.
- The chief executive has been in post since January 2017.
- The chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) has been in post since October 2013.
- The function that the local authority has delegated to a third-party provider is the emergency duty service.
- The local authority uses a 'resilience' model of social work.

#### Children living in this area

- Approximately 93,590 children and young people under the age of 18 years live in Barnet. This is 25% of the total population in the area.
- Approximately 17.4% of the local authority's children aged under 16 years are living in low-income families (HMRC 2014).
- The proportion of children entitled to free school meals:
  - in primary schools is 16.7% (the national average is 14.5%)
  - in secondary schools is 13.1% (the national average is 13.2%).
- Children and young people from minority ethnic groups account for 67.6% of all children living in the area, compared with 30% in the country as a whole.
- The largest minority ethnic groups of children and young people in the area are Indian and Black African.

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<sup>2</sup> The local authority was given the opportunity to review this section of the report and has updated it with local unvalidated data where this was available.

- The proportion of children and young people who speak English as an additional language:
  - in primary schools is 48.7% (the national average is 20.1%)
  - in secondary schools is 38.8% (the national average is 15.7%).

### **Child protection in this area**

- At 31 March 2017, 2,849 children had been identified through assessment as being formally in need of a specialist children’s service. This is a reduction from 3,338 at 31 March 2016.
- At 31 March 2017, 196 children and young people were the subject of a child protection plan (a rate of 25.4 per 10,000 children). This is a reduction from 263 (29.6 per 10,000 children) at 31 March 2016.
- At 31 March 2017, 16 children lived in a privately arranged fostering placement. This is an increase from 14 at 31 March 2016.
- In the two years before this inspection, eight serious incident notifications were submitted to Ofsted and one serious case review was completed.
- There are two serious case reviews ongoing at the time of the inspection.

### **Children looked after in this area**

- At 31 March 2017, 345 children were being looked after by the local authority (a rate of 38.3 per 10,000 children). This is an increase from 318 (35.8 per 10,000 children) at 31 March 2016. Of this number:
  - 214 (or 62%) live outside the local authority area
  - 40 live in residential children’s homes, of whom 70% live out of the authority area
  - 10 live in residential special schools,<sup>3</sup> all of whom live out of the authority area
  - 206 live with foster families, of whom 52% live out of the authority area
  - eight live with parents, of whom 75% live out of the authority area
  - 54 children are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.
- In the last 12 months:
  - there have been eight adoptions
  - 28 children became subject of special guardianship orders
  - 168 children ceased to be looked after, of whom 4.7% subsequently returned to be looked after

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<sup>3</sup> These are residential special schools that look after children for 295 days or less per year.

- 50 young people ceased to be looked after and moved on to independent living
- no children or young people are living in houses in multiple occupation.

## Recommendations

1. Ensure a continued and sustained focus on improving core social work practice, strategically and operationally, to equip practitioners and managers to deliver good-quality services to children and their families.
2. Ensure that partners work together in the multi-agency safeguarding hub to ensure timely and accurate information sharing and a consistent application of thresholds for all children referred to children's services.
3. Ensure that social work practice and decision making for children focus on understanding their lived experiences and incorporate their wishes and feelings.
4. Ensure that all children identified as being at risk of harm benefit from effective child protection enquiries.
5. Ensure that strategy discussions include information gathered from all partners, and result in clear planning and recording of actions and the rationale for decisions.
6. Ensure that all written records are clear and up to date, and accurately reflect the circumstances of children and their families.
7. Ensure that the quality of assessments is sufficient to enable an accurate evaluation of the risks posed to children, and that this is regularly updated.
8. Ensure that management decision making is effective and leads to clear, timely and effective care planning that safeguards children and focuses on improving outcomes for them.
9. Ensure that children who are victims of chronic long-term neglect and emotional abuse, and who are subject to long periods of child protection planning, have appropriate risk assessments and plans made for them.
10. Ensure that timely action is taken to understand and reduce risk to children who go missing from home or care and who are vulnerable to child sexual exploitation. When risk does not reduce, or increases, ensure that effective additional safeguarding action is taken.
11. Improve the standard of social work to families under the pre-proceedings phase of the Public Law Outline and ensure that, when there is no improvement within a timescale that is right for children, the local authority issues timely court proceedings to protect them and avoid drift and delay in achieving permanence.
12. Ensure that connected carers are thoroughly assessed within regulatory timescales.

13. Ensure that all children who are privately fostered and their carers are regularly visited, that all work is compliant with minimum standards of good practice, and that the awareness of private fostering is raised in the workforce.
14. Ensure that homeless 16- to 17-year-olds are thoroughly assessed and that appropriate ongoing support is offered to them to meet their needs.
15. Ensure that the oversight of practice by all operational directors, heads of service, team managers, child protection chairs and independent reviewing officers is child focused and effective in achieving positive change for children.
16. Improve children's participation in all decisions and planning that affect them and in future service developments, including their stronger involvement in corporate parenting.
17. Ensure that all children receive help to understand their histories, and that social workers write life-story books and later-life letters sensitively, in a child-focused way.
18. Ensure that children's diversity and identity needs are met and that they are supported to retain their birth language. Ensure that interpreters are used to communicate with them and their families, when needed.
19. Improve care leavers' ownership of pathway plans and the quality and timeliness of targets, to improve their lives. Ensure that care leavers have the tools, such as money management, to cope with life's challenges and are fully aware of the 'Pledge' and their entitlements.

## Summary for children and young people

- Too many services for children and young people in Barnet are poor. Senior leaders know this and have started to do something about it by making changes and focusing on recruiting good-quality staff to work with children and young people, but it is taking too long. This means that some children and young people in Barnet are not kept safe from harm.
- Senior leaders, all managers and social workers do not find out enough about what it is like to be a child or young person living in Barnet who needs help or protection. Social workers do not always respond at the right time to help children.
- When professionals tell social workers that children and young people need help, social workers do not always act quickly enough to help them.
- In almost all cases, social workers do not make enough effort to find out what children and young people want or need. This means that plans to help children and young people in need are not very good. It is not clear what is going to happen, or by when, to improve children's and young people's lives.
- Not all social workers are good at working out the risk of dangers to children and young people. They do not always make sure that children and young people are receiving the right services from the right people.
- Social workers' managers do not guide them to make sure that they are getting things right. When they do, they do not always write this down so that they can check that it has happened.
- The majority of children and young people in care live with someone who knows them well, listens to them, looks after them well and keeps them safe. Children and young people told inspectors that they are happy where they are living and that their achievements are celebrated.
- Social workers do not always bring children into care soon enough.
- Young people who go missing from care receive a poor service, because social workers do not find out enough about the risks to them. This means that young people who go missing are not always kept safe enough from dangers, such as gangs or adults sexually exploiting them.
- Once it is agreed that children in care are to be adopted, they receive a good service.
- Young people leaving care receive a better service from members of staff who know them well, find out what their basic needs are and put clear plans in place to meet their needs.

**The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection**

**Inadequate**

**Summary**

Since the last inspection in 2012, the quality of the service provided to children in need of help and protection has deteriorated. A lack of focus on listening to children in order to understand their experiences is at the core of the widespread and serious failings seen across the service. Risks are not always recognised, and many children live in neglectful or abusive situations for too long.

Threshold decisions are inconsistent at every stage. Partners in the multi-agency safeguarding hub do not work together effectively to ensure timely or effective decision making that is informed by good-quality information. This causes delay in receiving a service, for many children, and some remain at risk of harm because of this.

For many children, when they are identified as being at immediate risk of harm, the strategy discussions and child protection enquiries are of poor quality, with insufficient information sharing and lack of risk analysis. This results in risks to the children not being fully understood or evaluated, poor management decision making, and thresholds not being understood and consistently applied.

Large numbers of poor-quality assessments do not effectively analyse risk, so lead to reassessment and poor planning, therefore delays in the provision of services and poor outcomes for children. Poor oversight of casework by managers and child protection chairs leads to drift and delay for many children, particularly those identified as at risk of harm from neglect and emotional abuse. This means that those children do not have prompt and effective responses when things are not improving. Some children remain in the pre-proceedings phase of the Public Law Outline for too long before appropriate decisions are made about the next steps. Oversight in this area has recently been strengthened, but it is yet to have an impact on frontline practice.

Although the local authority has taken action to improve services for children with disabilities and homeless 16- and 17-year-olds, similar weaknesses in assessment and care planning, and poor management oversight are apparent.

The response to children at risk of sexual exploitation and those who go missing is not consistently effective. Despite some recent improvements, services for children privately fostered do not meet minimum standards, and the response to homeless 16- to 17-year-olds is too variable, with some children's needs not met.

Multi-agency arrangements are stronger for some areas of service led by the council's community safety service. The response to radicalisation is effectively coordinated, and there are both high levels of awareness and effective systems.

## Inspection findings

20. Work with children in need of help and protection is inadequate in Barnet, because practice is not child focused. At all stages of children's journeys, the work undertaken with children does not demonstrate enough professional curiosity to find out what is happening to them to ensure a sound understanding of their lived experiences. Social work practice too often describes and documents events and situations without any consideration or analysis of the impact on children or any clear plan of what needs to change to improve outcomes. This inhibits timely and effective intervention and means that some children remain at risk of significant harm.  
(Recommendation)
21. Not all children receive the right help at the right time. Referrals and concerns to children's services via the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) do not lead to the consistent or effective application of thresholds. This results in delay for many children. For children at the highest level of risk, action is taken quickly to ensure that they are safeguarded. However, for some children, risk remains unassessed for too long. For children who are not at immediate risk, there is delay as multi-agency information gathering takes too long or is incomplete. Children may not receive the appropriate help at the right time and then need more specialised help and support at a later stage, or be repeatedly reassessed before receiving an appropriate service.  
(Recommendation)
22. Many children identified as at risk of harm do not benefit from effective child protection enquiries. Strategy discussions do not routinely consider sufficient information from partner agencies, and the decisions to proceed to an initial child protection conference are not informed by thorough enquiries. The application of thresholds is inconsistent, resulting in low numbers of children being discussed at multi-agency conferences and some children not being offered intervention at the appropriate level of need. (Recommendation)
23. While some very recent assessments are of better quality, the overall quality of social work assessment is weak. There needs to be more consideration of historical information and analysis of parenting capacity, better consideration of diversity and a focus on the lived experience of children. The impact on children living with the risk posed by parental behaviours is poor, in the majority of cases considered. Decision making is often flawed, as it is based on a poor-quality evaluation of children's circumstances, and this leads to the help not being provided at the right time. (Recommendation)
24. The vast majority of care planning is ineffective. There is a lack of focus on measuring progress for children or their outcomes. When there is no progress, this is not re-evaluated or escalated effectively. This leads to drift and delay. This is particularly stark for a significant number of children who are victims of chronic long-term neglect and emotional abuse, who do not have the impact

of this risk recognised, responded to or reduced, despite spending long periods subject to child protection planning. Examples include children whose chronic neglect is 'missed' due to a focus on a child's disability, and whose parental mental health and learning difficulties lead to drift and delay in instigating the Public Law Outline (PLO) processes. (Recommendation)

25. Some children remain in the pre-proceedings phase of the PLO for too long before appropriate decisions are made about the next steps. The local authority has recently strengthened its oversight of practice within the PLO through a review of all children's circumstances by heads of service. However, decisions to take legal action have not been progressed swiftly for a small number of children, resulting in further drift and delay. This has meant that a small number of children have remained living in circumstances of high levels of neglect for unacceptable lengths of time. (Recommendation)
26. There has been some improvement in the participation of partners at regular core groups and reviews, but meetings are not sufficiently focused on the experiences of children. They do not offer a robust scrutiny of the progress of plans. This means that too many children live with neglect and abuse for long periods without effective intervention from multi-agency practitioners.
27. Poor-quality practice has gone unchallenged until recently. The ineffective management oversight is compounded by the lack of purposeful challenge from independent child protection chairs, who fail to act to address drift and delay for many children. Since January 2017, the local authority has begun to address this lack of effective oversight and is starting to implement change and improvements by strengthening practice leadership. This is not yet evident in the work undertaken with the majority of children.
28. Work with other specific cohorts of vulnerable children reflects similar issues. Services for children with disabilities demonstrate some skilled and sensitive direct work and some good-quality support, but also some examples of poor care planning, and drift and delay for those in need of protection.
29. The response to children at risk of child sexual exploitation and those who go missing has been the focus of recent improvement, but it is not yet consistently effective. Those children identified as being at high risk and regularly discussed at multi-agency sexual exploitation meetings receive a more coordinated response. However, the weaknesses seen throughout the service also result in some children at risk of sexual exploitation being responded to using incorrect thresholds. Consequently, assessment and care planning do not effectively address the underlying issues that place them at risk. Some children continue to be vulnerable to further exploitation, and others are responded to only when the risk has escalated to such a high level that it results in their becoming looked after and being moved to out-of-area placements to ensure that they are safeguarded.

30. Children who go missing from home are now receiving a more consistent response from the new service that undertakes return home interviews, but it is too early for the service to evidence real impact. Information is not evaluated so the reasons and patterns of 'missing' episodes may be understood for some children who are living with their families. The individual interviews undertaken were not used to inform future care plans.
31. The local authority has well-established arrangements, such as the pupil placement panel, to monitor those children missing education. The pupil placement panel has clear records and reasons why children are currently missing from education. The most recent local authority records at this inspection show that 57 children are not in full-time education. The attendance rate from data supplied by the local authority for all children in 2015–16 was around the level of the national rate.
32. Schools receive up to two visits a year from the local authority to support them to understand their safeguarding responsibilities. When children are absent, schools swiftly assess the reasons for absence and, when the head teacher has concerns, they make a referral to the MASH. Managers at the local authority rate schools for risk, for example where there may be clusters or higher volumes of children at risk of child sexual exploitation. Managers at the local authority attend the 'Channel' panel.
33. The local authority keeps accurate records on the number of those children who are being home educated. From May 2016 to May 2017, the number increased by 12 to 155. The manager responsible has a clear oversight of this, and the local authority keeps in touch with all home-educated children and makes visits to most. All children receive 25 hours of learning a week, unless the child can only cope with less, due to specific medical or behavioural needs. There are currently six children looked after in alternative provision. One of these is outside London.
34. The service for 16- and 17-year-olds who present as homeless was identified by the local authority as an area for development, and it is currently being remodelled. Current practice does not yet ensure robust assessment of the needs of this group of vulnerable young people or that suitable plans or accommodation are in place to give them appropriate levels of support. This results in some young people left in situations that place them at continuing risk. (Recommendation)
35. Arrangements for assessing and monitoring children in private fostering arrangements are showing improvement in more recent cases, following the creation in October 2016 of a dedicated social worker position. However, work with children does not currently meet minimum standards. Case records are of poor quality. Records are unable to demonstrate the required checks of carers and there are gaps in the records of initial visits. A small number of children are living in arrangements in which the carers are resistant to social work visits and state their dissatisfaction at the delay and drift on the part of the

local authority. There has been no ongoing work to maintain and raise awareness, and the number of private fostering notifications received by the local authority in the last 12 months have decreased significantly from previous years. The local authority has recently acknowledged this, and work is planned to address this. (Recommendation)

36. There is a range of early help provision that is offering some good-quality support to children. However, the services operate independently and do not offer an integrated early help service that provides seamless support to families. This is recognised and work is underway to develop more integrated, locality-based services.
37. The quality of assessments and plans is variable across the partnership, with stronger-quality work undertaken by social workers in the common assessment framework team. However, the limitations of this resource mean that the model currently requires partners to take lead responsibility for complex situations in families that have recently been at the threshold for social work intervention or straight from the MASH. This often results in children being stepped back up to social work teams when progress is not maintained or further concerns arise. In too many cases, the decision to pass work to early help is not informed by a social work assessment, despite long-standing concerns and lack of progress.
38. Children at risk of domestic abuse in their homes are referred to the multi-agency risk assessment conference, at which an established group of partners regularly share information to provide effective risk analysis. The outcome of meetings is clear and communication is effective, resulting in a good range of services and interventions being offered to families to respond to and reduce risk. However, for a small number of children, the risks of domestic abuse are not assessed or evaluated appropriately, or are minimised, and this leads to ineffective planning to protect them.
39. There is an effective service to respond to allegations against professionals. In addition to raising awareness of the service effectively, the designated officer ensures a rigorous response to concerns from the initial contact through to the strategy meetings to follow up and review. This is effective in dealing with allegations and protecting children from further risk.
40. Systems to recognise and access support for children at risk of radicalisation work well in Barnet, and there is good partnership engagement and information sharing through the 'Channel' panel to ensure that risks are known and children's circumstances are appropriately reviewed. There is good awareness of the risk of female genital mutilation among professionals, with examples of robust action taken to protect children when this is required.
41. An effective out-of-hours emergency duty service operates in partnership with Harrow children's services, employing a range of appropriately experienced

staff. This provides full coverage out of hours to deal with crises such as family breakdown, child protection enquiries and requests for accommodation.

<p><b>The experiences and progress of children looked after and achieving permanence</b></p>	<p><b>Inadequate</b></p>
<p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>Recent decisions for children to become looked after are appropriate, although not always timely. Some children experiencing significant neglect remain in the pre-proceedings phase of the Public Law Outline for too long before care proceedings commence. When children looked after go missing and are vulnerable to criminal or sexual exploitation, the action taken to understand and reduce the risk to them is often delayed and insufficiently robust.</p> <p>Permanence is not achieved swiftly for many children. A lack of urgency in completing assessments of parents and connected carers means that a minority of children experience avoidable delay in returning to their families or live in unassessed situations for too long.</p> <p>Independent reviewing officers' quality assurance of practice is not sufficiently focused on children's experiences, and escalation processes to challenge practice are rarely used. Team managers' oversight of work is irregular and lacks challenge. Consequently, staff do not receive enough guidance to improve the quality and timeliness of the services provided to children.</p> <p>Social workers visit the majority of children regularly, but do not always see them alone. The quality of assessments is variable and care planning is often delayed or insufficiently clear or specific. The quality of case recording is often poor. Children's identity needs are often not met well and interpreters are not always used when needed. Few children have a record of their life stories.</p> <p>Most children live in stable homes with carers who meet their needs. Children told inspectors that they are happy where they are living and are confident that they are listened to. The local authority is good at recognising and celebrating their achievements. While almost all children looked after attend good or better schools, too many personal education plans identify the targets insufficiently to evaluate children's progress and achievements.</p> <p>Small numbers of children are placed without delay to achieve permanency through adoption. Generally, the quality of adoption reports for adults and children is not consistent. The information and language used in life-story work are not always appropriate to the age of individual children to enable them to understand their histories.</p> <p>The care-leaving service is in touch with almost all its care leavers and knows them well. The local authority provides suitable accommodation for almost all care leavers. Although the majority of care leavers are engaged in learning or employment, too many are not.</p>	

42. While recent decisions for children to become looked after are appropriate, they are not always timely. Some children remain in the pre-proceedings phase of the Public Law Outline (PLO) for too long before appropriate decisions are made about the next steps. The local authority has recently strengthened its oversight of practice within the PLO, through a review of all children's circumstances by senior managers, and has established a permanency planning panel to scrutinise children's plans. However, the decisions to take legal action have not been progressed swiftly, for some children, resulting in further drift and delay. When children become subject to court proceedings, the quality and timeliness of assessments and planning for them are stronger. While not quite meeting the national target of 26 weeks, Barnet's performance in September 2016 was 29.6 weeks, in line with the London average of 29.4 weeks.
43. Social workers visit children looked after regularly. Not all workers meet minimum requirements for statutory visits, as some do not take place at the child's home and some visits to children are always made by arrangement. Some children are always seen with brothers or sisters, and not alone. These practices limit social workers' assessments of the children's home environments and mean that some children do not have the opportunity to speak confidentially to their social workers to influence the planning for their futures.
44. Children who go missing from care often receive a poor service. They are not always offered return home interviews to determine any underlying causes and to inform planning to reduce risk. The local authority strengthened and improved arrangements in November 2016, and since then children have been offered return interviews more often, rising, for example, from 23% as at April 2016 to 58% at the time of the inspection in May 2017. However, this service is not routinely extended to the majority (62%) of children looked after who do not live in Barnet. Return home interviews for children placed out of area are completed by a commissioned service that has struggled to meet demand. Outcomes of return home interviews are often not included on children's records. This makes it difficult to use the information gathered from the interviews in safety planning or even to know whether the interviews have taken place.
45. Overall, the local authority is far too tolerant of the risks that children face when they go missing and the risks that they present to others. Inspectors saw examples of children being threatened with violence or being physically attacked, and a small number of children going missing, sometimes for extended periods, without appropriate action being taken to find or protect them. This risks children believing that their experiences are acceptable or that professionals do not care what happens to them. While the local authority provides children with services to reduce specific risks, such as gang affiliation and child sexual exploitation, safety planning is not always timely or sufficient. Provision of services is sometimes delayed and, when children do not engage, the alternatives are not swiftly considered. Consequently, children sometimes

remain in circumstances that are unsafe for too long before it is recognised that the risk is not being reduced and additional action is taken. Inspectors saw examples of the risk of sexual exploitation to children being effectively reduced through placing children at a distance from Barnet. However, such examples were in a minority, and transition planning was not robust for those children when they were due to leave care.

46. Most children (68%) live in foster families and benefit from the experience of family life that this affords. Inspectors saw evidence of carers who know their children well, support them and meet their needs effectively. Carers have delegated responsibility, and this helps to normalise children's experiences. Carers reported that they are generally well supported by supervising social workers, although communication with children's social workers is more variable. Some carers reported delays when unaccompanied asylum-seeking children need age assessments, causing uncertainty about the suitability of arrangements and concerns that adults may be placed with children.
47. The legacy of delay is a major contributory factor in the effectiveness of care planning for children, and contingency planning is not always clear or rigorous. Although some more recent plans contain timescales, this is not yet consistent or embedded. This makes it difficult to hold workers, agencies and sometimes parents to account. Children experience delay in planning for permanence. For some children in stable foster homes, the impact is minimised. However, inspectors saw significant, avoidable delay in reuniting some children with their families, due to a lack of urgency in completing assessments. Some children live with connected carers for extended periods without a full assessment of the suitability of the arrangement, causing uncertainty for all concerned. (Recommendation)
48. Independent reviewing officers' (IROs') oversight of casework is regular and children have timely reviews. IROs visit children between reviews and sometimes are stable figures in children's lives. Children are encouraged to participate in their reviews, and many do so. Reviews for children looked after routinely consider children's contact with the people who are important to them, including previous foster carers. While not always timely, inspectors saw examples of clear efforts made to re-engage family members, when necessary, to the benefit of children. When children's contact requires supervision, support workers provide an effective service that ensures that children's contact with their families is safe. However, IROs' quality assurance of practice is overly focused on process rather than children's experiences. They have not used escalation processes sufficiently when positive change for children is not achieved within acceptable timescales. While the local authority has taken recent action since January 2017 by reshaping the service and refreshing escalation procedures to ensure that IROs have the capacity and skills to be more effective in their oversight of practice, this is not yet resulting in improved outcomes for children.

49. Staff report good informal support by frontline managers. However, in written records, team managers' oversight of practice is variable in frequency and is rarely challenging or effective in improving the quality of practice. This ineffective oversight by managers and IROs is not sufficiently focused on children's experiences. This means that staff are not provided with enough guidance to improve practice standards. (Recommendation)
50. While there is evidence on some case files of very recent activity to ensure that case recording is up to date, too many files overall do not give a complete picture of a child's experience. The quality of case recording is often poor, and it is sometimes not possible to tell from children's records what has happened in their lives or even where they are currently living. Discussions with heads of service are not recorded, so there is no evidence of their oversight of casework, including when children are at significant risk. This risks the out-of-hours services making decisions on casework without access to all relevant information and children not having coherent records of their histories if they choose to access their records in later life. (Recommendation)
51. The completion of life-story work and life-story books for children who do not have a plan of adoption has not been prioritised, and very few children have received the help that they need to understand and have a record of their story in the past 12 months. (Recommendation)
52. The virtual school has a clear oversight of the improvement in learning required for the children looked after for whom they are responsible, both in and out of the borough. It has established strong partnerships with schools and purposeful governance arrangements to improve the scrutiny of its progress and achievement and to raise its aspirations. It has identified salient priorities and ambitious targets for improvement and is taking steps to achieve these targets. For example, there has been an increase in the regular attendance of children looked after at school, although this remains too low, and a reduction in their authorised and unauthorised absence.
53. A high proportion of children looked after go to a good or better school. Arrangements for the few children who require alternative learning provision at the two specialist schools in the borough ensure a range of individualised curricula to meet their diverse educational and emotional needs. There are also some carefully planned initiatives in which children looked after mentor younger children, which helps to improve their behaviour and confidence. The majority of children looked after achieve well in their reading, writing and mathematics by the end of primary school. However, too few achieve sufficient qualifications and high grades or make sufficient progress by age 16 in secondary school. At age 16 to 18, although the large majority are in education and training, too many are not. Managers recognise the need to improve advice and guidance for children looked after to help them to understand all the learning options for them post-16. They are developing apprenticeships and traineeships with partners to increase the insufficient

number of children looked after who follow this employment-focused learning pathway.

54. The proportion of children looked after who are removed from school for a short period is too high, as is that of the small number of these children who are persistently absent. Managers are fully aware of this and it forms part of their improvement plan. The local authority allocates additional funding (the pupil premium) appropriately for children looked after, to provide a range of targeted support to help them to keep up with their learning. Education planning for children looked after has historically been poor. However, teachers and the local authority are now taking full ownership of a recently introduced electronic system, and the quality of personal education plans is improving. Despite this, too many plans articulate the targets insufficiently to enable managers to measure the progress and achievement of children. In addition, a few children do not yet have a plan on the new system.
55. The local authority has recently successfully prioritised improving the timeliness of initial health assessments when children first become looked after. Investment in training for local general practitioners and awareness raising is improving the quality of these assessments. Children receive review health assessments that are timely and provided by dedicated nurses for children looked after, including those children placed out of area. Few children refuse this service, which means that any emerging health needs are identified and addressed. The local authority recognises that children can experience unacceptable delay when they need additional support for their emotional or mental health needs through child and adolescent mental health services. For this reason, the local authority is in the process of recommissioning the service.
56. Children's diversity and identity needs are generally not met well. The local authority struggles to find a sufficiency of placements either within or outside its own resources to match children's linguistic and cultural needs. While this would be a struggle for any local authority, given the richly diverse children looked after population, inspectors saw examples of some basic needs not being met, such as ensuring that a child retains the ability to speak their birth language or that they are always provided with interpreters, if required. However, inspectors saw a few examples of stronger practice with sensitive attention to children's identity needs. (Recommendation)
57. The local authority is home to increasing numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. At the time of the inspection, 17% of all children looked after were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. The quality of support and services provided to them demonstrates the same deficits in practice as are seen in services provided to other children. While inspectors saw some examples of children's additional needs being met in a timely fashion, such as support to make asylum claims, this was due to the tenacity of individual carers and social workers, and other children experienced delay. When unaccompanied asylum-seeking children go missing, there is little recognition

of their additional vulnerabilities and, when this is recognised, action agreed is not always taken.

58. The newly reformed Children in Care Council has undertaken some useful and helpful work, such as a recent survey of children looked after, which echoes some of the findings in this inspection. Children spoken to by inspectors are happy where they are living and confident that they are listened to. The local authority is good at recognising and celebrating their achievements.
59. While the local authority has taken action to address drift in care planning, to strengthen quality assurance of practice and to improve responses to children who go missing, this is too recent to improve the quality of service that children receive.

**The graded judgement for adoption performance is that it requires improvement**

60. Low numbers of children leave care through adoption. Since April 2016, eight children have benefited from permanence arrangements through adoption, including children over five years old, children with complex disabilities, and brother and sister groups. At the time of the inspection, Barnet has a very small number of children in 'foster to adopt' arrangements and 12 children who are placed for adoption.
61. The local authority has identified that permanency planning requires improvement to ensure the earlier identification of plans for children who need adoption. Since October 2016, a permanency-planning panel and a permanency-planning tracker have been introduced to provide more focus and scrutiny. An adoption worker is identified to attend legal planning meetings to improve the timeliness of permanency planning. It is too early to see evidence of positive impact on children's timescales.
62. Once the agency decision maker (ADM) makes the appropriate decisions to proceed to a plan of adoption, the timeliness of adoption work is good, evidenced by a strong adoption performance scorecard. Published figures for 2012–15 show that the average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family was 472 days, compared to the national average of 593 days and below the national scorecard threshold of 487 days. This performance is continuing in 2016–17.
63. The prospective adopter reports (PARs) seen by inspectors vary in quality. This is acknowledged by the ADM, independent panel chair and adoption team manager. While the large majority of reports seen are detailed and contain all required checks and references, the documents are neither consistently completed in a timely manner nor adequately quality assured before they are submitted to the adoption panel. The large majority contain grammatical and

recording errors, while others lack sufficient analysis of the information presented. The ADM and recently appointed independent adoption panel adviser are robustly addressing the quality of written submissions with the adoption team manager. Joint training with the foster panel is planned in June 2017 to develop workers' skills and knowledge in writing reports.

64. Adopters who spoke to inspectors, including second-time adopters, were positive regarding the preparation, assessment and support received from the agency. Joint recruitment and preparation of prospective adopters, in partnership with the North London Fostering and Adoption Consortium, is supported by a wide range of good information, guides and an easy-to-use website. The joint preparation course is comprehensive and provides adopters with a good, basic understanding of the needs of adopted children. Adopters spoke positively of the learning and insight that they had gained from attending the foundation day and preparation course, and from the assessment process.
65. However, adopters and the service acknowledge some delays in moving between adoption stage one and stage two assessments, preventing some PARs from being progressed in a timely manner. Adoption recruitment has recently been brought back into the adoption service from the recruitment and assessment team to ensure the prompt assessment of prospective adopters.
66. The quality of child permanence reports is too variable. Reports seen contain recording errors and are not routinely updated by social workers. A minority of reports include irrelevant information from brother and sister assessments, and information such as medical adviser comments is missing. Senior leaders are aware that the lack of pre-adoption medicals to inform planning for children requires improvement. A recent paper presented to the clinical commissioning group has very recently led to a decision for resources to be allocated to address this issue.
67. The local authority works well with the North London fostering and adoption consortium to ensure the timely exchange of information and secure appropriate links for children and waiting adopters, resulting in the majority of children living at the earliest opportunity with an adoptive family that meets their needs. Local authority year-to-date figures show that children who wait less than 16 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family is 58% (11 children out of a total of 19), continuing the strong performance of 2012–15.
68. Timely family finding and robust matching are effectively scrutinised by the adoption panel, members of which carefully consider their recommendations for approving adopters and matching children. There were almost no adoption disruptions in 2016–17, and learning from the disruption has been appropriately disseminated to staff.

69. The ADM makes timely decisions and appropriately challenges staff when information and reports are not sufficient. The ADM meets regularly with the panel chair to maintain oversight and accountability. Panel members receive annual appraisals, as well as joint training with the adoption and foster panel and teams, to ensure that their contributions remain informed by current practice.
70. The adoption service undertakes comprehensive life-story work and later-life letters. However, the language and images used are not always appropriate to the age and understanding of children, and the later-life letters seen varied in terms of the quality and accuracy of information contained in them.  
(Recommendation)
71. The adoption service provides a range of effective post-adoption support, including the facilitation of direct contact, letterbox arrangements, birth records counselling and support groups for children, and adopter support. The local authority has been successful in supporting a large number of applications to the adoption support fund, resulting in financial and practical support to sustain permanence.

**The graded judgement about the experience and progress of care leavers is that it requires improvement**

72. The care-leaving team is in touch with almost all of its care leavers (98% in March 2017, according to local authority data). Personal advisers visit care leavers frequently enough to monitor their well-being adequately and provide day-to-day support when needed. The range and skills of staff, many of whom have recently come into the service, match the diverse needs of care leavers. There is a good team ethos and desire to improve the quality of the service, as it has not been effective enough. The local authority undertook a thorough evaluation of provision, including an audit of the quality of pathway planning, and this is leading to a number of positive changes in the service.
73. Planning to help care leavers to move towards independence is insufficiently thorough. Advisers record the events of care leavers' lives accurately, including when care leavers achieve positive outcomes. However, in approximately half of the plans, advisers do not translate their observations effectively into pertinent and timely targets. All care leavers have a pathway plan. A small minority did not have a sufficiently up-to-date one until recently, but this has now been resolved.
74. In too many instances, planning for when children looked after transition into the care leaving service does not sufficiently build on care leavers' prior experiences and achievement, and plans routinely start too late. Too many care leavers do not have sufficient ownership of their plans.  
(Recommendation)

75. Care leavers receive appropriate healthcare. They receive a health assessment prior to coming into the care-leaving service. The service provides care leavers with access to health visitors for advice on both the dangers of drugs and on sexual health, and there are plans to make an agreement with the family nurse partnership so that older care leavers can access mental health services more easily.
76. The care-leaving service works well with a range of partnerships to support care leavers. Managers, for example, have strong working relationships with advisers who work for the Department for Work and Pensions, which makes following up difficulties with benefit payments easier for care leavers. Managers also work closely with the probation service and youth offending team, and are putting in place a strategy to support one of the two young people currently in custody, who is due for release. The centre holds emergency supplies for when care leavers occasionally need them. Partnership working helped to reduce effectively the risk to two young people who were at high risk of child sexual exploitation. Care leavers have effective support to make sure that they have bank accounts and national insurance numbers.
77. There are insufficient organised learning activities to support care leavers in life skills such as money management, which is an evident need that personal advisers record in many pathway plans. (Recommendation)
78. The centre already holds some events that acknowledge young people's achievement and activities to develop their personal and social skills. Managers have well-considered plans to develop a training centre for this purpose.
79. The majority of care leavers (57% in March 2017, according to local authority data) are in education, employment or training. Some of these are undertaking some well-planned learning. For example, an unaccompanied asylum seeker is successfully completing a course in English for speakers of other languages, and another care leaver is fulfilling a long-held ambition to follow a mechanical engineering course.
80. Managers monitor the attendance and progress of care leavers and their safety in the learning settings in which they study. They have valuable contact with care leavers' key workers in the settings. However, there are too many care leavers who are not in education, training or employment or who do not undertake learning that is right for them. A few do not complete courses, or they follow courses that repeat the same level of learning, and this reduces their ability to improve their life chances. Currently, 43% of care leavers are not engaged in employment or training, and the attempts to re-engage these young people have had mixed success.
81. The head of the care-leaving service is fully aware of the improvements that are required in the quality of the work and services provided. Managers have introduced better governance arrangements, and are introducing new ways of

working to improve corporate parenting and support staff by using group supervision. In addition, they understand that they need to make sure that they further improve the oversight of any risks to care leavers. They also have an honest and self-critical view of what they do well and what requires improvement.

82. Almost all care leavers value highly the quality of accommodation in and outside the borough. This year, 98% of care leavers are in suitable accommodation and the majority live independently. Approximately one in 10 care leavers have remained with their former foster carers after the age of 18. Arrangements for housing in the borough are well established, and the service allocates accommodation swiftly. Care leavers are given a high priority for accommodation and receive a five-year flexible tenancy. A few care leavers stated that their initial temporary accommodation was of poorer quality.
83. Arrangements for the small minority who live out of London are suitable, apart from a few instances in which arrangements have not been so straightforward. Care leavers reported that they feel safe in their accommodation.
84. Care leavers are supportive of the service and trust their advisers. They discussed positively the work that advisers do to help them out. One described their accommodation as a 'palace'. Care leavers said that personal advisers help them well with their day-to-day living. However, too many are unclear about the local authority 'Pledge' and care leavers' entitlements. Care-leaving managers are aware of this, and work is underway to improve the promotion of both. Care leavers gave a mixed response to the usefulness of pathway plans. Again, managers are appropriately aware of the need to make plans a more integral and useful part of young people's futures.

<b>Leadership, management and governance</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
<p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>Services for vulnerable children in Barnet are inadequate. Leaders and all managers have not yet addressed the legacy of practice deficits to ensure that children are adequately safeguarded. Since the local authority was last inspected in 2012, there has been a significant deterioration in the quality of services that children and young people receive. Recognition and action taken by the director of children’s services in January 2016 enabled senior leaders to understand the depth and breadth of the service failures. As a result, the local authority has commenced an improvement programme to promote wholesale organisational and cultural change, focusing on creating the right environment for effective social work to develop. While this has achieved some key elements to support and develop children’s services, improvements in the standard of social work practice are much less advanced. Consequently, the quality of service for children in need of help and protection and children looked after is inadequate.</p> <p>The commissioning of a collegiate partner in April 2016, alongside the creation of a social work improvement board, has established a programme of planned activities to address deficiencies in service provision. Senior leaders have successfully gained corporate support and resources to make improvements, although these have been ineffective in improving standards of core social work practice for children.</p> <p>A lack of challenge from the Local Safeguarding Children Board has not assisted in raising safeguarding standards in the local authority. The recent engagement of key strategic partners is beginning to assist in improving services for children. However, this is limited, as services are newly commissioned or are at the planning stage, and there is not yet an evaluation of improvement.</p> <p>The oversight of practice by heads of service and team managers is weak. Evaluation of practice by managers is often too positive and plays down the risks to children. Managers do not provide enough guidance or direction to frontline practitioners to improve outcomes for children or keep children’s progress at the centre of improvements. Heads of service and operational directors rarely record their involvement in decision making.</p> <p>The corporate parenting panel is committed to improving the lives of children looked after but, until recently, had not received full performance information, which limits its ability to challenge any deficits in services effectively. The local authority is beginning to strengthen and stabilise its social work workforce with the creation of new posts and the successful recruitment of permanent social workers and managers. There is more work to do to address the existing culture of poor social work practice.</p>	

## Inspection findings

85. The local authority recognises that a restructure of children's services in 2014 was wholly unsuccessful in achieving a positive social work service for children. The increased demand for services and a significant number of staff leaving, following the restructure, resulted in widespread instability throughout children's services, contributing to deteriorating practice standards. The extent of the decline was not fully recognised until the recently appointed director of children's services commissioned a diagnostic review of the service in January 2016 and entered into a collegiate partnership with a local authority that is able to share considerable, relevant social work knowledge and expertise. This has enabled and assisted senior leaders to understand the depth and breadth of service failures. Since April 2016, senior leaders have focused on creating the right infrastructure and staffing requirements to support wholesale practice improvement. Improvements include the creation of additional social work posts and teams to reduce caseloads, significant investment in improving the local authority's electronic recording systems and more accurate performance management reporting. In October 2016, there was further investment in senior practice leadership to enable a focus on quality of practice and children's experiences. The very recent improvements are a result of this. However, there is recognition that there is much more work to do to ensure that all managers and staff embed a culture of positive social work practice across the organisation.
86. Senior leaders and elected members demonstrate a clear understanding of areas for development within children's social care, and a commitment to improving services for children and families in Barnet. The local authority has secured ongoing financial support and expertise across the council to support improvements. Collaboration with its collegiate partner and strengthened governance arrangements, including the social work practice improvement board chaired by the chief executive officer, monitor and scrutinise performance in areas already identified for improvement and development.
87. The practice improvement board has successfully promoted structural developments and improved working conditions. However, the accompanying practice improvement plan 2016–17 remains largely focused on management systems, structures and processes. While the local authority is at the beginning of its improvement journey, to date the activity has not focused quickly enough on securing improvements in frontline practice to improve outcomes for children. When practice changes are identified and appropriate action is taken to achieve these, they are not revisited to ensure that improvement is secured and sustained. Other changes, such as the review of the child protection chairs and independent reviewing officers, the review of 16- to 17-year-old homeless young people and the implementation of the permanency planning panel, are still ongoing or are too recent for their impact to have been monitored or evaluated. The local authority recognises that there is still much more to do to ensure that plans sustain the focus on

resolving the significant deficits in frontline operational practice quickly enough. (Recommendation)

88. The local authority's investment in improving electronic systems means that children's services now benefit from access to good-quality performance data. However, monthly reports are lengthy and unwieldy, and do not include analytical commentary to help the focus on required performance areas. Patterns of deterioration and fluctuation of key data in these reports indicate that the local authority is not yet consistently sustaining practice improvement. Weekly reports are circulated to managers for oversight and action. It is not evident that managers and staff routinely use this performance information to support, improve or sustain frontline practice.
89. Quality assurance of casework is now established through auditing and the use of practice weeks over the past year. These have been a helpful development. However, audits are overly focused on process, with insufficient weight given to the impact of poor decision making, creating drift and delay for children. Consequently, findings from audit sometimes give a falsely positive view of practice. This was replicated in the local authority self-assessment that was presented to inspectors. Of the cases audited for this inspection, inspectors considered 40% of the cases audited by the local authority to be over optimistic. While senior leaders demonstrate an understanding of what constitutes good and acceptable practice for children in Barnet, this has not been effectively communicated or translated to staff and managers or integrated into frontline practice.
90. Senior leaders' commitment to reducing caseloads by increasing the numbers of social workers and frontline managers has not yet produced the desired improvements in practice. Social workers report having to 'catch up' on uncompleted work, and changes to their line management arrangements contribute to delays. The practice development worker posts were created in November 2016 with specific responsibility to support and embed changes in practice. All roles were filled until an urgent requirement arose to cover a head of service post. This has limited the success of this initiative. The implementation of a 'resilience' model of practice is currently being established, but it is not used coherently across the service to improve outcomes for children.
91. There is a legacy of poor oversight, and casework direction of practice by managers at every level is weak and fails to drive performance effectively, leading to positive change. Supervision notes seen by inspectors are poor and there is little evidence of the direction given or the actions set by managers or any follow through to ensure accountability, but a revised template is improving the quality. The challenge from child protection conference chairs and independent reviewing officers is too often ineffective, and escalation processes are underused. Senior managers do not routinely record on children's records the direction and decision making. Their involvement in and accountability for decisions reached is not demonstrated, particularly in

circumstances in which children are at significant risk. Poor case recording compounds these failures, and it is not always possible to understand from the records the reasons for decisions or plans. (Recommendation)

92. Arrangements for commissioning services for families appropriately reflect priorities for children within the borough's comprehensive joint strategic needs assessment. Strong commissioning partnerships at a strategic level have ensured that a range of culturally sensitive services are available for children and families. These include services for children and their families in households affected by domestic abuse and drug and alcohol substance misuse. Stronger partnership working is resulting in the early identification of hidden harm and is strengthening multi-agency working. Through the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board, the local authority has successfully secured joint commissioning arrangements with the clinical commissioning group. Together, they have commissioned innovative children's mental health early help services through schools and children's centres, and have ambitious plans to further transform child and adolescent mental health services. However, many commissioned services are still in the planning stages or too new for the impact on children to be fully felt or evaluated.
93. Strategically, there is further work to do to ensure that multi-agency service provision responds more appropriately to meet the needs of children. This includes the need to clarify pathways with all partners to strengthen and embed the early help offer across all services and to secure accommodation to enable the local authority to appropriately discharge its duties to homeless 16 to 17 year olds. More positively, engagement with Barnet's housing providers is leading to better accommodation for care leavers.
94. The Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB), while challenging other partners, has not been effective in challenging the performance of the local authority. Not enough has been done to understand the deficiencies in either practice or the outcomes for children. Recognising the need to strengthen strategic arrangements, the chief executive has been proactive in commissioning a review of the LSCB. A leadership forum to progress recommendations from the review was held with the police borough commander and the chief executive of the clinical commissioning group in May 2017, and it is intended to address these deficiencies and to plan improvements.
95. The links between child sexual exploitation, sexually harmful behaviour, gangs and missing children is recognised at a strategic level, and has resulted in the creation of a new multi-agency team known as REACH. However, more widely, thresholds are not consistently recognised or applied. Frontline practitioners have, on occasions, inappropriately tolerated risks to children at risk of criminal exploitation and interpreted the behaviour of young people at risk of child sexual exploitation as a lifestyle choice. Once a risk of child sexual exploitation is recognised and managed through the multi-agency sexual exploitation panel, more effective protection for children results. The panel's

response also includes successful disruption of perpetrators' activity.  
(Recommendation)

96. The corporate parenting panel has strong cross-party membership and keeps itself informed of matters relating to children looked after and care leavers. The panel has been effective in championing issues for children, including being instrumental in care leavers gaining housing priority status and progressing the deficiencies in initial health assessments. While securing some successes, its ability to provide effective challenge and scrutiny is limited, as comprehensive performance information is not made available. The DCS has incrementally addressed this gap over the last few months.
97. Young people are involved in corporate parenting panel meetings through #BOP. While they provide a report for panel on their activities, the children require more support to challenge effectively the deficiencies in the services that they receive. Panel processes do not support children to bring individual concerns or complaints to panel members' attention, and members do not have direct links with children. Neither do they routinely attend children in care meetings, so they are missing opportunities to gain insight into the life experiences or concerns of the children in their care.
98. Not all children who would like to make a complaint are able to have support from a trained advocate when they need it. While children are able to access some advocacy support that is available through a commissioned contract, this does not support all children. A detailed report on complaints is reviewed at the children, education and libraries committee on an annual basis. However, as a result of this report, scrutiny and learning have had little impact on changes to practice. Action plans are weak, and progress and impact are not measured from a child's perspective.
99. Involvement of children is reported to be at the centre of many of Barnet's plans, and children are routinely consulted and encouraged to give their views and wishes. However, monitoring to ensure follow through on children's views is very recent and is only now beginning to be embedded. For example, the children in care 'Pledge', created with children, is a detailed list of sound promises with plans for an annual review, but its performance monitoring has only recently been put in place. Involving children and keeping their views and experiences at the heart of their care planning, and evidencing their participation, remain weak. (Recommendation)
100. The local authority has made significant progress with the recruitment of permanent staff at all levels. Effective working relationships and support from corporate human resources have allowed Barnet to successfully reposition itself to attract new workers and to innovatively change terms and conditions to convert agency staff into permanent posts. Most social work and management vacancies are recruited to and are waiting for the formal processes to be completed. The recruitment of suitably experienced senior leaders who have filled the newly created operational directors' posts requires

further consolidation to ensure permanent staffing arrangements. However, the experience of change and churn is still a reality for some teams, and this has an impact on the services provided for children. Social work practitioners have access to a range of training and development opportunities through the Barnet children's academy partnership. However, key basic practice improvement training to support consistent social work practice, while recognised and planned for, is not yet available.

## The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)

### The Local Safeguarding Children Board is inadequate

#### Executive summary

The Barnet Safeguarding Children’s Board is inadequate, as it is not effective in discharging all of its statutory functions. Monitoring of frontline practice has been poor and insufficient, therefore the board was unaware of the failings to safeguard children that were identified by this inspection.

The board does not have robust scrutiny of statutory requirements, such as the arrangements for children in private fostering or the monitoring of the quality of multi-agency safeguarding training. The business plan does not include specific actions to drive improvement in how the board discharges its statutory duties. Some annual reports to the board do not provide analysis and do not contribute to action planning. This has not been recognised or challenged by the board.

Some partnership financial contributions to the board have been maintained at a low level, and this prevents the board from funding core safeguarding training and evaluating the quality of training offered across the partnership. This has been recognised strategically, and recruitment for a learning coordinator post has commenced.

The chair has led ‘challenge panels’ across the partnership to enhance learning from section 11 audits, and themes arising from this are taken forward by the board. However, it was a serious oversight not to have conducted this process for the local authority. The chief executive commissioned an independent review of the board in January 2017 which recommended substantial improvements. A new executive strategic group is due to meet in May 2017 to improve the effectiveness of safeguarding across the partnership.

The learning and improvement framework is not fully implemented, as there is no programme of multi-agency audits. Case file audits in the last year have been infrequent and on a very small scale, and the board has not been provided with partners’ own quality assurance findings. The processes to review child deaths work well, and there is an effective multi-agency rapid response to unexplained deaths. The board has published a serious case review. However, inspectors found very little awareness of the ‘lessons learned’ among frontline practitioners.

The board has historically kept a strong focus on children at risk of exploitation and going missing, and has a detailed strategy and action plan in place. However, the sub-group has not met to advance this work for several months and the interface with other strategic groups is not clear. The board has yet to assess the quality of early help services, although data on common assessment framework assessments is included in a new performance data set.

<h2>Recommendations</h2>
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101. Ensure that a programme of quality assurance is established to monitor the quality of frontline practice across statutory work and early help.
102. Ensure that all partner agencies and their staff are aware of thresholds for intervention.
103. Increase scrutiny and challenge of practice for privately fostered children and raise awareness of the notification process.
104. Ensure that the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding training is monitored and evaluated.
105. Review the function of the child sexual exploitation and missing sub-group, and align this with other strategic forums to incorporate children at risk of youth violence and gang affiliation.

### Inspection findings – the Local Safeguarding Children Board

106. The Local Safeguarding Children’s Board (LSCB), Barnet Safeguarding Children’s Board, is inadequate as it is ineffective in discharging all of its statutory functions. It has not assessed the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and their families, quality assured practice or comprehensively monitored and evaluated the quality and impact of safeguarding training for multi-agency practitioners.
107. The governance and structure of the board meet statutory requirements, although there is no clear protocol that sets out the relationship with other strategic groups. The chair is an active member of the Health and Wellbeing Board, and children’s needs such as adolescent mental health are prioritised. The board works with community safety to align action plans and avoid duplication. The lead member attends board meetings regularly, but inspectors saw limited evidence of challenge between by the board to the local authority. A wide range of agencies are represented on the board, including the voluntary sector. However, some partners experienced the board as unwieldy, making it challenging to participate in, and they valued opportunities to work in small groups, to be more effective.
108. The board does not have a comprehensive programme of planned multi-agency audits. Two multi-agency audits were completed in the last year, reviewing a total of six social care cases. This has meant that the board does not have sufficient insight into the lived experiences of vulnerable children in Barnet. A very recent audit of domestic abuse highlights areas for practice improvement, but mechanisms are not in place for the board to drive the improvements forward and to hold partners to account. (Recommendation)

109. Quality assurance activity has been focused on developing a comprehensive performance data set, which includes a range of data across the partnership. The relevant sub-group recognises that the analysis of data and trends is an area for development. There is a significant time lag in the data reviewed by the sub-group, which reduces the potential impact of any actions agreed.
110. Securing sufficient financial contributions from partner agencies has been an ongoing challenge for the board. A relatively low level of funding in proportion to the child population has resulted in a very limited administrative capacity. The chair continues to challenge this with senior leaders across the partnership at a strategic level, but it has impacted negatively on the capacity of the board to deliver its functions.
111. The business plan does not include specific actions on core statutory responsibilities. The reliance on annual reports that are of variable quality and depth has not supported a systematic and rigorous approach by the board towards key priorities. The board's plan covers a very wide spectrum of activity, some of which lacks specific outcomes for children.
112. The board has published a serious case review and commissioned a further two serious case reviews. There is evidence of robust decision making and appropriate referrals to the national panel. The board has driven immediate action, when required, ahead of publication (such as a partnership audit of children who are unaccounted for). The chair has shown great tenacity in driving these reviews and there has been good engagement from partners. However, inspectors found limited awareness among frontline practitioners of the 'lessons learned' from reviews, despite the board conducting a number of learning events.
113. There are effective processes to review child deaths. Good partnership working contributes to an efficient rapid response process, led by an experienced designated doctor. The annual report needs to set out more clearly the learning from any deaths that have modifiable factors.
114. Challenge panels have enhanced the section 11 audit process. However, it is of note that a challenge panel for the local authority's children's social care services has not occurred. This is in contrast to evidence of strong and consistent challenge to police, probation and health partners by the board. This has contributed to improvements, such as a dedicated education post in the multi-agency safeguarding hub that is funded by the local authority, and improved identification of parents using drug and alcohol services. The quality of arrangements for privately fostered children has not been sufficiently scrutinised by the board. The board has been unaware of the quality of assessments or compliance with statutory visits. A very limited annual report in 2015–16 indicated a sharp drop in private fostering notifications, but the board has not yet taken any decisive action or held partners to account for this. (Recommendation)

115. Some sub-groups have been at 'stop start' over the last year, due to gaps in key roles such as group chairs. Not all sub-groups have forward plans of their work in progress and how the board drives forward the work of the sub-group or the reporting lines back to the board is not always clear.
116. While section 11 audits monitor the delivery of single-agency safeguarding training, the evaluation of multi-agency safeguarding training (delivered by the Barnet workforce development team for the partnership) is underdeveloped. The relevant sub-group restarted in 2016, and a training programme is now in draft form. This sets out bespoke training aligned to the board's priorities and informed by case reviews, such as recent self-harm in adolescents. There is limited capacity to evaluate the impact of this training or to commission further training. A learning coordinator is currently being recruited to address this challenge. (Recommendation)
117. The board historically played an important strategic role to improve practice in relation to child sexual exploitation, with consistent scrutiny of the return home interviews offer for children who go missing. A problem profile informs interventions, and there is a detailed child sexual exploitation strategy and action plan in place. A 'champions' network has been successful in improving recognition and referrals. However, the sub-group has not met for five months, and specific planned activity of the group is not clear and does not yet reflect youth violence and gang affiliation risks. The sub-group's remit overlaps with that of two other strategic groups and requires alignment to be most effective. (Recommendation)
118. The board has recognised that the lack of formal escalation across the partnership hampers opportunities for improvement. A revised escalation policy was reissued in February 2017, but it is too early to determine any impact. The board launched a revised thresholds document in early 2017, but engagement across the partnership was limited. While numbers of early help assessments are monitored, the board needs to use performance data to understand whether all agencies are responding to needs at an early stage.
119. The board has maintained scrutiny of key priorities, such as domestic abuse, focusing on developing services for adult victims such as independent domestic violence advocates in hospital settings and the effective use of police enforcement powers. However, there has been insufficient focus on children affected by domestic abuse, and the board does not yet understand their experiences.
120. The board launched a neglect strategy in 2016. Champions to combat neglect have been trained and a neglect assessment tool agreed. So far, there is little evidence of impact on practice. The data set does not yet reflect neglect measures, and the take-up of training has been low.
121. A range of schools are very much engaged with the work of the board. A headteacher chairs an online safety working group and the safeguarding leads

have network meetings with the chair of the board. The chair has recruited a second lay member. However, the role of lay members requires further development to ensure that their contributions add value.

122. 'Youthshield' acts as a youth consultative group for the board. Following its survey of young people, the group rolled out 'Healthy relationships' workshops to hundreds of children in local schools. The chair facilitates young people's participation through tabling their challenges and questions to the board.
123. A review of the board commissioned by the chief executive sets out a programme of significant transformation. Recommendations for developing a smaller, more strategic executive group have been positively received by the partnership, which reports that the board membership is too large always to function effectively.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences of children and young people who have needed or still need help and/or protection. This also includes children and young people who are looked after and young people who are leaving care and starting their lives as young adults.

Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that adults make to the lives of children, young people and families. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with families and each other, and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the local authority knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

The inspection of the local authority was carried out under section 136 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

The review of the Local Safeguarding Children Board was carried out under section 15A of the Children Act 2004.

Ofsted produces this report of the inspection of local authority functions and the review of the Local Safeguarding Children Board under its power to combine reports in accordance with section 152 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

The inspection team consisted of eight of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) from Ofsted.

### **The inspection team**

Lead inspector: Louise Warren

Deputy lead inspector: Margaret Burke

Team inspectors: Paula Thomson-Jones, Shirley Bailey, Tara Geere, Steve Stanley, Brenda McInerney, Ian Young

Senior data analysts: Patrick Thomson, Pete McLaughlin, Hywel Benbow

Quality assurance manager: Sean Tarpey

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD  
T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)  
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# Monitoring and re-inspection of local authority children's services judged inadequate

Inspectors' handbook

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This guidance describes the main activities that social care Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) undertake in local authorities that have children's services judged to be inadequate.

Section one outlines our arrangements for monitoring the progress of local authorities with inadequate children's services.

Section two outlines our arrangements for re-inspecting inadequate local authorities once the period of monitoring has ended.

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## Section one: monitoring visits

1. The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) believes that all children who use children's social care services are entitled to services that are good or better. Where local authority children's services are judged to be inadequate, Ofsted will carry out monitoring visits and report on the progress made by the local authority, to support them to improve further.
2. This guidance is for Ofsted inspectors. Local authorities and professionals working with children and young people and their families can use the guidance to see how the monitoring visits will be conducted.
3. Where local authority children's services are judged inadequate, Ofsted will carry out a programme of monitoring activities, including quarterly monitoring visits, to report on the progress made by local authorities. Where a local authority is not prepared to agree the programme of quarterly monitoring visits, we will refer the authority to the Secretary of State who is likely to intervene and direct Ofsted to undertake visits under section 118(2) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
4. All local authorities judged to be inadequate will receive an action planning visit, a programme of quarterly monitoring visits and a re-inspection.<sup>1</sup>

### Notification of the inspection judgement and the future monitoring activity

5. If the local authority is judged to be inadequate for their children's services or where areas for priority action are identified that suggest children are at risk of significant harm, the lead inspector will:
  - inform the relevant regional director and senior HMI (SHMI) of the provisional judgement
  - alert the director of children's services (DCS) that, the local authority:
    - should arrange an action planning visit between 25 and 35 days after receiving their report and that an Ofsted inspector will attend
    - will receive quarterly monitoring visits from Ofsted to evaluate the progress made against the recommendations since the inspection and to check that there is no decline in other areas.
6. At the inspection feedback meeting, the lead inspector will remind the local authority that they must produce a written statement of proposed action (the action plan) and submit this to the Secretary of State and HMCI within 70

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<sup>1</sup> More information on re-inspections is in section two of this guidance.

working days of the receipt of the inspection report.<sup>2</sup>

7. The letter that accompanies the pre-publication copy of the inspection report will confirm the submission deadline for the action plan – within 70 working days of receiving that report. A copy of this letter will be sent to the lead inspector and the responsible regional SHMI.

## Action planning visit

8. Ofsted will visit the local authority to ensure the local authority has a sufficient understanding of the recommendations to plan appropriately following the inspection judgements. The purpose of the visit is to:
  - clarify the roles, responsibilities and activities of Ofsted and the DfE
  - give local authorities and their partners a comprehensive understanding of the inspection judgements to enable the local authority to fulfil its statutory responsibility to develop the post-inspection action plan
  - explain the purpose and significance of recommendations in the context of the three key judgements
  - set out the implications for statutory partners, including the local safeguarding children board
  - support the local authority to develop an action plan that links clearly with the recommendations from the inspection
  - consider the draft action plan (if available)
  - confirm the date of the first monitoring visit and establish the pattern of future monitoring activity
  - agree the specific focus of the first monitoring visit and (where possible) any subsequent monitoring visits.
9. Once the local authority has received their report, the regional director will write to the DCS confirming the action planning visit (see letter template at Annex A). This letter will be copied to the lead inspector from the single inspection, the inspector who will lead the monitoring visits (if already identified), the regional SHMI, the Ofsted national director (social care) and the DfE inspections and interventions team.
10. The visit should take place between 25 and 35 working days after the local authority has received its inspection report.

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<sup>2</sup> This responsibility is set out in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Inspection of Local Authorities) Regulations 2007, Paragraph 3.

11. The visit is attended by:
  - the lead inspector of the local authority's single inspection (or another member of the inspection team if the lead inspector is unavailable)
  - a senior HMI based in the local authority's region
  - participants selected by the local authority.
12. It is for the DCS to determine who should attend the action planning visit, though the DCS may wish to discuss this with the lead inspector to ensure that attendees are appropriate to the recommendations in the report. The attendees will usually include senior managers of the local authority children's services and other key partners. As the visit is concerned with the work of children's services professionals, elected councillors would not normally attend.
13. The lead inspector should ask scheduling colleagues to add one day for preparation and one day for the visit in their schedule. The lead inspector should also notify the inspection and management support team supervisor of the date of the visit.
14. The SHMI and lead inspector will discuss the agenda for the action planning visit with the DCS before the event. This gives the DCS an opportunity to influence any specific areas that they want the visit to focus on. The lead inspector will circulate the final agenda five working days before the visit. An example agenda is at Annex B.
15. If the local authority has an early draft of their action plan, the DCS should share this with the lead inspector before the action planning visit to assist planning. Early drafts of action plans are accepted as 'work in progress' and will not be formally reviewed by the inspector.
16. It is for the SHMI to introduce the action planning visit setting out its purpose. The role of the lead inspector and the SHMI is to present the priorities and key recommendations of the inspection report in more detail and enter into formal discussion with the participants so that they can be fully aware of:
  - the evidence that supports the recommendations
  - the priorities for action
  - the detail that underpins any areas about which the local authority remains uncertain.
17. The lead inspector's presentation should not replicate inspection feedback. It should be concise and target the key issues that need to be discussed. It should inform debate with and between participants so that the local authority can use the material to develop its action plan.

## Recording

18. The lead inspector should keep a record of the outcome of the discussions (Annex C), which will be retained by Ofsted on its internal systems. The SHMI should also send it to the DCS, copied to the regional director and the Ofsted national director, social care.

## Action plan

19. Local authorities have a maximum of 70 working days from when they receive the inspection report to submit a 'written statement of action' to the Secretary of State and HMCI. This is required irrespective of the inspection judgement.
20. The lead inspector will review the action plan as soon as possible after receipt to check that it reflects the recommendations contained in the inspection report. Ofsted is not responsible for 'signing off' or endorsing the action plan – this is the responsibility of the DCS. Here, Ofsted's role is to advise the DCS about whether the action plan reflects the recommendations in the inspection report.
21. Ofsted's regional director will write to the DCS confirming whether the action plan reflects the inspection findings. If Ofsted considers that the action plan does not properly reflect or address the recommendations set out in the inspection report, the lead inspector and/or SHMI should discuss this with the DCS to ensure that the recommendations have been fully understood. Where this is not resolved, the regional director will write to the DCS setting out the area(s) of difference and the reasons. Annexes D and E provide templates for this correspondence. The lead inspector will keep the national director, social care informed.
22. The lead inspector will inform the interventions team at the DfE of the outcome of this process. If the differences are not resolved, the Secretary of State will be asked to consider what action (if any) the DfE wishes to take in response.

## Monitoring visits

23. At the action planning visit, the SHMI, HMI and DCS will agree arrangements for the quarterly monitoring visits. The monitoring visits may not be equally spaced throughout the year. The first monitoring visit will usually be within four weeks of the submission deadline for the local authority's action plan (which is within 70 days of their receipt of the inspection report). The lead monitoring inspector will confirm the dates of the visits in advance.
24. Usually two HMI will undertake each visit. They may be accompanied by an additional seconded inspector. They will work closely with a senior children's service colleague nominated by the local authority to help coordinate the monitoring visits. Each visit will usually last for two days. Wherever possible, the same HMI will lead all these monitoring visits.

25. Monitoring activity should relate to the key weaknesses and recommendations in the inspection report. The role of the HMI conducting the quarterly visits is to monitor and report on the local authority's progress since the last inspection. The HMI will also check that performance in the other areas has not declined since the inspection. Where new concerns have emerged since the last inspection, we are likely to look at these as part of monitoring.

### **Pre-visit preparation**

26. The lead monitoring inspector will confirm the arrangements for each monitoring visit in advance with the local authority. Once the date of a visit is confirmed, the lead inspector will ask the local authority to provide the latest available child-level data required to carry out the agreed monitoring work. This request will usually be two weeks before the monitoring visit. When providing the data, the local authority should indicate any cases that they have audited since the last monitoring visit.
27. The HMI may ask the local authority to audit cases but in most instances the HMI will request information about up to six cases that have already been audited by the local authority. The local authority will be asked to return the completed audits at least three working days before the monitoring visit.
28. The local authority should provide any information requested using secure processes. Inspectors will provide details for accessing a secure online site that local agencies can choose to use for this purpose. This site has been risk assessed by Ofsted against the Government's cloud security principles<sup>3</sup> to handle sensitive personal data.
29. Ofsted will only request data that is necessary to inform the activity specific to that monitoring visit. Any requests will be based on an extract of the data that is currently required for the inspections of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers – the single inspection.
30. The HMI and/or SHMI may, with the agreement of the DCS, attend the local authority's improvement board meetings as an observer, or other related meetings, for example with DfE officials.

### **Monitoring visit activity**

31. The lead inspector and DCS will agree a timetable for the onsite activity.
32. Activity on any monitoring visit, including tracking and sampling children's cases, will follow the methodology in the handbook for the single inspection.

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<sup>3</sup> 'Summary of cloud security principles', CESG and Cabinet Office, August 2014; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/cloud-service-security-principles](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cloud-service-security-principles)

33. On-site activity will usually consist of tracking the experience of a maximum of six children and young people. The criteria used to select cases will be agreed with the local authority before each monitoring visit.
34. Inspections will track or sample the cases audited by the local authority to evaluate how effective the local authority's auditing systems are and this will inform their evaluation of its progress and performance.
35. The tracking of children's experiences will be complemented by some case sampling activity. Where sampling is a more appropriate method to gather evidence in the particular focus of the inspection, the number of cases selected for tracking may be reduced. Any sampling activity should be proportionate to the nature of the service and/or area of practice that inspectors are evaluating. Inspectors will usually only sample cases from the previous three months.
36. Where the HMI identifies a cause for concern about the help, protection or care provided to a child/children, these must be brought to the attention of the DCS.
37. HMI will record the evidence collected and conclusions drawn during each monitoring visit. Inspectors must record the case numbers of tracked and sampled cases so that this can be cross-referenced in future visits.
38. At the end of each visit, the lead inspector will summarise and feedback the inspection findings to the DCS, chief executive and commissioner (where one is appointed). The Ofsted regional director and/or quality assurance (QA) manager may be present for the feedback meeting. If the authority and inspectors disagree on the findings, this must be recorded.
39. The areas to consider at the next monitoring visit will be agreed with the local authority at the feedback. Where the date of the next monitoring visit is known, the lead inspector will confirm the milestones by when the local authority should provide information, including whether the local authority will be required to specifically audit any cases.

## **Reporting of monitoring visits**

40. The HMI will write a brief report about their findings and, in particular, their evaluation of the local authority's progress. The local authority will be given an opportunity to review the factual accuracy of the report before it is finalised.
41. Ofsted will not publish the report relating to the first monitoring visit. Ofsted will usually publish the report of each subsequent monitoring visit.

## Timeline

42. A timeline showing the monitoring visit arrangements is shown below.

<b>Working day</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Two weeks before visit	Lead inspector requests child-level data. Local authority provides this data by the end of that week, indicating which cases they have audited.
Eight days before the visit	Lead inspector notifies local authority of audited cases to submit.
At least three days before the visit	Local authority submits audited case files (before the inspectors' preparation days).
Two days before onsite activity	Preparation by inspectors.
Days 1 and 2	Inspectors onsite
Day 3	Inspection team writes report
Day 4	Lead inspector and QA manager quality assure the report
Days 5 and 6 (am)	Regional director reviews the report
Days 6 (pm) and 7	National Director, Social Care (or Deputy director, Social Care) reviews the report
Day 8	Lead inspector/QA manager revises the report
Day 9	Inspection support team reviews the report
Day 10	Lead inspector/QA manager revises the report
Day 11 (by 4pm)	Inspection support sends draft report to local authority for factual accuracy check
Day 11 (4pm) – Day 15 (9.30am)	Local authority checks factual accuracy of the report
Day 15 (by 9.30am)	DCS provides factual accuracy comments on the report
Day 15	Lead inspector and QA manager review factual accuracy comments and report
Days 16–17 (am)	QA manager/Regional director clears report
Day 18	Inspection support team proof reads the report
Days 19–20	QA manager/Regional director clears final report
Day 21	Inspection support sends pre-publication report to DCS
Day 23	Report published

## Quality assurance

43. All inspectors are responsible for the quality of the monitoring visit and are accountable for the quality of the report.
44. Each monitoring visit will have a QA manager, usually the regional SHMI. The QA manager will not usually be onsite during the visit.
45. The role of the QA manager is to have oversight of the evidence base to provide assurance that the findings and evaluation of progress are robust. They will provide support and guidance to the HMI and oversee the final report to publication.
46. All inspectors are expected to quality assure their own and other inspectors' work during visits. The lead inspector has overall responsibility for ensuring that all the evidence gathered is robust, reliable and secure.

## Complaints

47. Ofsted aims to carry out all of its work to a high standard but recognises that, occasionally, concerns may arise about its actions or the conduct of its staff. We expect that in the first instance, all concerns about our work will be raised, wherever possible, as soon as they arise and directly with the individual inspectors involved. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the inspector's response, they should be made aware of Ofsted's complaints procedure, available at: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted/about/complaints-procedure](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted/about/complaints-procedure).

## Section two: re-inspection of inadequate local authorities

48. This section of the guidance outlines arrangements for re-inspections when Ofsted decides to undertake a post-monitoring single inspection rather than a full single inspection. This guidance must be read in conjunction with the single inspection framework (SIF) and associated inspector handbook.<sup>4</sup> Unless otherwise stated within this section, inspectors will follow the single inspection framework and inspector handbook.
49. Ofsted will usually re-inspect a local authority judged inadequate at its last inspection within two years of it submitting its action plan. The deadline for the local authority to submit its action plan is within 70 working days of receiving its pre-publication inspection report. A re-inspection will not usually take place until there have been at least four quarterly monitoring visits. This is because our evidence shows it is unlikely a local authority will be able to demonstrate sufficient improvement to alter its inspection outcome in less than a year.
50. Ofsted will tell the local authority when they decide that a re-inspection is the appropriate next step. At this point no further monitoring visits will be scheduled. Ofsted will not tell the local authority when that re-inspection will take place. The timing of the inspection is not within a prescribed timeframe but will be in the coming months. Ofsted will want to see that the improvements identified in the monitoring visits have been maintained.
51. Local authorities found to be inadequate across all or most areas will receive a full repeat single inspection. For local authorities in which inadequacy is less widespread – for example, a local authority that is inadequate in either, help and protection or children looked after – Ofsted may undertake a ‘post-monitoring single inspection’ instead.
52. The scope of the post-monitoring single inspection is the same as the single inspection and inspectors will make the same judgements. Inspectors will be on site for less time than in a full inspection under the SIF. The shorter fieldwork is possible because of the substantial body of evidence gathered by Ofsted on its quarterly monitoring visits.<sup>5</sup>
53. Ofsted re-inspects local authorities under section 136 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

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<sup>4</sup> ‘Single inspection framework: children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers’; Ofsted 2013; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-local-authority-childrens-services-framework](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-local-authority-childrens-services-framework) and ‘Inspection handbook: children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers’; Ofsted 2013; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-services-for-children-in-need-of-help-and-protection-children-looked-after-and-care-leavers-and-reviews-of-local-safeguarding-children-boa--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-services-for-children-in-need-of-help-and-protection-children-looked-after-and-care-leavers-and-reviews-of-local-safeguarding-children-boa--2).

<sup>5</sup> See section one of this guidance for more information on monitoring visits.

## Decision to undertake a post-monitoring single inspection

54. The decision to undertake a post-monitoring single inspection lies with the Ofsted regional leadership team. The decision will be informed by:
- information gathered during the quarterly monitoring visits
  - the local authority's evaluation of its improvement journey and performance, including whether they consider they are ready for re-inspection
  - the view of the Department for Education
  - performance data
  - other regional intelligence, for example inspection outcomes of regulated settings run by the local authority.

### Decision making process for conduction a post-monitoring single inspection



## Deployment for post-monitoring single inspection

55. The inspection team will usually be four social care HMI. The team size may change to reflect circumstances, size and complexity of the inspection or local authority. The inspection team will include HMI who undertook monitoring visits in the local authority. This will usually be the HMI who led the monitoring visits.
56. A senior analytical officer from Ofsted may be on site for up to two days in week one and one day in week two. When they are not on site, they will support the inspection remotely.

## Pre-inspection

57. The lead inspector will have two planning days, up to three weeks before the inspection fieldwork. These two days will be for the lead inspector to identify areas where there is already substantial, up-to-date evidence from the monitoring visits that will only require final triangulation during the inspection. The days will also be used to determine any lines of enquiry in addition to the areas of weakness identified at the last inspection. This will enable the inspection team to be more targeted in its evaluations of practice, leadership and management.

58. Data analysts will provide a pre-inspection briefing (PIB). The PIB will focus on:
- relevant data/information published by the local authority
  - national data trends and comparisons
  - data and trends from monitoring visits
  - other intelligence, for example serious incident notifications and whistleblowing
  - links to significant and relevant published documents, for example serious case reviews and other relevant inspection reports
59. The lead will determine which documentation from the single inspection framework (SIF) Annex A is required from the local authority at the start of the inspection.

### Notice period

60. The lead inspector will notify the director of children’s services two days before they arrive on site. This will usually be the Thursday before fieldwork.

### Inspection activity

61. The inspection activity on a post-monitoring single inspection will mirror the full single inspection. However, we will not ask the local authority to audit a sample of children’s cases for the inspection. Inspectors will ask for a list of children’s cases that the local authority has audited in the past three months. Inspectors will track and sample some of these children’s cases using the guidance and recording tools in the single inspection handbook. They will also sample some randomly identified children’s cases.
62. All inspectors’ evaluations of practice, leadership and management will be benchmarked against the grade descriptors within the single inspection framework. Inspectors’ evaluations will be made based on evidence gathered during the inspection, but inspectors will also rely on the substantial evidence base from recent monitoring visits to help develop robust lines of enquiry and to triangulate their findings. Where findings from monitoring visits indicate strong performance, inspectors will only sample sufficient cases to satisfy themselves that this performance has been maintained or improved.

### Inspection fieldwork – indicative timeline

Day	Day of week	Activity
Two days – up to three weeks before		Lead inspector planning days
-2	Thursday	Local authority notified of the inspection (AM). Lead inspector requests information to support the inspection.

Day	Day of week	Activity
1	Monday	All inspectors travel (PM) lead inspector on site PM to set up the inspection.
2 – 4	Tuesday – Thursday	Onsite evidence gathering
5	Friday	Case tracking meeting (AM). QAM on site. Travel (PM)
6	Monday	Travel (PM)
7 – 8	Tuesday – Wednesday	Onsite evidence gathering
9	Thursday	Mop up activity (AM) Provisional judgement meeting (PM) QAM on site
10	Friday	Confirm judgements. Feedback (late AM). Travel (PM) QAM on site

## Communicating with the director of children’s services

63. The lead inspector will carry out one keeping in touch (KIT) meeting per day, including the final day of week one. There will not be any further feedback at the end of week one. Feedback arrangements on the final day of inspection will mirror those for a full single inspection.

## The post-monitoring single inspection report

64. The inspection report will include:

- a one-page executive summary
- up to two pages per key judgement summarising the key strengths and weaknesses
- a one-page summary of the graded judgements
- recommendations for improvement.

65. A post-monitoring single inspection report should not usually exceed 12 pages in total.

## After the inspection

66. Arrangements to sign off and check the factual accuracy of the report will mirror the single inspection handbook.

67. If the inspection determines that the local authority remains inadequate, the monitoring process in section one of this guidance will start again. In the event that the Secretary of State appoints a Children’s Services Commissioner or begins the process of removing service control from the local authority, Ofsted will consult with DfE about next steps.

## **Annex A. Draft letter to DCS: action planning visit**

The regional director should send this letter to the DCS and copy it to Ofsted's national director, social care as soon as the SIF inspection report is published.

Dear (director of children's services)

### **Inspection of (name of local authority) children's services: action planning visit**

As part of Ofsted's response to local authorities judged to be inadequate, we now deliver an action planning visit. This visit is to support you and your senior leaders in creating an action plan that reflects the findings of our inspection support. The improvement board chair and your link person from the Department for Education (DfE)'s inspections and intervention team, as well as relevant colleagues from partner agencies and the local safeguarding children board should attend.

We normally expect the visit to take place between 25 and 35 working days of you receiving the inspection report. In your case, this means between (enter dates). (If the lead HMI/SHMI has preferred dates, enter them here.) As this event aims to support your action planning, the attendance list is for you to agree with the lead inspector. Our experience suggests that it should be limited to those who will have a direct contribution to make to improvement in your area and who have the authority to do so.

The purpose of the visit is to enable the lead inspector and senior HMI to present the key priorities of the inspection report in more detail before entering into informed discussion with you and your delegates to:

- ensure that you are fully aware of the evidence that supports our recommendations
- clarify any areas about which you are still not certain.

We are confident that it will be helpful and directly relevant to the work that you are undertaking to finalise your action plan.

I would be grateful if you could confirm the options for dates that you can accommodate and your proposed list of attendees. I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

(Name of regional director)

cc SHMI, HMI and national director, social care, DfE at SocialCare.INSPECTION-IMPROVEMENT@education.gsi.gov.uk

## Annex B. Draft agenda for action planning visit

Note. The programme detailed below is meant only as a suggested guide to indicate the topics that should be considered for the action planning visit's discussions. In liaison with the local authority concerned, the programme should be tailored to the particular circumstances as necessary.

*Welcome and introductions (SHMI and DCS)*

*Understanding the inspection findings and judgements*

- group discussion led by lead inspector from the single inspection.

*What has happened since the inspection?*

- group discussion about the actions the local authority has taken so far.

*Understanding the performance challenges*

- understand the inspection judgement and identify barriers to change
- begin to articulate the priorities for change and the capacity needed to make it happen.

*Identifying improvement priorities*

- identify evidence measures for change and leadership responsibilities
- agree initial timescales, improvement strategy (including relationship with Ofsted HMI/SHMI and the improvement board work).

*Summary of improvement planning and next steps*

- review the expectations in respect of next steps, the preparation of the written response to the inspection in the form of an action plan and timescales for submission.

## Annex C. Record of action planning visit

>Insert name of local authority<

### 1. List of attendees:

--

### 2. Details of discussion:

Should be compiled at the time by the SHMI. Any areas of continuing disagreement between the original inspection findings and recommendations should be noted.

### 3. Details of formal planning:

Action planning visit discussions may lead to agreements about how recommendations are to be addressed in the action plan. However, Ofsted should not prescribe how this is to be done. It is important that any agreed variation from the report's recommendations are recorded together with the reasons.

Agreed and signed by Ofsted HMI and SHMI:

Date of record:

## **Annex D. Letter to DCS following receipt of the post-inspection action plan**

(This letter will be sent by the regional director and copied to the national director, social care. The letter should also be copied to the link person in DfE's inspections and intervention team.)

Dear (name of DCS)

### **Inspection of (name of local authority) children's services: action plan**

Thank you for sending me a copy of your local authority's action plan dated (enter date). The plan satisfactorily reflects the recommendations of the inspection report and incorporates the outcome of discussions at the action planning visit that took place on (enter date).

As you know, Ofsted will track the progress of your action plan as we proceed through our monitoring visits and we shall discuss its impact on children and young people at key stages throughout the process.

Yours sincerely

(Name of regional director)

cc SHMI, HMI and the national director, social care and the link person in the DfE's inspections and intervention team

## **Annex E. Letter to DCS after receiving a post-inspection action plan that does not reflect the inspection findings**

(This letter will be sent by the regional director and copied to the national director, social care and to the DfE inspections and interventions team.)

Dear (name of DCS)

### **Inspection of (name of local authority) children's services: action plan**

Thank you for sending me a copy of your local authority's action plan dated (enter date). I write to advise you that the plan does not reflect the recommendations of the inspection report and fails to incorporate the outcome of discussions at the action planning visit that took place on (enter date).

(Draft paragraph to clearly but succinctly set out the areas of disagreement and the potential impact if they are not addressed)

I have asked the lead inspector (enter name) to have a further discussion with you as soon as possible to establish whether it is possible to resolve our different views. I shall look forward in due course to hearing about the outcome of this discussion. I will be grateful to receive a copy of the action plan if any amendment is made following this discussion. On receipt, I will write to you again.

Yours sincerely

(Name of regional director)

cc SHMI, HMI and the national director, social care and DfE inspections and interventions team.

## Annex F. inspection notification email

### Email to notify Director of Children’s Services of the start of the inspection

Dear (insert name of Director of Children’s Services)

### Re-inspection of local authority children’s services judged inadequate – (insert name of council)

This email is to inform you that I will arrive onsite on (insert date) to begin a re-inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. The rest of the inspection team will arrive onsite the following morning. The inspection will take place over a two-week period.

Week One	Week Two
Lead inspector on site Monday afternoon to set-up the inspection. Full inspection team on site Tuesday to Friday ( <b>4 days</b> )	Full inspection team on site Tuesday to Friday ( <b>4 days</b> )

I have spoken to (insert name and title of manager or ‘to you’) to inform him/her/you that the inspection will commence in line with the guidance published on our website.

We will be tracking cases, which will involve visiting offices to talk to staff, reading files and considering and observing front-line practice. We will identify cases to track from cases you have audited in the last three months. This will require the arrangements to be made expediently and I will talk to you how best to achieve this.

To help identify cases to track and sample, I will need lists of children and young people who are within the scope of the inspection and any meetings that will take place during the inspection. When compiling this information please refer to Annex A of the framework and evaluation schedule and the supplementary guidance.

Unless otherwise stated in the re-inspection guidance, inspectors will follow the single inspection framework and inspector handbook. Please see the links below for the relevant documents. I will discuss the specific arrangements for your inspection with you before the full inspection team arrives onsite.

Monitoring and re-inspecting local authority children’s services judged inadequate: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/monitoring-local-authority-childrens-services-judged-inadequate-guidance-for-inspectors](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/monitoring-local-authority-childrens-services-judged-inadequate-guidance-for-inspectors)

Framework and evaluation schedule: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-local-authority-childrens-services-framework>

Inspection handbook: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-services-for-children-in-need-of-help-and-protection-children-looked-after-and-care-leavers-and-reviews-of-local-safeguarding-children-boa--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-services-for-children-in-need-of-help-and-protection-children-looked-after-and-care-leavers-and-reviews-of-local-safeguarding-children-boa--2)

An online portal has been established to receive all Annex A information. Details for uploading information to this portal are in a guidance note appended to this letter.

All inspections are subject to a quality assurance process undertaken by a named quality assurance manager. If there are any issues the inspection team cannot resolve, you may wish to discuss these in the first instance with the manager for this inspection. This person is (insert name) and can be contacted on (insert number/email).

## Summary of changes

This section outlines additions to guidance or changes to the methodology. This does not include corrections or changes made to improve clarity.

### Changes made in May 2017

- More flexibility in the timing of quarterly monitoring visits.
- Amended guidance about sampling cases on a monitoring visit to ensure inspection activity is proportionate.
- Added information about the period between monitoring visits stopping and a re-inspection taking place.
- Introduced two days' notice for a post-monitoring SIF.
- Additional guidance on how the findings from monitoring visits inform activity at the re-inspection.
- The indicative timeline for a post-monitoring SIF has been simplified.

### Changes made in August 2016

- Amendments to the report writing and quality assurance timeline for monitoring visits.
- Section two (re-inspection of inadequate local authorities) added to this guidance.

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)  
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Department  
for Education

# Putting children first

Delivering our vision for excellent  
children's social care

July 2016

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## Ministerial foreword

Social services are the backstop of our society – offering help to families in need, and intervening where things go wrong. Yet children’s social care is not a service that the majority of children and families ever have to draw on. For most families, the support network provided by relatives, friends, communities, schools and health services will enable them to provide their children with a safe, stable and nurturing home. However, there is a small but important group of children – our most vulnerable – who need more intensive support to have the stable foundation that others take for granted.

These children face challenges which most of us can only imagine. They may have disabilities, or have faced abuse and neglect. They may have been let down time and again by the people who are supposed to love and protect them. They may be being exploited by perpetrators preying on their vulnerability.

The horrors of the serious cases we all know about – Daniel Pelka, Hamzah Khan, Ellie Butler, the children exploited so terribly in Rotherham – demonstrate just how heartbreaking the consequences can be when we fail to protect our children.

But there are thousands more stories of children whose lives are transformed by social workers, foster carers, residential care staff or adopters. These people epitomise the compassion and deep desire in our society to help others, without which we, and our children, would be so much the poorer.

Over the last six years, working with local government, we have made real progress towards achieving more for the children and families we serve. We have made wide reaching reforms to the adoption system, to special educational needs and to the support provided to children in care. We have invested in over 50 innovation projects, testing out new approaches to children’s social care. We have maintained our strong commitment to short breaks for disabled children and their families. We have introduced ‘Staying Put’, enabling young people to stay in their foster home to age 21 if they want to. We have provided over £100 million via the Pupil Premium Plus to help looked after children get ahead in school.

But we will not stop there. We are determined to bring about the widest reaching reforms to children’s social care and social work in a generation. Earlier this year, we set out our vision for the children’s social care system. We were very clear that we want a system

staffed and led by the best trained professionals; dynamic and free to innovate in the interests of children; delivered through a more diverse range of social care organisations; with less bureaucracy; smarter checks and balances designed to hold the system to account in the right ways; and new ways to intervene where services fail.

Today we are delighted to be publishing the government's strategy to achieve that transformation: our plan for 'Putting Children First'. This plan involves fundamental reform of each of the three pillars on which the children's social care system stands:

- first, **people and leadership** – bringing the best into the profession and giving them the right knowledge and skills for the challenging but hugely rewarding work ahead, and developing leaders equipped to nurture practice excellence
- second, **practice and systems** – creating the right environment for excellent practice and innovation to flourish, learning from the very best practice, and learning from when things go wrong
- third, **governance and accountability** – making sure that what we are doing is working, and developing innovative new organisational models with the potential to radically improve services

We need a system that works for every child – whether that be a child on a child protection plan whose parents are being supported to provide them with the kind of safe and stable home environment they need; a child moving towards a loving adopted home; a disabled child who needs help from social workers to live their life to the full; or a young person leaving care who needs the continued support and guidance that other young people receive from their parents. We need to get it right for every single one of these children, and that is what our plan for 'Putting Children First' is designed to achieve.

In a modern, one nation, Britain we have to strive for excellence in children's services, because as a fair and decent people, we believe that every child, no matter what their circumstances, should be afforded the best possible start in life. The kind of start that not only allows them to become successful adults, but also gives them the happy childhood that we want for all our children. We should be judged by how we treat the most vulnerable in our society, and that means putting our most vulnerable children first.



**Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP**  
**Secretary of State for Education**



**Edward Timpson MP**  
**Minister of State for Children and Families**

# Letter from the Chief Social Worker for Children and Families

Dear colleagues,

Today the government has published 'Putting Children First – Delivering our vision for excellent children's social care'. This signifies an historic step change for how we will work with children and their families in the future. It's important you read it and in discussion within your teams and organisations reflect on what it might mean for you, but critically what it will mean for the children and families with whom you work. Great opportunity to really change things for the better is within our reach. We must maximize this chance to radically improve the child protection and care system for children and their families.

Without doubt social workers must be trusted to get on and do the job they came into the profession to do. We must be enabled to use our professional judgment in flexible and creative ways, rather than having to follow a procedural path or series of legal rules, far too automated to match the social complexity of the lives of the children and families with whom we work. We also need to work within the right cultural context which supports a practice system sophisticated enough to meet that complexity. Organisations need practice focused leaders with high ambition for what we can achieve for children and families; practice leaders who firstly respect the need for sufficient time to undertake direct work with children and families which really helps and protects the most vulnerable, and secondly provide the necessary support and resources to do so. For many overstretched social workers that might sound a little like nirvana. But it isn't.

The undeniable reality is that in every single authority in England there are great social workers doing great social work, even where caseloads are high, supervision is infrequent, resources are reducing and there is little professional development. For some social workers, however, it's not such a daily battle. For there is a small but growing vanguard of children's social care organisations that are doing things differently – organisations where practice leadership is very strong, workloads are manageable, supervision is frequent, supportive and reflective and learning and development has become centre stage. In some organisations this is now starting to translate into fewer children coming into the care system through the provision of effective family support, the

safety and long term stability of children in the care system is getting better, and new ways of working with young people are providing properly supported independence.

We need to keep on building the critical mass of children's social care services that are getting it right for children and families. 'Putting Children First' sets out how government is going to help make this ambition a reality so that even in high performing services, outcomes for children and families are even better. Social workers – as practitioners, practice supervisors and practice leaders – have a most critical role to play alongside their multi-disciplinary colleagues, and the many parents and carers who have the *most* important role in children's lives.

'Putting Children First' is the gateway to the kind of practice social workers want to be doing every day. Probably the single most refreshing thing about 'Putting Children First' is its central recognition that relationships and long term social connection is the cornerstone to child and family welfare. This of course goes to the core of social work. It is why social work is such a pivotal player in the public service landscape and why social work is important to government. The fantastic and inspiring Innovation Programme, our radical Partners in Practice Programme, the new power to innovate, new opportunities for post qualification CPD and specialist accreditation under a dedicated new body for social work as one profession, a new What Work's Centre to get research into the heart of practice, are just some of the motivating changes in which government will invest. Some of you might have to suspend disbelief to become part of this progressive movement of change, and I urge you to do so. Don't let others interpret this opportunity for you and don't let it pass you by.

It has been a pleasure to meet and speak with so many of you and to hear your views to date. I look forward, very much, to continuing to meet and discuss with you this exciting agenda, as I continue visiting children's social care services across the country.



**Isabelle Trowler**  
**Chief Social Worker for Children and Families**

# Chapter 1: Our ambition for children, young people and their families

## Putting children first

1. By putting children first, excellent children's social care can transform the life chances of our most vulnerable children and families. It can offer every child who has had a difficult start the promise of a brighter future, with every prospect of success.
2. Strengthening families is central to that aim. Children who grow up with safe, stable and nurturing relationships form stronger friendships, develop greater resilience, achieve more in school and are more likely to build successful careers and have positive relationships throughout their lives. The right support gives children independence, choice and control as they enter adulthood.
3. The fundamental purpose of children's social care is to make sure that our most vulnerable children – those who have been abused and neglected, or face other significant challenges such as a disability – can have a safe, dependable foundation from which to grow and flourish. This is achieved by supporting parents to provide the best possible care for their children or, where this is not possible, by giving them a stable and nurturing alternative home. It is only a small proportion of the nation's children who will need this support – around 400,000 of the 11.5 million children in England are in need or in care at one time – but intensive and highly specialist help is needed if these children are to have the opportunities that others take for granted.
4. Whether it is by finding a new 'forever family' for a child waiting for adoption, helping a child in care to understand their early experiences and settle in their foster home, supporting a disabled child to have the confidence to take part in the activities their peers enjoy, or working with struggling and distressed parents to understand where things are going wrong and what their children need to thrive – children's social care is vital and transformative.

5. And those working in social care do not, of course, do this work alone. Strong partnerships with schools, with the NHS and with the police are often vital to identifying issues and putting in place the right solutions for children.

“When I was growing up I had the same social worker for seven years. I felt like I could trust that social worker 100%. Our relationship wasn't easy, but she stuck by me through thick and thin. I always looked forward to seeing her – she was my special person. She worked with my family at the same time to protect me from my mum, who wasn't easy to work with, and she was always available to me. I didn't even realise there were other children on her caseload – it didn't even occur to me that I wasn't the only one because she was that good.

The first person I met that I really wanted to be like was my last social worker. She was so cool. She's still in my life now I'm part of her family. She was actually only 5 years older than me, I was 16 then. Sandra was so cool, she taught me a lot in life. I was in care as a child, and so were both my parents. Two generations. My daughter didn't go into care - we're not repeating that pattern. My children's upbringing and success is a credit to my social workers; they were the ones who gave me the ability to break out of that cycle. Parents usually take the credit don't they? Well my parents lost that right, with my social workers gaining it. Social workers don't always see the impact, but boy can they make a difference. I have got to where I am today because of social workers.”

**Jenny Molloy**, now a writer  
*'Hackney Child'*, Simon & Schuster, (2011)

## The case for change

6. The best children's social care services in England deliver excellent help and support to children and families. But whilst there is much impressive social work in the system, evidence from frontline delivery organisations, multiple Serious Case Reviews and from Ofsted inspections points to continued inconsistency in the quality of work with children and families. Ofsted's recent Annual Report on children's social care states that, of those local authorities inspected under the current framework, a quarter have been found to be inadequate. In addition, almost half require improvement to be good. The majority of local authorities still struggle to provide consistently effective core social work practice. Similarly, fewer than half of

Local Safeguarding Children Boards, which coordinate and challenge multi-agency working locally, do so in a way which is 'good'.

7. Reviews by Professor Eileen Munro, Sir Martin Narey and David Croisdale-Appleby, amongst others, have given us a deep understanding of the challenges faced by children's social care. They have described a system:
  - in which initial social worker training is not consistently preparing students for the challenges of the job, and those already doing it too often lack the time, specialist skill and supervision needed to achieve real change for children and families
  - that focuses too much on management and is governed by prescribed approaches rather than excellent practice
  - where services have not always been designed around vulnerable children, and innovation hasn't been given enough space to thrive
  
8. We do not underestimate the challenges that social care faces: increased pressures on budgets; higher demand for services; and new threats to our children and young people as they become targets for radicalisation, child sexual exploitation or gang culture. But we know that these challenges are far from insurmountable. The pattern of inspection outcomes is not about how deprived an area is, or local geography, or even the amount of money being spent on children's social care. Some of the local authorities judged 'inadequate' by Ofsted this year were amongst the highest spending, whilst higher performers were found to spend their money more effectively, investing in the best services and bringing costs down. Ofsted's inspections this year show that, regardless of local context, providing outstanding services is possible, and 'good' is a standard that any local authority can achieve and maintain.<sup>1</sup> It is our moral obligation to refuse to rest until every local authority does. We owe it to Daniel Pelka and Ellie Butler, killed by their parents, and to the more than 1,200 children in Rotherham who faced the most heinous child sexual

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<sup>1</sup> [Social care: the report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills \(2016\)](#)

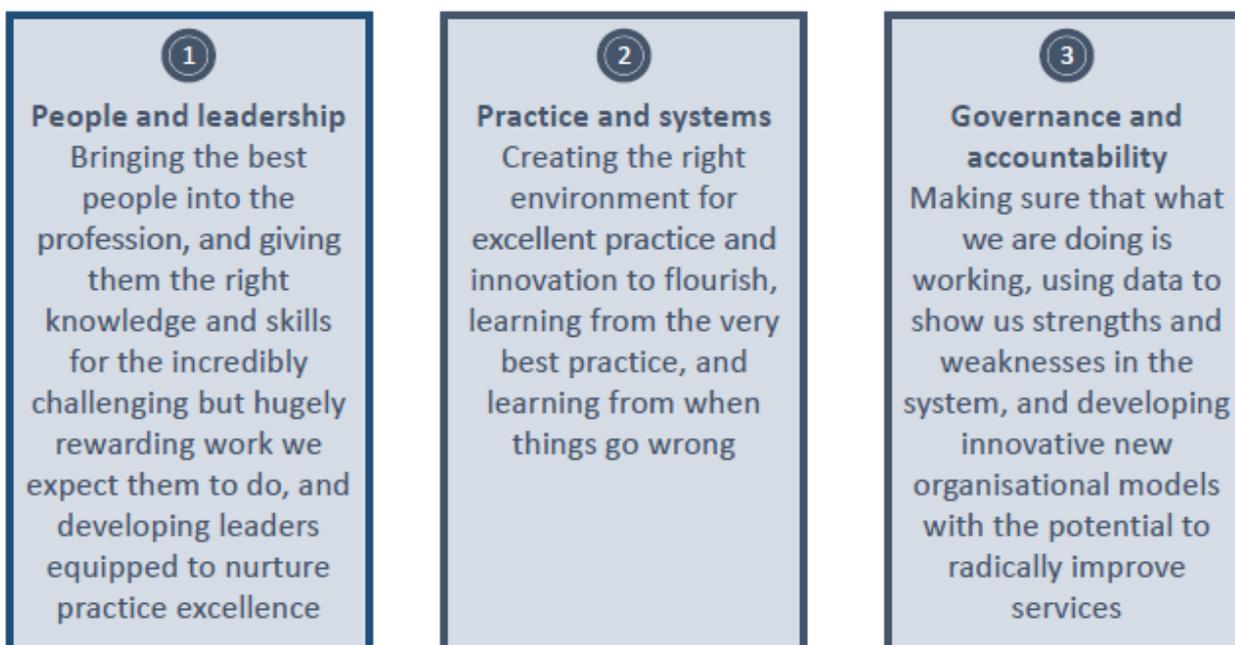
exploitation in the line of sight of people who should have intervened. We owe it to every child who has suffered without the help and protection they needed.

## **Progress so far**

9. Over the last six years, we have begun to lay solid foundations for the improvements required. We have made significant progress towards reforming the child protection system, stripping back bureaucracy. We have secured crucial additional support for children in care and those leaving care. We have reformed the adoption system, to give more children a permanent family, more swiftly. We have helped 35 local authorities move out of failure, and established the first two children's social care Trusts. We have appointed a Chief Social Worker and introduced the first definitive statements of the knowledge and skills needed by child and family social workers. We have begun the transformation of the Special Educational Needs and Disability system, to join up social care, education and health, and put the child at the heart of the system. We have invested in Frontline and Step Up to bring more high calibre recruits into social work. We have introduced the Pupil Premium Plus, giving extra money to help schools to support children in care. We have invested £100 million in testing out radical new approaches to children's social care through our Innovation Programme.
  
10. This is all starting to have an impact: we have seen the first 'outstanding' Ofsted judgements under the current framework; we are recruiting a new generation of talented social workers into the children's social care workforce to complement some of the outstanding social workers who enter the profession from the traditional university route; and examples of exceptional leadership are being celebrated by Ofsted and others. Importantly, we are starting to see the emergence of a culture which strives for excellent practice and has the confidence to believe that it can be achieved.

## **Our reform programme**

11. Building on that work, we have a real opportunity over the next five years to transform the quality of children's social care services in England. In January 2016, we set out our vision and our reform programme, under three fundamental pillars of reform:



12. This paper outlines in detail how we will deliver fundamental reform across each of these three pillars. It builds on the paper 'Adoption: a vision for change' which set out the government's vision for a reformed adoption system by 2020, and also responds to the important recent reviews by Sir Martin Narey and Alan Wood CBE, on residential care and multi-agency arrangements for safeguarding children respectively.
13. The government has a responsibility to support change and intervene where children's wellbeing is at risk. However it is important that local areas have the freedom and flexibility to find what works for the children in their care. We need reform to be locally driven, by leaders who know what works to help children, and by strong local partnerships. Help needs to be delivered in ways which fit the local context and the varying and complex needs of individual children and families, but to the same consistently high standards. The diverse examples of success that we are seeing are often the result of highly innovative structures, systems and practices. Their common ground is the relentless pursuit of excellent practice, irrespective of the challenge or environment.
14. By 2020 our ambition is that all vulnerable children, no matter where they live, receive the same high quality of care and support, and the best outcome for every child is at the heart of every decision made. Getting this right isn't just about changing lives, it's about transforming them. The reforms outlined in this paper will

give the entire children's social care system the opportunity to do that. They will ensure that the whole system puts children first.

## Chapter 2: People and leadership

In 'Children's social care reform: a vision for change' we set out our ambition to bring the best people into the profession; give them the right knowledge and skills for the vital work they do; and develop leaders equipped to nurture practice excellence.

### **To achieve this, we will:**

- have an accredited practice leader in place in every local authority by 2020
- establish a new programme to develop our most talented social workers into the practice leaders of the future
- launch a programme for the development of new practice supervisors
- continue to invest in existing teaching partnerships and support new ones, to raise standards of entry into social work
- roll out a new system of assessment and accreditation for all child and family social workers, practice supervisors and practice leaders by 2020
- establish a new specialist regulator for social workers in England
- led by the new regulator, set new professional standards for social workers; new standards for qualifying education and training; and new specific standards for the continuous professional development of social workers

15. The individuals who make up the children's social care workforce have the opportunity to have a genuinely life-changing impact on our most vulnerable children. They will often find themselves to be the one person in a child's life who is both trusted enough to understand the problems the child faces and also skilled and confident enough to bring about the change that is needed to address them.
16. Our most vulnerable children are helped and supported by thousands of deeply committed child and family social workers, foster carers, residential care home workers, and a wider workforce made up of personal advisers, therapists, counsellors, social work assistants, family support workers and others. It is only through their skill, expertise and capacity to care that we can truly achieve the change we need for children.

### **Case study**

Emily graduated from University having studied English Literature, followed by a Masters in International Development. Before joining the first Frontline cohort in 2014, she worked for a national children's charity. Now in the second year of the programme, Emily is working as a newly qualified social worker in a London Council.

Emily is extremely proud to have recently qualified and enjoys the variety of the work she does in child protection: "No day is the same in social work. I have had the privilege of working with families and children who are defying the odds to work through difficult situations. I have particularly enjoyed building relationships with clients to encourage collaboration and positive change. One of the best parts of this job is the people we work with, and although there are difficulties and challenges, there are often also success stories for families involved in social services."

17. This chapter focuses on our reforms to raise the skills and confidence of the social work profession. But foster carers, residential care workers and others also have a vital role to play. These people often provide the central relationship in a child's life, the foundation on which their stability, security and self-worth are built. They have to be able to love and nurture children who can often be resistant to it. They have to be hopeful and aspirational for children who feel others have given up on them, and who have sometimes given up on themselves. This work is not easy. Not everyone can do it and no-one can do it alone. Those who do, provide a priceless service to our most vulnerable children and to society as a whole. Chapter 5 sets out our emerging plans for supporting this wider social care workforce to do their vital work.

### **Developing the social work profession – achieving confidence in practice**

18. Our vision is for a social work profession that has fully confident and highly capable social workers, who have been properly trained in the right way with the right knowledge and skills. They must have the opportunity to work in supportive environments, that facilitate critical thinking and enable them to make the best decisions for children and families.

19. Child and family social workers hold the statutory responsibility for keeping children safe and making the right decisions about their futures. Social workers know how to effect change within families, but also know when success cannot be achieved and they must pursue a stable and secure alternative family future for them. They have to be able to simultaneously build a strong, supportive relationship with a family whilst remaining open minded and forensically inquisitive about the risks a child could be facing. They know how to help young people build their social world and leave the care system brave, hopeful and equipped for the adult world.
  
20. There are great social workers and leaders in the system, and great local authorities that are excelling in the delivery of services to vulnerable children and families. But – across local areas and within local areas – the quality can be variable, with some social workers lacking the right knowledge and skills to do their job effectively, working under poor leadership and supervision, in systems that do not focus on what matters most: keeping children safe and supporting them to reach their full potential.
  
21. The knowledge and skills statements published by the Chief Social Worker for Children and Families for child and family practitioners, practice supervisors and practice leaders set out for the first time what social workers, at all levels of seniority, should know and be able to do, establishing the foundations for a clear career path for the profession. Ensuring that all social workers working with the most vulnerable children and families have the right level of knowledge and skills is a key priority.

### **Case study**

Anna Banbury has worked at the NSPCC since 2013, where she is Development and Impact Manager for Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) policy, practice and research. She trained and qualified as a social worker from the University of Oxford in 2003 and began her career as a social worker in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

Anna is motivated by the unfairness that for some families, things are harder: “Change takes a very long time: it is hard and frightening and needs someone to stand alongside you to reassure and support. That’s the job of a social worker. We all know that there is never enough time to spend with our clients, but I have come to value research and reflection as much. So much depends on the quality of our decisions and our records. It can be hard to remember that what feels like cumbersome paperwork at the end of a long day is a person’s life story. One day they will need those records to make sense of what has happened. The hardest part about being a social worker is knowing that, for some people, our support comes too late. The hurt and harm that could have been prevented are now too deeply embedded. And we must be able to explain and evidence that. But my passion for the work comes knowing that I am helping to draw a line in the sand: for this child or this family, the cycle can be broken and there is hope for the future. Change is possible. And we can evidence that too.”

## **Developing leadership to transform children services**

### **Definition of practice leader – knowledge and skills statement**

Practice leaders are qualified social workers with the day-to-day operational responsibility across the whole local system for child and family social work practice, for child and family practitioners and practice supervisors. They are typically referred to as the Assistant Director of Children’s Social Care or Director of Family Services.

22. As the most senior qualified and experienced social workers in an organisation, practice leaders are in a unique position to lead and to improve practice. Practice leaders provide clarity of organisational purpose, create the context for excellent practice, are able to design systems to support effective practice, develop excellent practitioners, support effective decision making and set and uphold high quality

practice standards. They instil a strong sense of accountability in staff for the impact of their work on the lives of children and families, being committed to continually improve the services provided. The importance of this role has recently been recognised in the Ofsted note on practice leadership<sup>2</sup>:

*“The qualities that make a successful children’s services leader aren’t straightforward to define – but inspections show that they’re very obvious when present – and strikingly so when they aren’t.*

*“It isn’t just a question of good leadership and management skills, although these must be present in abundance. Like all good leaders, social work practice leaders are inspirational and influential. They are energetic, visible, and ensure that they are surrounded by a strong team at every level.”*

23. Our ambition is that all local authorities will have an accredited practice leader in post by 2020. Some local authorities may choose to have more than one practice leader in place, but it is essential that in appointing more than one practice leader the essence of the role is not diluted, losing the clear line of leadership, accountability and ownership over the quality of practice. As with the wider social work profession, it is important that practice leaders are centrally accredited to build professional and public confidence around them. The first group of practice leaders will be accredited in 2017.

24. As announced by the Secretary of State in January 2016, it is important that we start investing now in those talented social workers who will be the practice leaders of the future. As part of their work as a Partner in Practice, Tri-borough (Westminster City Council, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea) will lead work to develop and deliver this programme, with the support of other Partners in Practice and high performing local authorities. The programme will have input from the best existing practice leaders and will have a particular focus on developing the pipeline of future leaders to work in challenging areas and newly-created Trusts.

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<sup>2</sup> Schooling E, ‘Practice leadership’, Ofsted, [Commentary on social care: June 2016](#)

## Bringing the very best into the profession and improving the quality of education

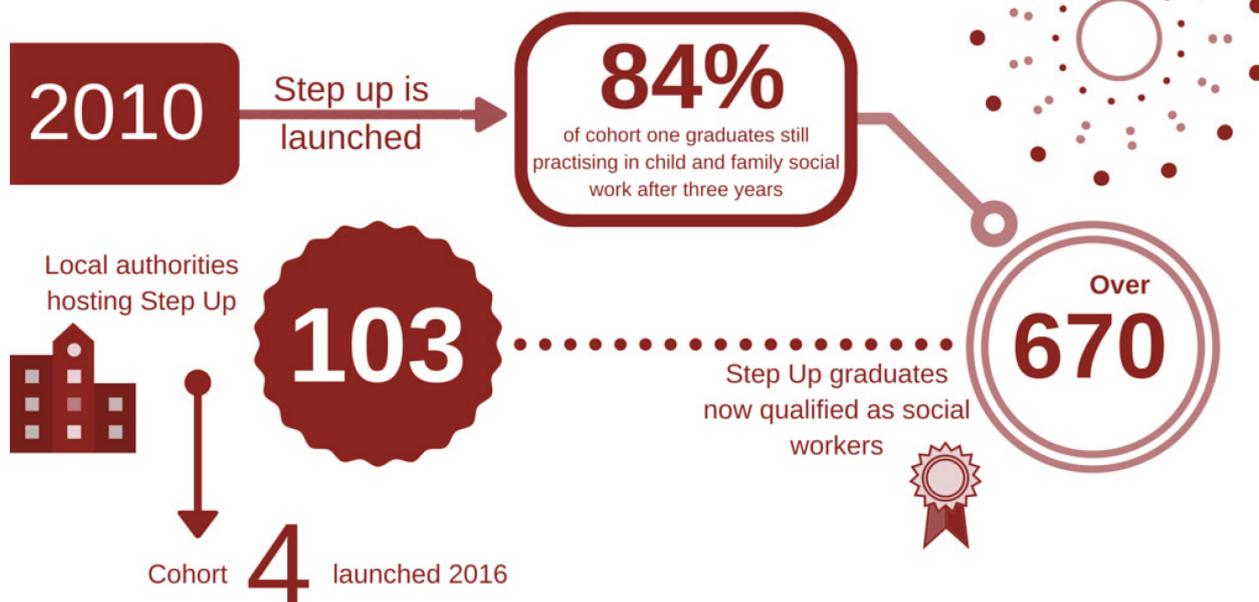
25. The main route for people to enter child and family social work is through a generic three-year social work degree or a two-year Masters. As the Narey Review (2014)<sup>3</sup> showed, the quality of these courses is hugely variable. While some courses are very strong, some accept poor calibre individuals, have too limited a focus on the skills and knowledge needed to be a social worker, and lack high quality practice placements. Universities are too often insufficiently responsive to the voice of the employer. And only a proportion of those being trained ultimately end up working as social workers. Latest figures show that only 3,000 of the 4,700 qualifying from social work programmes (65%) have entered the profession six months after the end of their course.<sup>4</sup>
26. We need more high calibre recruits to enter social work, taught through a curriculum based on the knowledge and skills they need to work with the most vulnerable children and families and assessed against the knowledge and skills statements. Supportive, high quality statutory placements are also fundamental for their effective future practice.
27. During the last Parliament we invested in establishing and developing two successful new entry routes – Frontline and Step Up. Both programmes build on the generic foundations of social work with a specific focus on the knowledge and skills required to operate effectively in a child and family statutory setting. Both programmes have been very popular with both high calibre students and employers.
28. Our ambitions for these fast-track routes are therefore high. By 2018 we anticipate around 30% of new child and family social workers will come from fast-track routes, and up to 40% by 2020.

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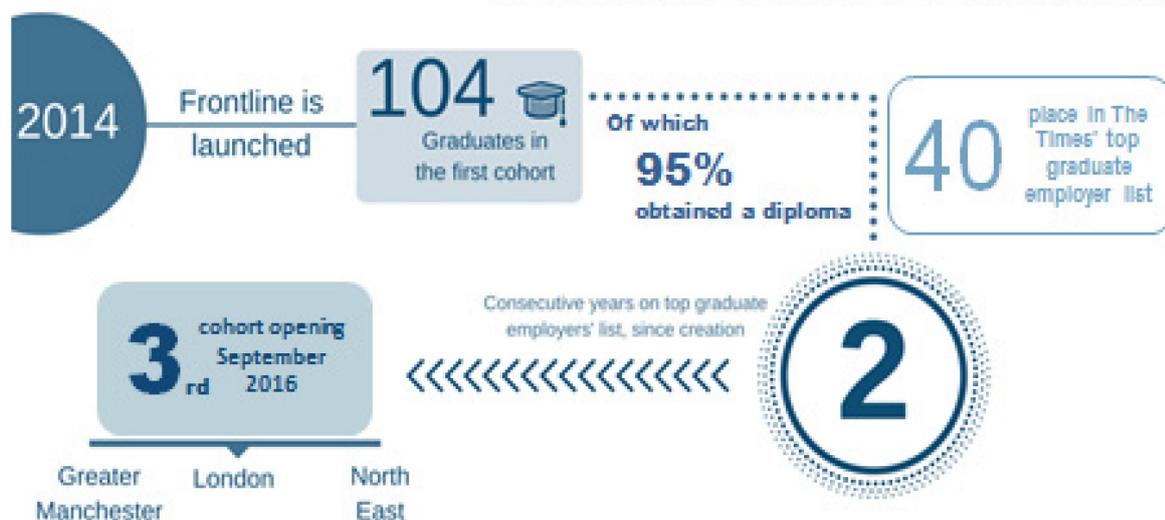
<sup>3</sup> [Making the education of social workers consistently effective: Report of Sir Martin Narey's independent review of the education of children's social workers](#) (2014)

<sup>4</sup> Social Work, Skills for Care, March 2016, page 12. <https://www.nmds-sc-online.org.uk/Get.aspx?id=957463>

## STEP UP: IN FIGURES



## FRONTLINE IN FIGURES



29. In 2010 Step Up operated in just 42 local authorities; now 103 local authorities are hosting the programme. Frontline will expand from the London and Manchester areas into the North East from September 2016 and the West Midlands from September 2017. **We want every local authority to have the opportunity to benefit from at least one of these programmes by 2020 and will work with local authority senior managers to ensure full national coverage.**

30. But standards of education must rise across the board, with no tolerance for courses that fail to prepare students for the realities of statutory work. In 2015 the Department for Education, together with the Department of Health, launched four teaching partnerships, bringing together a range of local authorities, other social care and health organisations and universities. These partnerships are raising standards of entry into conventional social work programmes, are incorporating the Chief Social Workers' Knowledge and Skills into teaching and practice curricula and have a strong focus on statutory placements.

“Teaching partnerships play a key role in transforming social work practice. The teaching partnership has re-energised and re-focused our commitment to and passion for social work as a true vocation. Feedback we have received reaffirms the value of teaching partnerships being employer-led and responsive to the needs of the statutory sector in a way that has never been seen before.”

**Christine Bennett**

Assistant Director (Children Fieldwork Services), Sheffield City Council  
and Chair of the South Yorkshire Teaching Partnership

31. We continue to invest in existing teaching partnerships and will support new ones to build on the positive impact already achieved. The interest in the teaching partnership programme continues to grow with 23 new applications received for phase two of the programme from a total of 98 different local authorities, 43 universities and a range of other public sector, private, voluntary and independent organisations. A panel led by the Chief Social Workers for Adults and for Children and Families is reviewing these proposals and making recommendations to ministers for expansion.

32. The teaching partnerships programme paves the way for the standards that the new social work regulator will set across the board. Although the exact details of these standards will be for the new regulator to decide, it is expected that they will build on the requirements for teaching partnerships including promoting high entry requirements, focus on the Chief Social Worker's knowledge and skills statements, a strong emphasis on statutory placements and continuous professional development (CPD) that supports the new career framework. The expansion of the teaching partnership programme enables institutions to work towards those standards.

## **Developing confidence in the social work profession – assessment and accreditation**

33. Social work can be a lonely job and proper supervision and support is vital to doing it well. Quality of individual practice is variable, with different standards and expectations being applied by different employers. Although the knowledge and skills statements set out in clear terms what child and family social workers are expected to know and be able to do, there is no nationally consistent mechanism to demonstrate whether individual social workers are able to meet these standards.
34. The assessment and accreditation system will provide that mechanism, so that employers and the public can therefore be assured that social workers meet these expectations. It will offer an opportunity for social workers to demonstrate the quality of their practice through a test of their knowledge and through observations of simulated practice in a number of role play scenarios with actors. It offers both the opportunity to develop the confidence of the public in the profession, and for the profession to develop confidence in the quality of its own practice against clear standards.
35. During the proof of concept phase, which ran from April 2015 to March 2016, almost 1,000 social workers took part and helped the department shape the future of the system. We plan to publish our conclusions about the proof of concept phase and what it means for the future of the assessment later this year.
36. This will be published alongside a consultation document on the future of the assessment and accreditation system, covering the key questions about the future implementation of the system. This will include whether accreditation should be made compulsory and, if so, for what roles or functions, and the consequences of failing to achieve accreditation. If accreditation were to be made compulsory, this would not be until after 2020, when we expect all child and family social workers to have had the opportunity to be accredited.
37. From 2017 to September 2018 (phase 1 of the rollout), our Partners in Practice and a group of volunteer local authorities will help the department shape delivery, and pioneer the assessment with their workforces. Social workers who have recently

completed their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment are also expected to be part of this phase.

38. Phase 1 of the rollout will give us the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the impact that assessment and accreditation has on the workforce and the ability of employers to manage the implications for their staff. It will also enable us to develop a robust infrastructure to support further rollout and pass responsibility to the new social work regulator at that time.

**39. We intend to publish guidance later this year to support employers and social workers to embed the knowledge and skills into their practice.**

**40. We will launch a tender for the selection of a delivery partner to support phase 1 of the rollout alongside the publication of the consultation and the results of the proof of concept phase.**

## **Investing in continuous professional development**

41. Learning does not stop at qualification and we know social workers are eager to continue to develop their own practice, with many employers providing a programme of post qualification training and development.

42. The transition from initial qualification into the realities of practice is a crucial time in the development of a strong social work professional. Previous work experience, quality of classroom and practice teaching, type of student placement, curriculum content and the quality of support provided by the employer all have an impact. The Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) helps bridge this transition, ensuring newly qualified social workers are supported to become confident in practice and evidencing that they can apply their social work knowledge and skill to particular work contexts.

43. Nearly 10,000 child and family social workers have been supported through ASYE, with over £18 million invested over the past five years. We know that this programme is highly valued but we also know that the level of support participants receive is variable and standards fluctuate across local authorities. The introduction of the knowledge and skills statements and assessment and accreditation provides an

opportunity to strengthen this programme, with ASYE participants expected to gain accreditation following completion of their ASYE. **We will continue to invest in ASYE, with the launch of cohort 5.**

44. Moving from initial qualification into work is not the only transition that social workers will face. Moving into supervisory roles is equally important and it is essential that social workers are supported in this transition to ensure they are properly able to supervise and support others under their responsibility. **That is why we will establish a new programme for the development of those making the transition from frontline practice into practice supervision, akin to the ASYE for frontline practitioners. The programme will launch its first cohort in 2017.**

45. Alongside the core social work reform programme, we are keen to provide social workers with opportunities for rigorous continuing professional development which promote depth of practice in key areas of child and family social work. As announced in 'Adoption, a vision for change' the first area of practice we want to focus on is the knowledge and skills required to achieve permanence for children within and outside the social care system. **We are creating a new optional training programme to support social workers to develop or sharpen skills they need in order to make and support robust permanence decisions.** The content of the training will be based on a specialist statement of knowledge and skills. This statement will set out what a child and family social worker needs to know and be able to do in order to successfully undertake the complex assessment, analysis and permanence decision-making we require of them, and progress permanence plans with urgency and skill. A formal consultation on the proposed knowledge and skills statement will be published shortly on the gov.uk website. We will use this area to trial this approach to developing depth of practice and then consider whether additional areas of child and family social work would benefit from a similar approach.

## **A new regulatory body for social work**

46. Social work is a complex and challenging profession that has the power to transform lives. Key to this is a highly skilled and expert workforce. However, we know that excellent practice is not found consistently across the country. As set out above, the government has developed a significant reform programme to improve social work quality and the quality of the systems which support social workers. To embed these

reforms, we need a regulatory system that focuses on practice excellence and raising standards from initial education through to post qualification specialism.

47. Subject to the passage of the Children and Social Work Bill a new specialist regulator for social workers in England will be set up. The new regulator will cover both child and family social work and adult social work and will have an absolute focus on raising the quality of social work education, training and practice with children young people, families and adults. This will help improve public safety and promote the status and standing of social work. To achieve this the new regulator will:

- publish new professional standards, aligning with the Chief Social Workers' knowledge and skills statements
- set new standards for qualifying education and training, and reaccredit providers against these standards by 2020
- maintain a single register of social workers, annotating it to denote specialist accreditations
- set new, social work specific, standards for continuous professional development
- oversee a robust and transparent fitness to practise system
- approve post qualifying courses and training in specialisms such as Approved Mental Health Professionals and Best Interest Assessors
- oversee the proposed new assessment and accreditation system for child and family social workers
- oversee the required arrangements for successfully completing the ASYE
- make effective use of workforce-related data available to it to offer insight and advice which informs and supports workforce planning by both local and central government

48. On 28 June, the government published a policy statement that set out the vision for this vital area of reform.<sup>5</sup> To achieve these ambitions collaboration, consultation and engagement with the social work sector will be vital and that will be a key feature of the development and running of the new regulatory framework.

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<sup>5</sup> ['Regulating Social Workers: Policy Statement'](#) (June 2016)

**Extract from 'My Heroes... My Happiness...'**

**By Steven, Year 8, Luton. Winner of Coram VOICES writing competition 2016**

"I lay there like death lies over the graves of the living. Jumping into the darkness of the night like light jumps into the darkness of the abyss. My life being shadowed like the British clouds shadow the light and all that is good for this world. Being drowned into the depths of the ocean like a fish gets drowned in the depths of the air. My soul being burnt like the rain burns the fire to the deepest pits of hell. But still I am happy, and the two people who make this possible..."

My heroes... Clint and Estelle... I had felt a new emotion that I had never felt before. I was greeted by happiness. I was greeted by another feeling that I had never felt before when I met them... love. My eyes filled with tears of joy as I struggled to keep in the happiness. Warmness flooding through my veins. A sigh of relief as I felt as though I had found my safe haven...

Struggling to control my emotions as strangers became my friends and friends became my family. Could I have been there? Was I in heaven? Every day I asked myself these exact same questions. But then I have to come back into reality and realise that I was still in this same world of war and torment. But with these people helping me through my poisonous life I can do it and I will eventually become stronger and no longer crying my way to sleep every night...

The past ten years of my life have been the best I have ever experienced. Our family is like the story of Romeo and Juliet except in our family the love is returned because there is always love and sometimes it is consistent and that is why I love my family and they love me in my family. They are my heroes. They are my happiness. I love them loads..."

*Used with the permission of Coram*

## Chapter 3: Practice and systems

In 'Children's social care reform: a vision for change' we set out our ambition to create a system that provides the right environment for excellent social care practice and innovation to flourish; learns from the best, and learns when things go wrong; and frees up social workers to use their skills and talents to the full.

### **To achieve this, we will:**

- expand the Innovation Programme through the £200 million additional investment announced in April, launching a new bidding round in September 2016
- work with our eight leading local authorities as Partners in Practice to: understand how authorities get to good and what it takes to move from good to excellent; interrogate the most important practice questions facing children's social care; and develop additional sector-led, peer to peer improvement
- seek to use a new Power to Innovate to test where legislation, regulations and guidance might be getting in the way of excellent practice
- launch a new What Works Centre for children's social care
- establish a new national framework for inquiries into cases of serious harm to children
- develop effective responses to new and emerging threats
- move from a system of data collection to data-driven practice, and improve the quality and collection of data

49. This chapter is about what the children's social care workforce does when working with children and families – making sure that they are intervening in a way that will make a genuine, long lasting difference to children and families.

50. We mostly know who the children in need of support, care and protection are, and we know a lot about their family life, their experiences and the challenges they are facing. But what we don't yet understand deeply enough is whether what we are doing to support them is actually helping. In order to put children first, we need to foster a resilient and dynamic practice system, underpinned by a robust and continuously evolving evidence base. We need a national learning infrastructure that brings

together everything we know about the best ways of helping our most vulnerable children, and makes this available and easily accessible to the whole system. The future we want to see is one in which excellent professionals do not shape their practice to comply with diktat from Whitehall, or even the Ofsted framework – but rather they form a confident profession, constantly pushing the boundaries and redefining what works through rigorous and evidence-based practice.

51. Actions taken in the last Parliament have already started to develop our understanding of how excellent practice can be unleashed. Our £100 million investment in innovation has energised the sector, and built consensus around the need to push boundaries and rigorously test and verify new approaches. Emerging messages from the first round of our Innovation Programme, and from the Ofsted annual report and commentaries, suggests that the following are key features of successful children’s social care systems:

- leaders know what excellent social work looks like and fearlessly put children’s needs first, and resources, or corporate pressure, second
- leadership and governance brings teams and organisations together around a ‘golden thread’ of a clearly thought-out, coherent vision for improving the lives of children – creating shared values and purpose that is championed by leaders but owned by everyone
- social work methods and practice focus on strong relationships – strengthening the relationships at the heart of children’s lives to increase stability, create real change for birth families, and better support children and young people
- the workforce culture creates an enabling environment and common practice between professionals – a single theory of practice across the whole workforce so professionals are speaking the same language and working in a consistent way with children and families; with manageable caseloads; high quality reflective supervision and clinical support for staff; time to do direct work with families; and integrated, inter-disciplinary and cross-agency teams
- system conditions enable new approaches to take off – which can be created by new delivery models focused exclusively on children’s social care, and/or by new approaches to commissioning and funding which put children’s needs front and centre

- staff are challenged and supported to take appropriate managed risks – leaders and managers who take responsibility and don't seek to apportion blame

52. Our ambition for developing the practice system now is to:

- deepen our understanding of the system conditions needed for excellent practice, and properly understand how these can be fostered across children's social care organisations
- investigate and build our evidence base on the biggest and most important practice questions and challenges facing children's social care
- work out what it takes to move organisations from good to excellent
- extract, properly understand and disseminate lessons from analysis of the most serious incidents of abuse and neglect
- boost sector-led improvement and development, where the best authorities support those who are struggling, and authorities work together in a concerted way to tackle cross-system and cross-boundary challenges
- establish a national repository of knowledge and insight, bringing together everything we know about what works for our most vulnerable children and families, and identifying priorities for further investigation

53. To achieve this, we will expand the Innovation Programme, establish a new Partners in Practice programme to work with our leading local authorities, make better use of data to improve practice, and take a new approach to learning from serious incidents. We will also create a new What Works Centre for children's social care, giving professionals the authoritative and trusted voice on 'what works' in social care practice and systems that they both need and deserve. Collectively these actions will add up to a new national learning infrastructure, the role of which will be to create a deeper understanding of practice excellence, and spread that across the country.

## **Supporting greater innovation**

54. The Children's Social Care Innovation Programme is the vehicle by which we will test new approaches to tackling the most important and difficult practice questions facing the children's social care system. The programme is already supporting local authorities and other organisations to develop new approaches to children's social

care with an investment of over £100 million in 53 projects, and in April this year we announced a further £200 million investment to extend the programme.

### **Case study**

**Pause's 'Preventing Repeat Removals' project** received £4.3m of funding for their work to break the cycle of children being removed into care, often related to complex trans-generational patterns of neglect or abuse. Pause's aim is to break these cycles by intervening at a point when women have no children in their care, working intensely with them through a systemic, integrated model. Pause is currently delivering across seven areas in England, working intensely with up to 20 women at each area.

Evidence has so far demonstrated a number of positive outcomes as a result of the intense therapeutic, practical and behavioural support, provided through a one-to-one Practitioner relationship. As well as a reduction in pregnancies and removals, many women are now in safe accommodation, receiving help and support from domestic violence or mental health services, and engaged in training and education, as well as volunteering and employment. Some women have reengaged in positive and consistent contact with their children, with feedback beginning to demonstrate a positive impact on children.

55. So far the Innovation Programme has focused on three areas:

- rethinking children's social work – these projects have started to show evidence that giving social workers and other frontline workers freedom and support to design services that they know children and families need can have a dramatic impact, and includes projects that have redesigned the organisational systems and practice frameworks
- rethinking support for adolescents in or on the edge of care – including projects providing integrated models of support to young people on the edge of care, and new models for specialist foster care and foster care working in partnership with residential care to create greater stability for young people
- other innovative ideas outside these two priority areas – giving the opportunity for the sector to drive reform where it is most needed, such as the work that the Council for Disabled Children have been doing with five local authorities to explore

challenges and potential solutions in relation to the assessment of disabled children, young people and their families

56. These priorities continue to be central to the programme. Indeed, we are continuing to support projects with positive results and where there is good potential for replication. We are also enabling projects to extend their evaluations.

57. The next phase of the Innovation Programme is a real and enduring opportunity to strengthen and spread the best ideas so far and to drive more innovation in new areas up to 2020.

### **Case study**

**Tri-borough** (Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster local authorities) have implemented their ambitious new model called Focus on Practice, a project designed to bring greater coherence and confidence to social work practice, embed a new culture based on systems thinking and reduce the number of re-referrals of family cases and the number of children in care. The main idea is that social work should be encouraging families to seek solutions for themselves, with the support of practitioners. Focus on Practice involves employing clinicians (family therapists and clinical psychologists), which is proven to be making a difference to social work practice. Clinicians are seen as authentic experts, an extra resource to help resolve 'stuck' cases. They are embedded in teams and provide social workers with systemic ways of tackling problems. The first two 'outstanding' Ofsted judgments under the new framework were recently awarded to two of the authorities in this project, and the programme was cited as contributing to their success.

58. We need to use the next phase of the Innovation Programme to make progress on two fronts:

- deepen our understanding of the system conditions needed for excellent practice, building on the messages emerging from phase one of the programme, and supporting more local authorities to rethink their whole practice system around these conditions

- investigate and build our evidence base on the biggest and most important practice questions facing children’s social care, including building on phase one by continuing to develop our understanding of how we can best support young people making the transition to adulthood

59. In response to Sir Martin Narey’s report on residential care, and building on the adolescents strand of phase one of the Innovation Programme, local areas will be invited to test innovative new ways in which residential care could be used in a more dynamic and creative way to support children and to link seamlessly with other care placements and with other services. In response to Sir Martin Narey’s specific recommendation, we are committed to introducing Staying Close for young people leaving residential care. Staying Close – similar to the Staying Put arrangements which exist for children in foster care – will enable young people to live independently, in a location close to their children’s home with ongoing support from that home. As Sir Martin recommends we are going to pilot variations of the scheme, in order to understand the costings, practicalities and impact first. We will also make Innovation Programme funding available for local authorities to come together in larger scale commissioning arrangements for residential care placements to test Sir Martin Narey’s view that this could lead to significant savings, wider placement choice and better outcomes for children.

60. We also want to use social investment to improve the way that care leavers are supported as they make the transition to independent living, and particularly to support their sustained participation in employment and training. Where providers succeed in doing so, they will be paid for their ‘social impact’. We will make funding available from the Innovation Programme to support the development and commissioning of care leaver Social Impact Bonds over the rest of this Parliament to test new approaches.

61. We are also keen that the next phase of the Innovation Programme has a focus on testing out alternative delivery models for children’s social care (see chapter 4). Whilst structural change is not an end in itself, there is emerging evidence that, in the right circumstances, it may be the key to unlocking improvement and innovation. We want to use the Innovation Programme to build our evidence base in this area.

**62. The Innovation Programme will open for its next round of applications in September 2016.**

## **Understanding and spreading excellence through our Partners in Practice**

63. Our Innovation Programme has started to develop our understanding of the conditions needed to create excellent practice in children's social care. What is clear is that some local authorities – all of whom are already engaged in the Innovation Programme – are achieving this already. These are the authorities we want to make our 'Partners in Practice'. We want to work with the Partners in Practice local authorities, as the leaders in their field, to achieve the following:

- interrogate how these authorities got to good, and further develop our emerging understanding of the conditions needed for excellent practice to flourish
- work out how authorities can go from good to excellent – by providing freedoms, flexibilities and other forms of support, we want to see just what these authorities can achieve when barriers are removed, creating a model of excellence that the whole system can learn from
- boost sector led improvement, by backing the Partners in Practice to drive improvement in authorities still working to get to good
- use these leading authorities to contribute to our effort to investigate the most important and difficult practice questions facing the children's social care system

64. This is an approach that puts genuine partnership between local and national government at the heart of work to improve services, with our very best practitioners and leaders in the driving seat of reform for children and young people.

65. We want the Partners in Practice to help us fundamentally rethink the framework in which social workers operate and social care leaders design, manage and quality assure their services. In particular, they will provide evidence about new structural models and innovations; trial the new social work workforce reforms; explore greater freedoms in how they design and deliver their services; and support work looking at how best to measure performance and outcomes. They will also tackle some of the hardest practice questions facing the system, adding to our understanding of what actually works to make change happen for the most vulnerable families.

66. We will undertake rigorous evaluation of how the Partners in Practice authorities work to provide the sector with insight on what works to improve outcomes for children and also how local authorities could move from 'good' to 'outstanding'. As this work and our other reforms take effect, we will take on more Partners in Practice.

### **Case study**

#### **Lincolnshire County Council: Partners in Practice**

Our ambition is to use the power to innovate to redesign how social work is delivered. We will reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and enable social workers on the front line to spend more time working with families and less time sitting in front of their computers and filling in forms. It will allow social workers to make real, lasting, effective change for the better in the lives of families, doing the job they expected to do when they trained for it.

We will use the most recent research on the education of children in care and develop a programme that aims to ensure that their progress educationally is better than what is expected. This will be done by creating a new approach based on a "Caring Schools and Learning Placements" methodology.

The way in which we currently make plans for our children in care is too bureaucratic, adult focused and time consuming. We will redesign care planning by putting children in charge of the decisions about their lives in a way that engages them to respond.

We will explore an alternative delivery model of Children's Services and explore opportunities for more collaborative working. Lincolnshire County Council has a track record of introducing effective new models through commissioning and has stated its aspirations to be a commissioning council. We believe that an alternative delivery model will open up opportunities for greater collaboration to drive efficiencies and improvement.

## Removing barriers to effective practice

67. One important ambition for our Partners in Practice programme is that we use this programme to work out what children's social care organisations should *stop* doing in order to be great, as well as what they need to do. Putting children first means freeing up social workers to deliver genuinely high quality practice and drive better outcomes for our children, and we recognise that achieving this means stripping back some of the process and bureaucracy that gets in the way. While it is crucial that the children's social care system is effectively regulated, with appropriate safeguards and standards, we must be careful not to step into over-prescription, which constrains innovative, locally developed practice.

68. We have already made progress. Following Professor Eileen Munro's 2011 review of child protection, we substantially reduced and streamlined our 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' statutory guidance in 2013, ensuring that it focuses clearly on the core legal requirements that all professionals should follow to keep children safe.

69. Within the revised guidance, we streamlined the assessment process, removing the distinction between initial and core assessments and creating a single, continuous assessment process better geared towards ensuring that children are given the right help at the right time. However, in 2013 we fell short of fully implementing another of Professor Munro's recommendations by retaining a 45 working day timescale for the completion of the single assessment. We have been trialling exemptions from this and other timescales in statutory guidance for a number of years and we will now explore whether the time is right to remove these more broadly.

70. We need to continue to ask rigorous questions about which elements of our work with children and families genuinely add value, and which do not. There is a consensus stemming from the Munro Review that over-regulation gets in the way of good social work practice and prevents social workers and other staff from putting children first. In recent years the government has been working to create the conditions for local authorities and others to test radical new approaches that improve outcomes and efficiencies in children's social care. The Innovation Programme has already generated an exciting suite of projects that test the limits of the current framework – but local authorities tell us they often want to go further for children and families than legislation allows.

71. Our Partners in Practice will help us to do this. Many areas still feel unable to take measured and managed risks in the interests of children for fear of falling foul of prescribed approaches. In many cases the work that the Partners in Practice want to do means taking a fresh look at established practice, legislation and regulation and thinking hard about how far it genuinely supports the sort of changes we want our social workers to be able to make in the lives of young people. We need them to show us what they are capable of achieving when they are given the freedom to design practice around an uncompromising focus on what children and families need.

72. In order to safely test and evaluate the removal of barriers that social work leaders tell us get in the way of good practice, **we are seeking a new ‘Power to Innovate’ through the Children and Social Work Bill, currently before Parliament.** This would create a controlled environment in which we could enable local authorities to test deregulatory approaches that are not currently possible, before taking a decision to make substantial changes to existing legislation that would apply across the board.

“I welcome the introduction of the power to innovate set out in the Children and Social Work Bill. This is a critical part of the journey set out in my Independent Review of Child Protection towards a child welfare system that reflects the complexity and diversity of children's needs. Trusting professionals to use their judgement rather than be forced to follow unnecessary legal rules will help ensure children get the help they need, when they need it. Testing innovation in a controlled way to establish the consequences of the change, before any national roll out, is a sensible and proportionate way forward.”

**Professor Eileen Munro**

## **Effective responses to new and emerging threats**

73. Familial abuse and neglect remain the biggest reasons for children to be in the child protection system. But our children now also face new threats: from online abuse, made easier via access to social media and the Internet; from sexual exploitation through gangs and from peers; and from extremist ideologies. As a result, local authorities and social care Trusts need to understand how the risks presented by non-familial abuse are being picked up by children's social care, and what interventions are needed in response.

74. In the aftermath of shocking child sexual abuse in Rotherham and elsewhere, the Department for Education and the Home Office have worked with local authorities to understand the nature of the threat and the appropriate social work response. The report of the joint targeted area inspections into child sexual exploitation have also helped significantly and **we have now let a contract with the National Working Group for a Child Sexual Exploitation Response Unit, to bring expertise and support to those local authorities who face new or particularly challenging child sexual exploitation issues.** Given this is a fast moving area of practice that has been subject to recent developments, we recognise the role for government in bringing together examples of effective approaches, **and intend to publish new practice guidance and a revised civil definition of child sexual exploitation later this year.** This will help further with spreading good practice about dealing with child sexual exploitation.

75. Similarly, we have just completed the first phase of research to understand what best practice is when tackling issues of radicalisation of children. Here too, we are committed to supporting local authorities to build capacity and capability in these emerging areas of practice.

## **Understanding why serious incidents occur**

76. Learning from the most serious incidents of abuse and neglect has to be a core part of our new national learning infrastructure. The current Serious Case Review (SCR) system seldom gets to the heart of why things went wrong. Reviews take too long to carry out and, as the national panel of independent experts has stated, the quality of reports is 'disturbingly variable, with good reports being outnumbered by those still failing on key points'. We need a system in which families, practitioners and the public can have confidence. 'Children's Social Care Reform: a vision for change' announced a move to a more centralised system. This will create a more sophisticated understanding of the factors in serious case reviews, so that local agencies can improve the quality of the services that they provide to vulnerable children and families. This will bring greater consistency to public reviews of serious incidents involving children; improve the speed and quality of reviews at local and national levels; make sure that reviews which are commissioned are proportionate to the circumstances of the case they are investigating; and support the development of both national policy and local practice.

77. To support this, **we intend to establish, through the Children and Social Work Bill, a Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel to oversee a national framework for inquiries into cases of serious harm to children.** The current system of SCRs and miscellaneous local reviews will be replaced with national and local child safeguarding practice reviews. National reviews will include reviews of the most serious and/or complex cases, and will be undertaken when the Panel believes that the cases involve issues of national significance. Commissioning of local reviews will remain with local areas. This picks up some key recommendations in the review of the role and functions of Local Safeguarding Children Boards undertaken by Alan Wood CBE earlier this year. We will make sure that the outcomes of these reviews are properly analysed and disseminated through the new What Works Centre.

### Using good data to improve practice

78. The relentless pursuit of excellent practice across the system will depend on high quality data being shared and used. At a national level, data should inform policy and legislation about children's social care; help us target support and challenge to local areas; and facilitate local learning. At a local level, data can ensure that the need for help is identified early; resources are targeted appropriately; services are commissioned effectively and efficiently; risk is managed well; and the right support is put in place for children and their families.

79. We have sought ways to reduce the burden of data collection, and increase quality (such as improved workforce data on social workers). We have also developed new ways of sharing data, for example by adding a range of special educational needs and disability (SEND) data to the Local Government Association's LG Inform tool. This helps local authorities compare their SEND performance more effectively, and the Local Authority Interactive Tool enables authorities to compare their performance with peers, with both tools including financial benchmarking.

80. Strong local authorities are increasingly using data to inform commissioning and resourcing decisions, and to monitor the support provided to children, for example using their registers of disabled children to ensure that they provide the support services needed in the right places. Central government, local authorities, and other public sector organisations need to know their unit costs and how these costs compare, to make the best decisions about services and to manage successfully in

the current budgetary climate. We want to encourage local authorities to make the best use of financial planning and comparator tools, such as that being produced by Aldaba and the Dartington Social Research Unit, in their commissioning and planning decisions.

### **Case study**

**West Sussex County Council** has teamed up with local charity Amaze, to manage Compass West Sussex, West Sussex County Council's disability register for 0-25s. Joining the register will entitle children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities access to the Compass Card West Sussex, a leisure discount card and the opportunities this offers. West Sussex has used this approach to support families to engage with their community and to encourage them to sign up. The register will provide a rich data set that they can use to inform better commissioning decisions and better engagement with those families.

81. Despite this progress, however, we still do not get full value out of the wealth of data we collect; the quality and timeliness of data varies; and at its extreme data collection can divert resource away from working with children and young people. Too often, data are used primarily to try to indicate good or bad performance at specific intervals, rather than to identify opportunities to improve outcomes for children on an ongoing basis. Leaders and practitioners report that the way we share data does not always meet their needs and that local authorities can lack the tools, and capacity to fully utilise data to improve practice and outcomes for children.

82. To help us move from a system of data collection to data-driven practice, we will:

- work with local areas and organisations including the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS), the Local Government Association and the Adoption Leadership Board to explore better ways of sharing data and analysis, and to understand barriers within local areas to using data
- promote effective practice to support authorities to use data to improve practice, manage risk, improve commissioning, and scrutinise their costs. This will include working with the Behavioural Insights Team to ensure that lessons from the big data project are disseminated effectively to local authorities; and sharing tools

and findings from work by the government and Boston Consulting Group on costs of local authority services

- identify opportunities to use national data in a more innovative way, for example analysing data from across government to identify trends that could help us target resources more effectively

83. We will also improve the quality and collection of data by:

- ensuring that everything we collect is collected for a clear purpose, and based on what central and local government find most useful, including working with local government to look at improving the section 251 data collection
- working with Ofsted and government departments across Whitehall to ensure data requests are as aligned as possible and duplication minimised
- encouraging better benchmarking of value for money data and lessons from Innovation Programme projects, to help local areas to meet the challenges of the current fiscal climate
- exploring how we can make fuller use of technology to improve how we collect and share data, and to move towards more timely data
- developing a framework of what good local data looks like, led by Partners in Practice, based on early work which indicates that there is consistency in the type of data strong local authorities collect

84. Performance data are crucially important in managing the provision of effective services but, as Professor Munro identified in 2011, should not be treated as unambiguous indicators of performance, particularly in child protection where the majority of information available is more nuanced. At the moment, however, local areas report that meaningful performance indicators are, at best, buried within the surfeit of data they are required to collect.

85. Bearing Munro's findings in mind, we will explore whether there is an appetite for developing a streamlined set of measures across children's social care, or for specific groups of children. We are considering, for example, how to make better use of the rich data already collected on children in care and care leavers, including looking at

the development of an outcomes framework consisting of the most useful indicators of success, to enable better local authority decision-making.

## Establishing a new What Works Centre

86. Our new What Works Centre (WWC) is our long term solution to bringing together in one place our national understanding of practice excellence. For some time now social workers and practitioners have been asking for a children's social care equivalent of NICE for the NHS or the Education Endowment Foundation for education. It is important they have an authoritative and trusted voice on 'what works' in social care practice and systems – testing the strength of the evaluated evidence and disseminating key messages. This is exactly why we are establishing a new What Works Centre for children's social care.

87. The WWC will have a sharp focus on improving outcomes for our most vulnerable children and their families. It will identify best practice in supporting children suffering from, or at risk of, abuse and/or neglect from targeted early support all of the way through to permanence. By looking at both effective interventions and practice systems we expect that the WWC will be able to build a truly comprehensive picture of what excellence looks like.

88. While building the evidence base in children's social care is important, it is not enough on its own to transform outcomes for children. That is why we expect the WWC to work in close partnership with the sector and bring new and innovative approaches to gathering, disseminating and embedding its findings, drawing on lessons from a wide range of interventions – including reviews of serious cases, the Innovation Programme and Partners in Practice. It will be a critical part of our plan to raise the status and quality of the social work profession, and in learning lessons from horrific cases of the past.

89. We have already started early market engagement and plan to commission the WWC over the next few months. **We expect to launch the new organisation at the end of the year.**

## Chapter 4: Governance and accountability

In 'Children's social care reform: a vision for change' we set out our ambition to establish diverse and dynamic children's social care organisations; reform the arrangements across agencies for coordination and accountability of services and responsibilities for safeguarding children; and intervene swiftly and decisively to turn around failing organisations.

### **To achieve this, we will:**

- encourage bids for Innovation Programme funding from areas interested in testing out a new delivery model for all or part of a children's social care service
- undertake a review of the role of the local authority in relation to children, including children's social care
- introduce new, more robust, flexible and proportionate inspection arrangements
- introduce a stronger statutory framework for multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, creating greater accountability for the three key agencies of health, police and the local authority
- intervene decisively in cases of failure, removing service control from any local authority which has persistently or systemically failed and does not have the immediate capacity to improve

90. Through the Innovation Programme and through Partners in Practice, we have begun to see some real excellence emerge in the provision of children's social care services. It remains the case, however, that there are too few examples of excellence and too many examples of failure or of organisations struggling to deliver strong services. Too often vulnerable children and families have not been the singular focus for how services are managed; innovation has not been given the space to thrive; data have not been used intelligently; leadership has not been strong enough; and services have not been delivered within a coherent and consistent framework, driving practice. Local authorities are also facing an increasingly constrained fiscal climate, seeing greater demand for services and dealing with new threats to children and young people.

91. All of this makes a clear case to do things differently. Structural solutions and stronger accountability have an important role to play in driving change. Our reforms in this area focus on: supporting the emergence of innovative organisational models for children's social care including Trusts and as a strategic priority within devolution deals; ensuring sharper and more focused accountability; and intervening decisively in cases of failure.

## **Supporting new organisational models**

92. The current system, where the vast majority of children's social care services are delivered by in-house local authority teams, is not delivering consistently excellent practice. Local authorities are diverse in size and demography, but the structure for delivering services is much less diverse and governed by very many of the same rules whether in large cities and counties or in small unitaries. Whilst structural change is not an end in itself, in the right circumstances it may be the key to unlocking improvement and responding to budgetary pressures as well as new threats to our children and young people. New models can:

- refresh leadership and attract strong and ambitious people to organisations where new ways of doing things are needed
- attract good people more generally – including to areas where previous organisations have had a poor reputation and recruitment problems
- provide a sharper focus on children's social care as a whole or on aspects of the system
- enable existing strong organisations to innovate more easily and to create a distinctive culture of excellence
- bring together different areas and organisations in robust structures which go beyond collaboration and into integration

93. Over recent years we have seen two particular approaches emerge:

- new Trust arrangements – whereby children's social care functions are delegated to not-for-profit organisations separate from local authorities (though political accountability remains with the council). This can be achieved voluntarily, by local authorities seeking to pursue new ways of working, and has also been delivered

under direction from central government in cases of local authority failure, for example in Doncaster and Slough

- combined authorities<sup>6</sup> (including new sub-regional or city deal arrangements) – where local authorities come together in a variety of arrangements to operate some or all children’s social care services across a larger geographical area. Again, this might happen voluntarily as innovative local authorities seek to drive change (e.g. Tri-borough in London); or as a result of local authority failure, with a high-performing local authority leading work to improve services in a failing authority (e.g. Hampshire leading work in the Isle of Wight)

94. It is, of course, possible to combine approaches. Richmond-upon-Thames and Kingston-upon-Thames voluntarily combined their children’s services and created a new community interest company to deliver those services, Achieving for Children.

95. We have also seen that in specialist areas partnerships with strong national charities can help to transform service quality (for example, Coram in adoption) by offering a singular focus on and expertise in relation to children and families in need of that service. This can help a struggling part of the service to catch up, or can bring increased improvement capacity and expertise to one part of a wider improvement plan.

96. Evidence from the small number of existing alternative delivery models already in existence is very encouraging. We know already that some of the strongest local authorities and their partners are thinking creatively and boldly about how alternative delivery models could improve outcomes for children – making services better, more secure and effective in the future. By the end of this Parliament, the government anticipates that most local authorities will be in a devolution deal and we therefore expect to see a significant shift in the national picture of children’s social care delivery

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<sup>6</sup> Combined authorities are a legal structure that may be set up by two or more local authorities in England, with or without a directly-elected mayor. They may take on statutory functions transferred to them by an Order made by the Secretary of State, plus any functions that the constituent authorities agree to share. The relevant legislation is the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016

with a mixed economy of delivery models. **Our ambition is that, by 2020, over a third of all current local authorities will either be delivering their children's services through a new model or be actively working towards a different model.**

97. In future we expect to see more children's services not-for-profit Trusts leading children's social care services in a single authority, or having the responsibility for all children's social care services in a combined authority area. It is also likely that we will see Trusts delivering a sub-set of children's social care services, for example, for leaving care services. In some areas combined authorities will commission services across wider areas and different kinds of services will operate across different areas, according to what works best to improve outcomes for children and families. We intend no change in the current legal arrangements which prevent local authorities from delegating their functions to profit making organisations.

98. Areas of focus for combined services might include:

- establishing centres of excellence for specialist teams and services operating across groups of local authorities or Trusts (for example, leaving care teams, disabled children's teams, or for children with the most complex needs)
- creating joined-up commissioning arrangements – for residential care and fostering
- ensuring clearer lines of accountability and strong leadership: this might include a single leadership structure for several authorities or Trusts, controlling a single budget
- developing better structures for working with partner agencies, based on a closer alignment of boundaries
- creating workforce development programmes that operate across boundaries
- forming strategic partnerships with voluntary and community sector organisations, drawing on their specialist expertise to deliver services

## Case study

**Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA)** has set a vision to achieve the best outcomes and life chances for children and their families across Greater Manchester (GM) and to build a system that works for families and delivers the same high quality support regardless of traditional boundaries across the city. In 2015, GMCA began a fundamental review of its children's services including a comprehensive service mapping, analysis of data and cost comparisons. This has resulted in a set of recommendations for how we want to organise and govern children's services across GM in the future. For the GMCA and each of ten councils this means we will have collective responsibility and accountability for our children and young people and we will have an agreed set of standards and performance metrics to monitor our practice and our progress. Our services will be governed and run at either a combined authority level; via a Greater Manchester centre of excellence led by a specific authority; at a locality level; or commissioned via the GMCA, depending on the type of provision.

99. We are particularly interested in testing specialist Care Leavers Trusts – new organisations that would be focused entirely on improving the life chances of care leavers (aged 16-25), putting the care leaver at the centre and better providing them with the holistic, all round support they need.
100. Local authorities are also coming together with voluntary adoption agencies to form larger Regional Adoption Agencies to improve outcomes and practice. The government currently supports 19 proposed Regional Adoption Agencies, all of which have made progress in recent months towards defining the role of the new regional structure and built partnership arrangements between local authorities and the voluntary sector to deliver services. Through increased and more effective co-operation within regions and across boundaries, Regional Adoption Agencies will help maximise children's chances to find an adoptive family and improve outcomes. They will also provide an opportunity to share existing good practice between local authorities and the voluntary sector and develop innovative working practices. The views of adopters and children have helped shape the service design with a view to improve their experience under the new system.

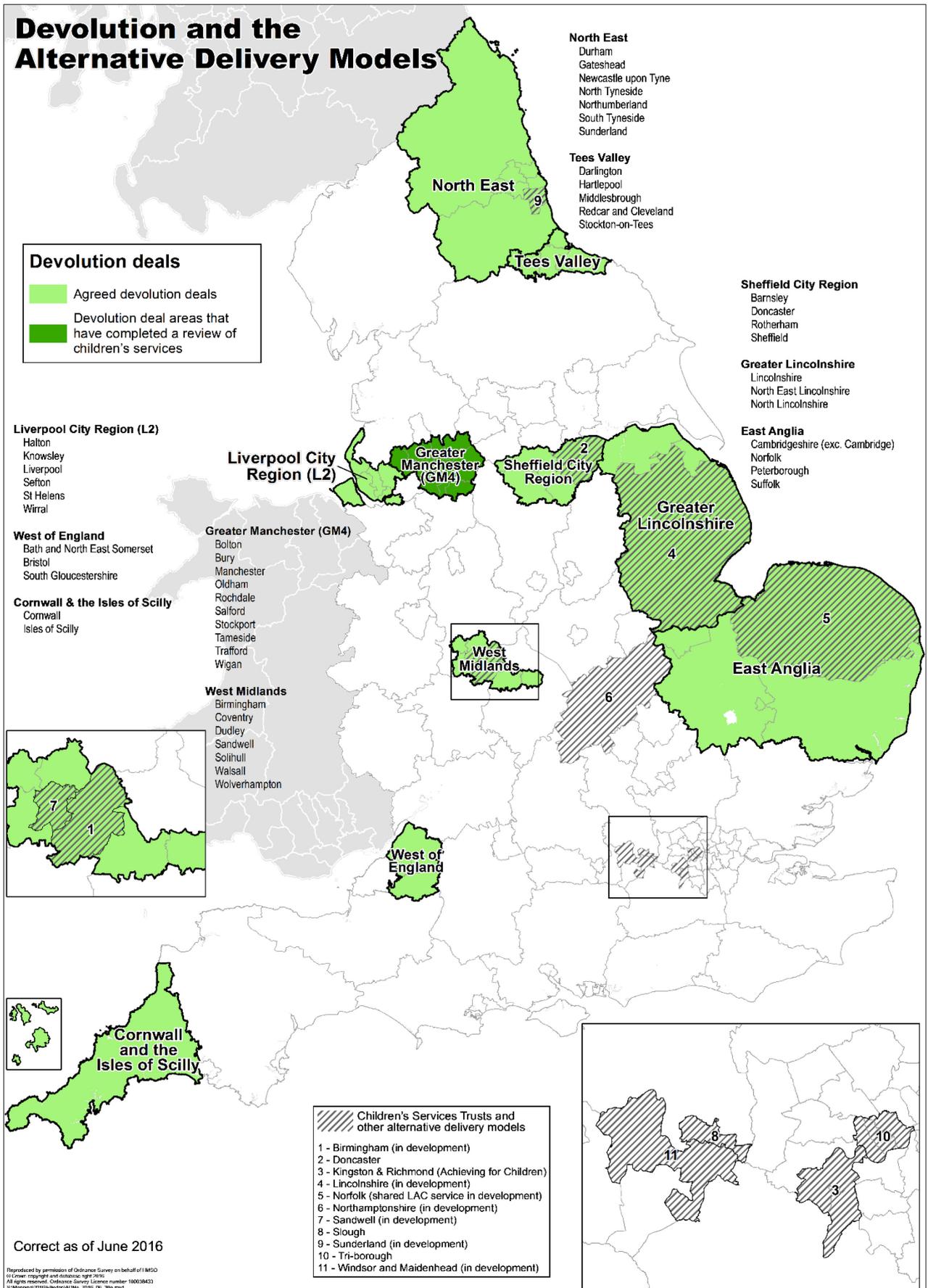
101. It is likely that there will be variable geography in how services are delivered across England and that not all boundaries will be co-terminus with existing arrangements. Whilst this might not offer the one size fits all simplicity that it is tempting to apply from Whitehall, the important thing is that each area offers the right services for their particular children and families, and that those services are run to suit the needs of each area.

102. In working through these steps authorities need to be ambitious – to think creatively and act boldly to secure excellence – ensuring that their services are the best possible fit for their local area. We want to encourage all areas to open up a dialogue with local partners and to scrutinise and review services – not to feel constrained by historical divisions and practices.

103. To support these ambitions, we will:

- encourage more bids on alternative delivery models for the next round of the Innovation Programme and provide access to expertise in policy and change management approaches to those areas that are developing proposals for new models
- co-design approaches with each devolved region and provide support in sharing best practice through networks, communications and support
- de-regulate where there are barriers
- help to tailor a children's social care element to each devolution deal to match the local landscape and to pull in engagement across government where needed
- work with Ofsted to develop a model of inspection that works with services operating in different geographical areas and under different models of governance, including combined authorities
- offer support to broker and form strategic partnerships with VCS organisations, particularly as part of a Trust arrangement
- work closely with Regional Adoption Agency projects to understand and address the challenges they face and help to ensure they will bring about real practice improvements

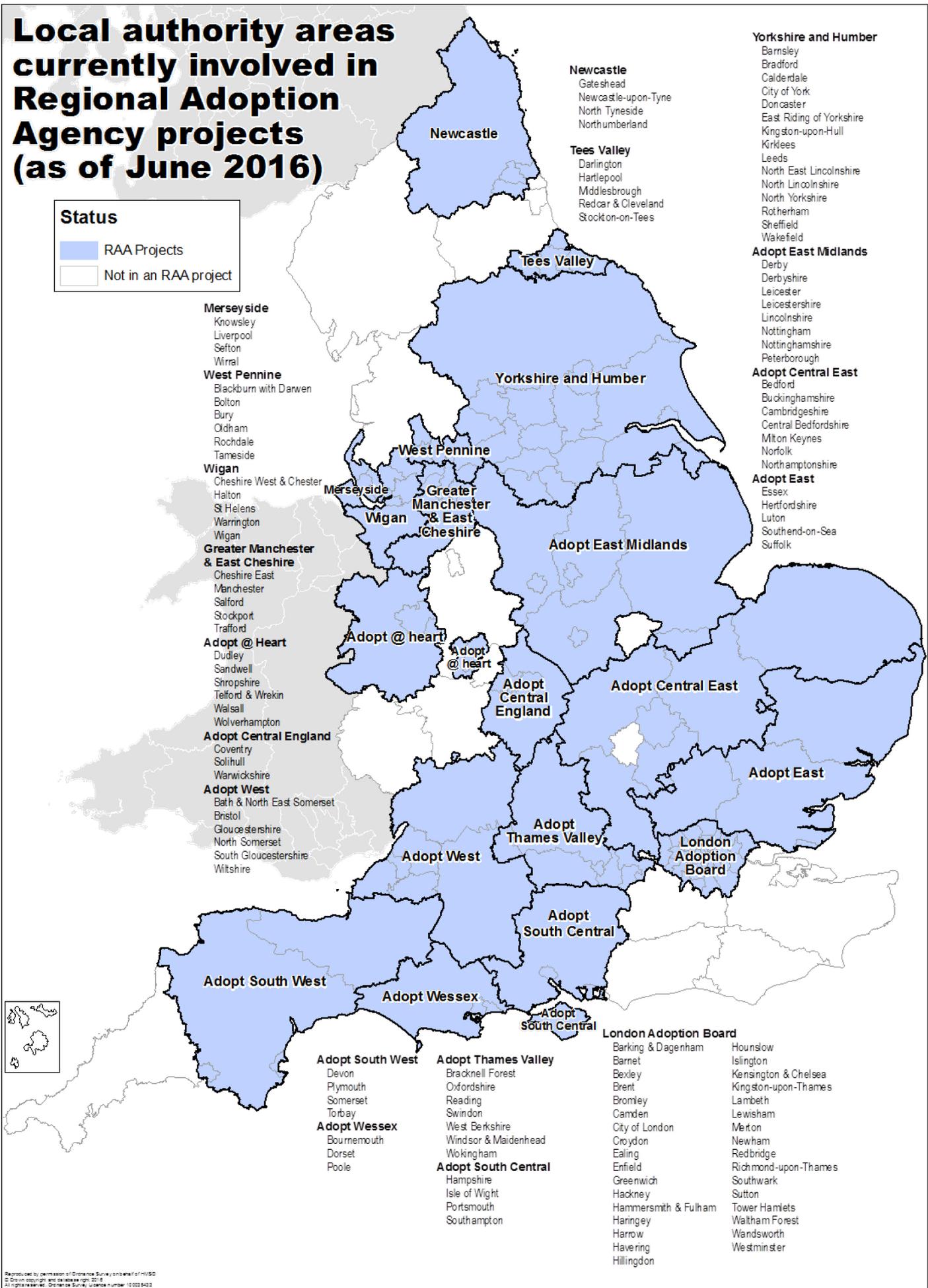
# Devolution and the Alternative Delivery Models



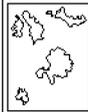
# Local authority areas currently involved in Regional Adoption Agency projects (as of June 2016)

**Status**

- RAA Projects
- Not in an RAA project



- Yorkshire and Humber**  
 Barnsley  
 Bradford  
 Calderdale  
 City of York  
 Doncaster  
 East Riding of Yorkshire  
 Kingston-upon-Hull  
 Kirklees  
 Leeds  
 North East Lincolnshire  
 North Lincolnshire  
 North Yorkshire  
 Rotherham  
 Sheffield  
 Wakefield
- Adopt East Midlands**  
 Derby  
 Derbyshire  
 Leicestershire  
 Leicestershire  
 Lincolnshire  
 Nottingham  
 Nottinghamshire  
 Peterborough
- Adopt Central East**  
 Bedford  
 Buckinghamshire  
 Cambridgeshire  
 Central Bedfordshire  
 Milton Keynes  
 Norfolk  
 Northamptonshire
- Adopt East**  
 Essex  
 Hertfordshire  
 Luton  
 Southend-on-Sea  
 Suffolk
- London Adoption Board**  
 Barking & Dagenham  
 Barnet  
 Bexley  
 Brent  
 Bromley  
 Camden  
 City of London  
 Croydon  
 Ealing  
 Enfield  
 Greenwich  
 Hackney  
 Hammersmith & Fulham  
 Haringey  
 Harrow  
 Havering  
 Hillingdon  
 Hounslow  
 Islington  
 Kensington & Chelsea  
 Kingston-upon-Thames  
 Lambeth  
 Lewisham  
 Merton  
 Newham  
 Redbridge  
 Richmond-upon-Thames  
 Southwark  
 Sutton  
 Tower Hamlets  
 Waltham Forest  
 Wandsworth  
 Westminster



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## Regional commissioning of residential care placements

104. Regional arrangements are also of potentially significant benefit when it comes to commissioning residential care placements. Skilled commissioning plays a vital role in ensuring that residential care placements of the right type, quality and price are available and can be readily accessed when children need them. Over recent years, the large majority of local authorities have chosen to commission their fostering and residential care services collaboratively, recognising the potential for savings, wider placement choice, and therefore better outcomes for children.
105. But Sir Martin Narey's detailed look at commissioning as part of his review of residential care indicates that the current collaborative arrangements are not delivering anything like the cost and quality benefits, the increased placement choice or the impact on children's outcomes that they could.
106. We agree with Sir Martin that better commissioning practice – including a more intelligent use of block and cost and volume contracts – will ensure better value for money for local authorities and improved confidence for providers.
107. We also agree with Sir Martin that organising commissioning on a larger, regional scale is key. Children's care needs are changing and diversifying, and local authorities need to come together to shape the market and provide a wide range of placement options if they are to put children's needs first. A regional approach will better ensure local authorities find the best placement for each child, and always make informed decisions about where to place them – going out of area where this is the right thing for the child rather than because there is no alternative. Commissioning on a much larger scale could play an important role in extending placement choice, improving quality and meaning children get the support they need, when and where they need it.
108. To help drive this forward, and as part of the new round of Innovation Programme funding covered earlier, we will invite local authorities to come together to bid to pilot new, larger scale commissioning arrangements that will test the options for wider placement choice, better value for money, greater confidence for providers and better outcomes for children.

109. For secure homes, the government has signalled its wish to see a more co-ordinated approach to planning and placements. We are already funding a central co-ordination unit which is collecting data to enable us to test whether a move to central commissioning would provide better support to this most vulnerable group of looked after children.

## **Reviewing the role of the local authority**

110. The White Paper, 'Educational Excellence Everywhere', set out a radical vision for the full academisation of the schools system. Local authorities will continue to play a positive and important role in the reformed system, but it will clearly be a changing role. The White Paper made a commitment to review the responsibilities of local authorities in relation to children, including implications for the roles of the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children. As children's social care is already the largest role local authorities play in relation to children, it is important that the review looks at the implications of changes in relation to schools for the social care system. The review will consider three broad questions:

- what the future role and responsibilities of the local authority in relation to children and young people should be
- what powers and levers local authorities will need to carry out those responsibilities effectively
- what transition and implementation arrangements will be needed to help local authorities manage change over the coming months and years

111. Talking to local partners will be key, both informally and through an advisory board to test key findings. Alan Wood CBE, former Chief Executive of the Learning Trust, will chair this advisory group.

## **Ensuring robust and proportionate inspection**

112. Ofsted's current Single Inspection Framework (SIF) provides a comprehensive baseline of local authority performance in children's social care. Its focus on practice has moved the quality of debate forward significantly and provided a robust basis for identifying and addressing poor performance.

113. The SIF was introduced in November 2013, bringing together previously separate inspections. All local authorities will have been inspected under the SIF by the time the cycle is completed at the end of 2017. Its detailed and intensive approach means, however, that the inspection process can be burdensome for frontline services and is not able to respond effectively to changing circumstances.
114. **Ofsted is now consulting on the principles of the next inspection framework, and will be consulting on the detailed content later in the year.** Ofsted intend to move towards a new inspection regime that will act as an enabler for excellent social work practice and innovation. Having secured a clear baseline of performance across all local authorities the future regime will take a more proportionate, more dynamic approach, with shorter, sharper and more frequent inspections. This will allow high performing councils the space to get on with the job, and free up the inspectorate to spot failure sooner in areas of concern. Modular inspections would underpin a more targeted approach to supporting local authorities in getting to good and, equally, where early signs of deterioration in performance in a good authority are detected, identifying where the local authority needs to focus its attention to maintain a good judgement.
115. Alongside its inspection activity, Ofsted's regional structures and systems provide good access to local intelligence and data about council performance in children's services and a channel for discussing innovative approaches and good practice. Under the proposals which Ofsted is consulting on, this local information will support decisions about the timing of inspections and underpin a greater understanding of the issues and challenges facing individual local authorities.

## **Using joint targeted inspections to drive improvement**

116. Recognising that safeguarding children is the responsibility of a range of agencies Ofsted has now also commenced its initial round of joint targeted area inspections, alongside inspectorates for the constabulary, probation and health. Under this approach, a joint inspection team looks together at the experiences of children and young people in the local area, with a focus on how agencies work with each other to safeguard children. In addition, the review teams will be looking at leadership and management, and the influence of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

117. The focus of the first round of inspections is child sexual exploitation and children missing from home, care and education and a comprehensive report will be published in September setting out findings and highlighting good practice across the sector. A second round will commence in the autumn with a focus on children living with domestic abuse.

### **Improving multi-agency working**

118. The review by Alan Wood CBE of the role and functions of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) was published in May, together with the government's response. Alan consulted extensively during his review and found a clear consensus in favour of reform. As a result, we are seeking to introduce a stronger statutory framework which will introduce greater accountability on the three key agencies involved in safeguarding children, namely local authorities, the police and the health service. As well as being stronger, the arrangements will be more flexible and enable local areas to determine the best way to organise themselves. There will be no obligation to have a Local Safeguarding Children Board, if local areas can develop more effective arrangements.

119. The proposed new local arrangements will put a duty on the three key agencies to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and jointly identify and respond to emerging needs and priorities. They will also be required to produce and publish a plan which will set out how they will carry out this duty. They will need to decide, among other things, how they will work with other agencies, what the resourcing for the arrangements will be, how to share information and data, and how they will ensure there is independent scrutiny of their decisions. They will also be responsible for undertaking local child safeguarding practice reviews. Some details will be included in associated regulations, and there will be statutory guidance to support the agencies. We will consult on the regulations and statutory guidance in due course.

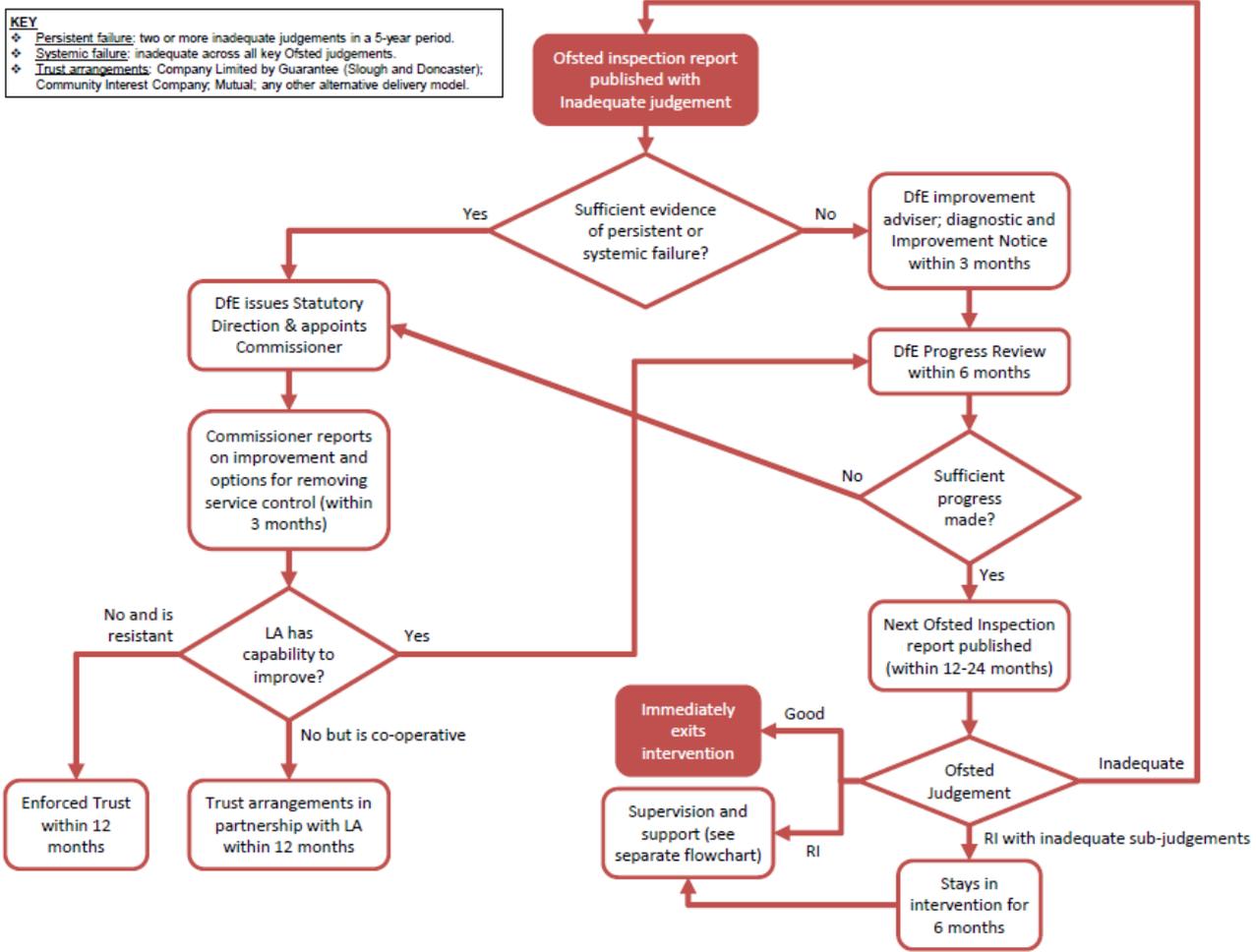
### **Intervening strongly in cases of failure**

120. Keeping children safe is one of the most important things councils do, but one in four recent Ofsted reports shows councils failing to deliver adequate children's social care services. The government will take whatever action is required to ensure children receive the services they deserve.

121. We are strengthening our approach to intervening when councils fail to provide adequate services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after, or care leavers as follows:

- whenever Ofsted finds children's social care services to be inadequate, we will provide expert scrutiny to diagnose problems and support the council to produce an effective improvement plan within three months
- we would expect most of those councils to improve with support and challenge from experts, but councils' progress towards improvement will be reviewed every six months
- if these reviews find that insufficient progress has been made, we will appoint a children's services Commissioner to review whether services should be removed from council control
- we will also immediately appoint a Commissioner wherever council failure is systemic, with a presumption that the service will be placed outside of the council's control, unless the Commissioner identifies good reasons not to do so, and where we judge that failure has become persistent we will take the same approach
- where councils do not have the capacity or capability to improve children's social care services in a reasonable timeframe, we will remove those services from council control for a period of time and transfer them to a different organisation (usually a Trust) in order to secure sustainable improvement

**KEY**  
 ♦ Persistent failure: two or more inadequate judgements in a 5-year period.  
 ♦ Systemic failure: inadequate across all key Ofsted judgements.  
 ♦ Trust arrangements: Company Limited by Guarantee (Slough and Doncaster); Community Interest Company; Mutual; any other alternative delivery model.



**Supporting improvements through Trust delivery arrangements**

122. There are often three main challenges which lead to a failure to turn services around. Firstly, some local authorities, through poor political or officer leadership, are unable to turn around poorly performing services, even over a long period of time. Secondly, the size of the improvement task has sometimes seemed too large for one organisation with LA, resulting in one area of work improving while another falls back, or in ineffectual progress across the piece. Thirdly, insufficient capacity can mean that concentration on the basics cannot be combined with innovation. Putting in place a Trust in these circumstances can provide fresh leadership, additional improvement capacity, clarity of purpose and a more stable operating environment.

123. We have done this already in Doncaster and Slough by setting up new independent children’s social care Trusts and we are already seeing signs that the new Trusts in these areas are beginning to have a positive impact. The Trusts mark a new stage in innovation and improvement for the children, families and social workers in these areas.

124. This chance for a fresh start is one that we are keen to offer to more councils that are struggling to deliver effective children's services and recognise that they need to try a different approach. We have been working collaboratively with Sunderland City Council to establish a voluntary Trust there that is similar in design to Achieving for Children (Richmond and Kingston) and will take over delivery of children's services there from April 2017. We are also working with Birmingham and a number of other councils to establish whether voluntary Trusts are the best option for rapidly accelerating improvements to children's social care services in those areas.

### **Investing in improvement, supervision and support**

125. Driving improvement in children's social care services needs to be locally led and delivered to meet the needs of our different communities and of individual children and families. Each local area has a clear responsibility to its own children and families. The role of central government is to intervene in cases of failure, and to create a national infrastructure which enables and supports the pursuit of excellence and innovation. But that should not detract from the core, local responsibility for effectively helping and supporting local children.

126. Those councils that are not failing but still require improvement to be good can access support to do so through the sector-led support offers from the Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Children's Services, who have an important role to play in driving continuous improvement in children's services. ADCS are, for example, planning to publish shortly a set of key "must do's" that need to inform any successful improvement journey. More generally, ADCS regional arrangements will continue to be key to improvement and to spreading best practice.

127. At a national level, central government will support sector led innovation through our Innovation Programme as well as through the reforms to the Ofsted inspection regime. We will also help to embed peer-to-peer learning, make success replicable and drive improvement across the social care system by working with our Partners in Practice and investing in the What Works Centre. The Local Government Association's peer review system and work for their Children's

Improvement Board will operate alongside these approaches and we will work together to ensure we complement one another.

128. Where Ofsted returns a “requires improvement” judgement on a previously inadequate council, central government will continue to provide supervision and support for 12 months to ensure that improvements are sustained. We will also place those councils, whose adoption and care leavers’ services are inadequate, under supervision and provide them with support to improve rapidly.
129. Over time, we would want the balance of government activity to shift away from intervening where there is failure, towards supporting the spread of excellence, in a system which is more likely to challenge us to enable innovation than to seek our support to improve.

## **Chapter 5: Putting the three pillars into action: how will things change for children and families?**

130. This paper has set out an action plan for building the ‘three pillars’ of reform which we think are critical in a social care system that puts children first. By focusing on these three fundamental building blocks, we hope to transform the experiences of children and families across every stage of their journey through the social care system.
131. For individual children and families, this will mean consistently getting support from practitioners who know how to make real, lasting change happen – to make real change in the course of children’s lives, rather than watching, waiting and monitoring. It will mean getting support from a system designed entirely around putting children first, however complex their needs.
132. This chapter sets out some of the ways in which our reforms will change and improve the real-life experiences of children and families, bringing about sustainable change and stability in their lives, and placing strong relationships back at the heart of the system.

### **Putting children first is everyone’s responsibility**

133. All agencies locally – schools, the police, health services, youth services – need to understand and buy into the local arrangements for identifying children at risk and putting in place an appropriate response. This is the key ingredient to ensuring that issues are identified and appropriate referrals made to children’s social care. The strengthened multi-agency arrangements which will replace LSCBs are intended to drive greater levels of partnership and more bespoke arrangements for identifying problems and responding to them.
134. There is of course a role for the wider public too, in spotting and sharing concerns about children at risk. We know that people are often cautious about alerting social care to their worries about children or families, because they don’t feel confident to interpret what they’ve seen or the consequences of making a referral. The government’s new communications campaign “Together we can tackle child

abuse” is designed to help tackle these worries. It was launched earlier this year and **we will run the campaign again in 2017.**

135. The role for the wider public does not stop when a vulnerable child turns 18. Just as other young people continue to receive support from their parents into their twenties and beyond, children who are looked after and supported by the state continue to need help and guidance. To offer this support to young people leaving care, **we are introducing a new voluntary care leaver covenant that organisations can sign up to and make a commitment to support care leavers.** The covenant will provide an opportunity for private organisations, charitable bodies and central government departments to set out the services and support that they will offer to care leavers to ensure that the state continues to support them as they transition into adulthood. We will be engaging with relevant partners over the summer with an intention to launch the covenant in the autumn.

### **Providing help to prevent children needing to enter the child protection system**

136. We are very clear that the children’s social care system is there to provide help and protection to children facing acute social need and risk, or who are disabled – children for whom the state has a moral and legal responsibility to provide additional support and protection.
137. However, it is also important to ensure that help isn’t only available when problems have escalated to the extent that state intervention is inevitable. Since the publication of the Munro Review, many local authorities have developed their ‘early help’ offer to families, and work closely with schools, health services and others to provide holistic support to children and families as soon as a need emerges. But despite this, we are not seeing a reduction in the number of referrals to children’s social care, and *are* seeing a significant increase in the number of families needing the most intensive forms of intervention through child protection plans – up by 27% since the data collection began six years ago.
138. This raises questions about whether the early help currently on offer to children on the edge of the social care system is really working to address their problems. We cannot leave these children and their families to languish until the conditions of

some of them deteriorate to the point that intervention from the state in their lives is inevitable. We see the provision of targeted early support in these circumstances – clearly distinct from broader, more universal early help – as an area where we have not yet determined the right, most effective role for children’s social care.

139. The Troubled Families Programme is undoubtedly one programme already adding to our understanding of what works to support complex families to secure better life chances for themselves and for their children, to avoid the need for children’s social care to get involved, and to break the cycle of disadvantage, in particular through getting parents into work. The Programme continues to be a key plank of the government’s life chances agenda, and will increase its focus on improving parenting, family stability and ensuring pre-school children within the Troubled Families cohort are meeting child development milestones. Some local authorities have brought together their Troubled Families and Early Help services to form one coherent support offer.
140. However, the focus of the Troubled Families programme is not specifically children in or on the edge of needing children’s social care services; it works with a broader range of families. Finding out what will work to effectively reduce need and risk for the specific group of children right on the edge or just within children’s social care, and what the role of children’s social care should be for these children, is exactly the kind of thing our new national learning infrastructure is designed to investigate. **We will work with our Partners in Practice local authorities and use the Innovation Programme to test and develop national understanding, and over time will use the new What Works Centre to bring together learning and spread best practice.**

## Helping children within the child protection system

141. As well as investigating new ways of working with those children at the very edge of, and just within, children’s social care, we need to rethink practice in relation to children within the child protection system facing the most serious needs and risks. If we are to effectively support families where children are already at risk of harm, and make genuine and sustained changes to their lives, this will require effective

and sustained interventions. We need not to withdraw services at the first sign of improvement.

142. We need to deepen our understanding of how best to support families facing such entrenched challenges to become stronger, through skilled assessment of parental capacity and sustained intervention. We need to know how to draw more effectively on family strengths and resilience, and on support from wider social and community networks. We need to develop ways of working with families where children are at risk of harm which enable them to work together with professionals to quickly reduce immediate risks and work out long term strategies for changing their lives more fundamentally. We also need to build on and test emerging evidence which suggests that the longer a child is kept on a child protection plan, the more improvement we see in their outcomes.
143. Identifying the sorts of interventions that really work to make lasting change happen for children on child protection plans – and prevent the need for children to become looked after – **will be a key focus for the Partners in Practice local authorities, Innovation Programme and What Works Centre.**

## **A safe and stable home for every child**

144. Where a child's birth family cannot meet their needs, it is the role of the children's social care system to create the safe, stable and nurturing relationships and home environment that children need, whether through adoption, foster care, family and friends care or residential care. For these children, the state becomes their 'corporate parent'. In recognition of the gravity and importance of this role we are currently legislating to set out in law, for the first time a set of 'corporate parenting principles', which will guide the way in which the whole local authority – not just children's social care – acts as any good parent would for children in care and care leavers.
145. Our success in finding safe, stable homes for all children who need them has improved in recent years. Children are now finding permanence through adoption four months more quickly than they were in 2012-13; three quarters of residential homes are now rated 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted; and we have funded councils to find new ways to attract and retain foster carers from a broad range of

backgrounds. But we still see too much instability in placements for looked after children, including for disabled children, and too much of a focus on making a single placement decision which works right now, rather than really working out what is needed to meet the complex and evolving needs of a particular child for the long term.

## **Foster placements that work**

146. Some local authorities are better than others at matching the right child with the right placement to fully meet their needs, now and for the long term. Early findings from some of the projects that have been funded through the Innovation Programme, such as North Yorkshire's No Wrong Door programme and the Mockingbird programme, have started to show us how stability in a family environment can be achieved even for children with the most challenging backgrounds when foster carers are properly trained and supported, and young people have access to proper respite and therapy. We will use the new national learning infrastructure we are putting in place to learn from the best authorities and providers. In addition, **we will undertake a national stocktake of foster care to give us a richer understanding of how placements are made**. This will have as its central focus the question of what different foster carers need – skills, expertise, support – in order to meet the diverse needs of today's looked after children.

**Extract from Sir Martin Narey’s review of residential care in England, July 2016**

“Although fostering does not seem to work for some children, particularly adolescents, I believe that residential care can sometimes be used to make fostering a success, even when it might have failed previously. And evidence suggests this can be achieved with the most challenging of older children – those who might be very resistant to the notion of being fostered – as demonstrated by the excellent No Wrong Door (NWD) initiative in North Yorkshire.

“Two children’s homes in this geographically vast county act as hubs. Each hub provides placements in mainstream residential care; emergency beds; community foster family placements; supported accommodation and supported lodgings with outreach support. Children often move from one type of placement to another, but the key element of the NWD approach is ensuring that each adolescent has one key worker who works with him or her throughout. The quality of residential care provided in North Yorkshire is of exceptional quality (one of the two hubs had a full Ofsted inspection as I was completing this report) and the Ofsted commentary – alongside the Outstanding rating - is remarkably positive.”

# What Makes a Good foster Carer



Jaden\*, Essex

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## The role of residential care

147. Sir Martin Narey's review shows us that residential care remains an important part of the care system. His report reminds us that, for some children, a residential care home is absolutely the right place for them – either to manage a crisis or, in the short term, to provide intensive support and help prepare them for moving into a family home as part of a fostering arrangement. And, for some children, residential care is their best long term option.
148. Sir Martin's report highlights a number of ways in which residential care could be used in a more dynamic and creative way to support children – as we see in excellent projects such as No Wrong Door. We therefore intend to introduce a specific stream of the Innovation Programme to test these ideas and take to scale those that have already shown their effectiveness through the first stage of the programme.

“When I first moved to the children's home I did not like it. It was hard having all the people. It taught me about respect for other people and this has been really helpful for me in everything I do. Some of the people have become my best friends and I have just moved into a shared house with one of them. Living in a children's home helped me achieve my goals and they helped me learn to cook and budget and so I was ready to leave. Even though it was very different to being in a family home, I felt cared for and I made proper relationships while I was there. It was a big part of my life and made me who I am.”

**Craig\*, 19**

## **Sir Martin Narey's review of residential care – the government's initial response**

We are hugely grateful to Sir Martin Narey for his insightful report and for the significant contribution it makes to our understanding of children's homes in England. We are pleased that he has concluded that the quality of the care they provide – to some of our most vulnerable children – is often very good and that residential care is the right placement choice for some children, not a last resort.

We accept his analysis and findings and welcome the recommendations that Sir Martin has made and which highlight the areas where further action is needed to ensure that all children's homes, and the wider system in which they operate, deliver the highest quality care. We will respond more fully in the autumn. However, some immediate actions are clear and we will take them forward now:

- we will use the Innovation Programme to test innovative ways in which residential care could be used in a more dynamic and creative way to support children and to link seamlessly with other care placements and with other services
- we are committed to introducing Staying Close for those leaving residential care – similar to the Staying Put arrangements which exist for children in foster care. We are going to pilot variations of the scheme, through opening a specific stream of the Innovation Programme, in order to understand the costings, practicalities and impact first
- we will invite local authorities to come together to bid through a new round of Innovation Programme funding, to pilot new larger scale, regional commissioning arrangements that will test the options for wider placement choice and better outcomes for children
- we will undertake a national stocktake of foster care to better understand current provision, how needs are matched with skills, where this works really well, and what can be learned nationally from good practice
- we will clarify the steps that residential care workers can take to protect children, as any good parent would

## **A new, permanent family for every child who needs it**

149. 'Adoption: a vision for change', published in March 2016, sets out the government's plans for a radical redesign of the adoption system. In line with our wider strategy for children's social care, our plan for adoption is to create the workforce, practice systems and delivery structures needed to provide a permanent home through adoption for every child whose interests are best served by this. Our professional development programme 'Achieving Permanence' will provide adoption social workers with the specialist skills they need for this area of work; our adoption-specific Practice and Improvement Fund will stimulate the spread of excellent practice on the front line; and our plan to regionalise the adoption system will mean services are delivered on a scale and in a way which will better serve the needs of children and adopters.

## **Supporting and empowering carers to care**

150. In order to settle and prosper, and achieve real stability in their lives, children need, above all else, the backing of strong, consistent and resilient relationships they can depend on. That is why we will consider with Partners in Practice the legislation, regulation and guidance which underpins work with looked after children and care leavers, to identify where greater freedom and flexibility will help put relationships at the centre of practice. It is vital that foster carers have the freedom to care, and the delegated authority to make day to day decisions for the children in their care. We want foster carers to be actively involved in decisions about the children they are looking after, for example in relation to their schooling, agreeing the additional support they need, and decisions about care planning. We want to empower foster carers to stand up for and look out for the children they look after as any good parent would.
151. Sir Martin Narey's report also reminds us that, just as foster carers sometimes feel unable to make day to day decisions on behalf of the children in their care, staff in children's homes sometimes feel unable to take the kind of action to protect children that any good parent would take when putting the needs of their child first. Day to day acts, such as setting curfews or locking the doors at night, are exactly the sorts of things that good carers do. Setting boundaries is one of the most important tasks of a parent.

152. Building on Sir Martin’s recommendation to strengthen the government’s guidance, we want to make sure that all those who look after children in care have, and feel that they have, the power to parent. They need to feel confident and able to act decisively when protecting children from risks – as any parent would. It is a legally complex area, and it is critical that we maintain all the current safeguards which prevent any abuse of power by adults in a caring role. **But to provide more certainty for carers and to give them the power to parent, we will take the best and most up-to-date advice from experts to create practical advice and guidance for residential care workers.**
153. Adoptive parents and special guardians need support to nurture resilient relationships with their children and to meet their often complex needs. This support has been in place since May 2015 for adoptive families through the Adoption Support Fund (ASF) which has supported almost 7,000 families with over £23 million of therapeutic support. From 1 April 2016, in recognition of the often similar challenges these children and their carers face, the ASF was extended to families where the child left care through a Special Guardianship Order.
154. ‘Adoption: a vision for change’ set out our intention to continue strengthening the evidence base of ‘what works’ in terms of preventive and therapeutic adoption support. In the short term, this involves consulting with and securing views from a wide group of experts to inform proposals for commissioning research. In the longer term, the What Works Centre for children’s social care will become the repository for this learning.

## **Safety, stability and relationships to depend on into adulthood**

155. The need for nurturing, consistent relationships does not stop at age 18. As will be set out in more detail in our forthcoming Care Leavers Strategy, we need to apply the very same principles of reform to support for care leavers as we are to the rest of the children’s social care system. Every young person needs a foundation of safe, stable and nurturing relationships in order to have the resilience to cope with the challenges life will throw at them, and thrive.
156. When a young person leaves care they continue to receive support from a local authority personal adviser who helps them to make a successful transition to

adulthood and independence through providing advice and identifying the support the young person needs. We will carry out a review of the role to better understand how personal advisers spend their time and identify ways to maximise the support that personal advisers offer the young people they are working with. Through the Children and Social Work Bill, we are extending personal adviser support to all care leavers up to the age of 25. But we are also keen to test out approaches that look beyond the personal adviser model, drawing on other sources of support so that care leavers have a wider, more resilient support network around them.

157. We also recognise that, whilst young people in foster care can now ‘Stay Put’ in their placement to age 21, there is still too much of a cliff edge for children in residential care. In response to Sir Martin Narey’s specific recommendation, we are committed to introducing Staying Close for young people leaving residential care. Staying Close – similar to the Staying Put arrangements which exist for children in foster care – will enable young people to live independently, in a location close to their children’s home with ongoing support from that home. As Sir Martin recommends we are going to pilot variations of the scheme, through opening a specific stream of the Innovation Programme, in order to understand the costings, practicalities and impact first.
158. Finally, we will look to free up local authorities to deliver services in new ways and in partnership with the voluntary sector, such as through testing specialist Care Leavers Trusts – new organisations that would be focused entirely on improving the life chances of care leavers aged 16-25, putting the care leaver at the centre and better providing them with the holistic, all round support they need.

## Chapter 6: Our vision for the future

159. We want families to have more confidence in turning to professionals for help; for the help and protection we provide to be timely, enduring, flexible and thoughtful. We want families to work with professionals to quickly reduce immediate risks and work out long term strategies for changing their lives more fundamentally. Families will be supported to think through the impact of what happens now and to be made central to planning the future together.
160. We want every local children's social care service in England to have a workforce – at every level – with the knowledge and skills to do this highly challenging work to the highest possible standards. This needs to be verified through robust assessment and accreditation. The social work qualification must have credibility and mean professionals are equipped to deal with complicated situations and the highest levels of risk while striving for the best standards of practice.
161. We want those who care for children – foster carers, residential care home staff – to have the freedom to make decisions on behalf of the children in their care, and the power to parent in the way any good parent would. We want those who care to have the support and specialist skills they need to love and nurture our most vulnerable children.
162. To support this innovation and drive for excellence, by 2020 we want to see a more diverse range of children's social care organisations, operating over new geographical areas, supported by meaningful data and an inspection regime that supports high-quality evidence-based front line practice, with strongly supportive partners and local arrangements that best support coordination across agencies. And crucially, the performance of these new organisations must be driven by challenging, sharp and practice-focused accountability.
163. The future we want to see is one where excellent professionals do not shape their practice purely to comply with legal requirements, or guidance from Whitehall, but rather they form a confident profession, resilient when faced with new challenges, mindful of the role our society asks them to play in people's lives, and prepared to

learn from each other and redefine what works when ideas are tested and evidence is shared and understood.

164. Making this vision a reality is what it means to put children first.



Department  
for Education

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## Family Services

### Document control

<b>Document title</b>	<b>Family Service's Improvement Action Plan</b>
<b>Document description</b>	This improvement action plan has been developed in response to the formal recommendations and improvement areas highlighted by Ofsted during their Barnet 'Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers, and review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board' which took place from 24 April 2017 to 18 May 2017. This action plan sets out the continued improvement journey we need to make to transform our social care services for children, young people and their families from inadequate to outstanding.
<b>Contributors/Author</b>	Chris Munday – Director of Children's Services Tina McElligott – Operational Director Brigitte Jordaan – Operational Director Yogita Popat – HoS Business Improvement

### Version control

<b>Document production date</b>	July 2017
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## 1. Introduction

This improvement action plan has been developed in response to the recommendations and areas for improvement as outlined in the Ofsted *'Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers, and review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board'* which took place in Barnet between 24 April 2017 and 18 May 2017.

The action plan provides a framework for the improvement journey to transform Children's Social Care Services and the quality of services provided to children, young people and their families from Inadequate to Outstanding. To realise the changes we need to make, we will not compromise on the quality of staff we need to improve the experience of children, the rigour or pace of our approach to improve the services we provide and the outcomes we achieve for children and young people

## 2. What we have done so far

We have secured a commitment from Barnet's senior officers and member to resource and support an improvement journey for the Children's Services. This has enabled us to achieve, over the past year, a foundation from which social work can improve. We have achieved our conditions for success which enable us to focus on improving the quality of our services and the experience of children and families who use them, by:

- A more stable workforce, turnover rate reduced from 39% (Sept 2015) to 12.76% (March 2017) as part of a focus on recruitment, development and retention of social workers and social work managers in frontline practice
- More manageable workload social care workloads with a reduction from 37.5 (January 2016) to 12.7 (April 2017) in the Duty and Assessment team and from 18.7 to 14.6 in Intervention & Planning team over the same time period
- Creation of more and smaller social care teams to allow team managers to know both staff and families well. There was a reduction in the ratio of managers to social workers from 1:13 in April 2016 to 1:6 in April 2017 and additional management capacity in MASH.
- Improvements in appropriate practical support - removal of inefficient WISDOM system and configuring the Early Help system to enable partners to access. Over 130 IT issues were resolved including key changes to systems and forms in response to needs.
- The Chief Executive, along with partners of the LSCB, commissioned a review of the LSCB to understand the effectiveness.

Following the initial Ofsted report immediate actions were taken:

- Implemented the new senior leadership structure agreed by General Functions Committee in March 2017, with a key focus on practice leadership
- Secured investment to manage demand and improve quality (£5.7m)
- Changed the line management arrangements for MASH, DAT and Intervention and Planning Services to ensure consistency in decision making and with a future aim of reducing points of transition for families thereby promoting a seamless system of child protection
- Developed a robust framework for multi-agency working, information sharing and accountability in the MASH by introducing daily MASH meetings and a new framework for multi-agency audits
- Introduced robust checks and balances to the quality and frequency of management oversight at the front door of children's services
- Implemented a new assessment pro-forma that promotes robust child focused assessment and analysis of information gathered
- Developed a new chronology template and delivered lunchtime workshops to staff on chronologies
- Completed appraisal targets with all front line managers and staff that set out clear expectations for practice quality and management oversight which is congruent with the DfE child and family social work knowledge and skills framework
- Permanently employed a strategic lead for children at risk of CSE/Missing to ensure robust monitoring, strategic multi-agency and inter-agency interface and practice leadership

- Audited and improved reporting, tracking and monitoring systems of children missing from care
- Improved tracking and case management of children subject to PLO to ensure robust and timely decision making
- The fostering workflow has been reviewed and configured on LCS to improve recording
- Developed and implemented a refreshed 16/17 year old homelessness protocol
- Developed a framework for a robust quality assurance programme of activities that has a clear and purposeful link to the workforce development programme, identified areas for improvement and performance data
- Live audit activity (observations of practice) have started
- Provided a Corporate parenting report on the impact of the care leaver pledge to Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel (CPAP)

### 3. The Methodology - Resilience

Daniel et al defines resilience as 'the capacity to adapt and rebound from stressful life events strengthened and more resourceful' (Daniel et al., 2012).

Critical to service transformation is the resilience-based approach that we have adopted to provide a solid evidenced-based foundation from which to develop our workforce, The model provides a philosophy for practice that recognizes that people can thrive and in the face of adversity and further provides a focus for our workforce development programme to ensure practitioners are equipped with the knowledge, skills and tools they need to increase resilience and strengthen the communities in which Barnet's children and families lives so they can thrive and achieve. .

Based on the work of Gilligan (1997) and Daniel & Wassell (2002), we can identify six domains of a child's life that contribute to the factors known to be associated with resilience.

- **Secure and Stable relationships - Positive parent-child relationships are critical to children's wellbeing. Interactions that are characterised by warmth, acceptance, praise and positive attention help a child feel good about themselves. Secure, predictable and dependable relationships can also lead to pro-social child behaviours and improved child emotional wellbeing.**
- **Increasing Safety** - Keeping children safe is a core priority and outcome of a resilience-led approach. Safety can refer to the provision of physical safety in the environment, where children are kept safe from abuse/neglect and family violence, have stable and secure housing which is hygienic and free from hazards, and receive adequate physical care including nutrition, hygiene and health care. Children's emotional safety is also critical and is achieved through positive relationships with a primary caregiver and increased connectedness to places and friends, siblings, and other significant adults in their lives.
- **Increasing self-efficacy** - Self-efficacy is commonly defined as a person's belief in their capability to achieve a goal or an outcome. It includes the thoughts and feelings that an individual has about their competence and worth, their ability to make a difference and to confront rather than retreat from challenges. Children's perception of their own competence develops over time through experiences of success and feedback from significant adults. Children who receive strong messages that they have the capability and skills to manage challenging situations are more likely to put in greater effort and persist in the face of setbacks.
- **Improving empathy** - Empathy refers to a person's ability to identify emotions in other people and to subsequently experience that emotion (or similar) themselves. Children who learn about empathy at a young age are better equipped to treat others with compassion, and go on to develop stronger social skills and adjust more easily to the school setting. Empathy is complex and is derived of three primary skills which include: a sense of self-awareness and the ability to distinguish one's own feelings from the feelings of others; taking another person's perspective; and being able to regulate one's own emotional responses.
- **Increasing coping/self-regulation** - Self-regulation is a person's ability to control their attention, impulses, emotions and behaviour in order to attain goals. The ability to regulate emotional responses to frustrating experiences and solve interpersonal problems has consistently been shown to contribute to social competence, academic performance and positive experiences at home and school.

## 4. Driving improvement

To achieve change we must be relentless in our expectations and committed to achieving improvements in the way we deliver services and the outcomes we achieve with children and families. We have invested in achieving and sustaining a systemic leadership style that promotes respectful challenge and curiosity about the systems we work within and our influence upon the effectiveness of these. In recognition of the scale and importance of the task ahead our practice leadership team have developed a mutually understood and agreed core ethical value base from which we would want to drive practice improvements. We recognise the importance of inspiring and committed leadership to drive high quality social care practice. The change we want to see has to be continually modelled, promoted and challenged when it is not evident in children's experiences of our services. We must recruit and retain managers and practitioners that understand, embrace and model our expectations for practice and outcomes for children. Our social work practice must be purposeful and focused on achieving change for children by ensuring that they are at the centre of everything we do.

Our Family Services' Improvement Action Plan provides a clear framework for our leaders, managers and practitioners to acknowledge influence and contribute to the change we need to see. It sets out, in detail, the actions required to deliver systematic and cultural change and drive activity for improvement that evidences transformation of our services to children and families. We have set out three core improvement objectives that are supported by a series of tangible, resourced and sequenced actions:

### 1. Empowering and equipping our workforce to understand the importance and meaning of purposeful social work assessments and interventions with families

This work stream will assist social work practitioners and managers to build professional competence and confidence through regular and effective supervision and by ensuring decisions for children are robustly scrutinised by experienced managers who can:

- ask sufficiently robust questions about what is happening in a family
- challenge and support social workers to adopt a curious and child-centred approach to their enquiries which serves to inform good quality assessment and planning activities
- identify and put in place sufficiently robust plans to manage risk to children and families and ensure progress is made for those children within timescales that are appropriate and proportionate to their needs
- recognise that delay causes and prolongs harm to children
- recognise that risk changes so needs constant review and consideration to mitigate against the circumstances risk and harm can thrive within
- hold other professionals to account
- advocate for children by escalating risk that is that is not being responded to effectively by other professionals
- ensure children are not unnecessarily subjected to statutory interventions
- have sufficient professional expertise and access to professional development activities to appreciate developments in and the changing context of policy, evidence base and practice

### 2. Ensuring our organisational culture, systems and tools to support the delivery of high quality child and family interventions

Freeing social workers from the burden of administrative processes to facilitate capacity for direct work with families requires the building blocks of the organisation and wider partnership to be effectively operating, influencing and contributing to achieving positive and timely outcomes for children. Technology and systems support (both internally and through the corporate IT infrastructure), Finance, Performance Management, Procurement, Communications and Corporate Learning and Development activities must operate to a collective vision that offers congruence and coherence with practice and practice management demands to reduce and minimise bureaucratic process that stalls progress for families and reduces capacity for direct work

### 3. Retaining, attracting and growing a cadre of effective practitioners who are well supported, child focused, curious and inquisitive about what they are seeing and assessing

To develop, recruit and retain a workforce that is equipped to support practice improvements we will re-brand to attract a calibre of social work professionals that can grow, model and promote our methodology and enhance our practice so we can achieve consistently good assessments and interventions that are meaningful and of a high quality. We will be implementing robust recruitment processes that recognise current and future potential within the organisation and implement a workforce development strategy that is responsive to the needs identified through the quality assurance framework. We will ensure practice managers and leaders can deliver and promote reflective supervision and case consultation opportunities that provide space for critical reflection and direction

## 5. Measuring Progress

Our Improvement Plan is split into two sections: 1) the recommendations from Ofsted, our objectives and measures to achieving these and 2) the actions we will undertake to deliver the outcomes within Section (1). This action plan will build on the improvement programme already established and Family Services will continue to work with Essex as collegiate partners in delivering the programme.

Delivery of the plan will be monitored by the Chief Executive as chair of the Family Service's Social Work Improvement Board (SWIB). The individual improvement priorities will be overseen by the two Operational Directors responsible for delivery and who will attend the Board meetings to report on progress, risks and issues. The Improvement Plan will also be monitored through the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee to allow elected members to support and challenge improvement activity.

All actions are assigned to a designated lead officer who is responsible for delivery and required to engage with key stakeholders and staff to ensure actions are completed and achieving impact. Lead Officers are required to provide regular updates to senior leaders for the Improvement Board on a monthly basis. The Improvement Team will prepare a monthly highlight report to monitor and measure progress against actions, including RAG status. The monthly highlight report, including any risks or issues, will be reported to the DCS Assurance Meeting.

A set of performance indicators have been developed to measure the impact of the plan. Further, , we have developed a robust quality assurance framework, to test the implementation and embedding of changes achieved .

We will monitor our improvement activity using the following mechanisms:

- **DU Assurance Report** prepared by Heads of Service for Operational Directors for analysis and upward reporting to the DCS and Lead Member
  - The report focuses on key performance indicators, i.e. visits to children, assessment timescales, caseloads etc.
  - Improvements achieved and risks identified to delivery
  - The report is scrutinised and challenged at the monthly Family Services Business Management Group chaired by an Operational Director and attended by Heads of Service
  - The DU Assurance Report provides a monthly snapshot of performance data and key practice issues across the service including Quality Assurance activity.
- **Quality Assurance Activity** will continue to be undertaken through our embedded Practice Weeks and the continuation of learning through our 4R's (Rapid, Reflective, Resilience Reviews) learning activity. These will be monitored and reported through the monthly DU Assurance Reports.
- **Audits** are undertaken monthly, cases are selected at random across the service and ensure case work is to the standard we expect. Audits are carried out by practice managers from across the service
  - Audits focus on key practice issues to measure quality of practice, ascertain areas for change and improvement and inform workforce development requirements
  - Issues that arise from case audits are tracked and monitored for improvement and action, they are used to inform learning and development opportunities across the workforce;
  - Audits are also used to highlight and share examples of good practice

- A quarterly report collates audit findings which feed into management and workforce development activities for improvements to practice, the findings and changes implemented to mitigate are reviewed at three monthly intervals for evidence of impact
- **Service user feedback and engagement**
  - Feedback from our service users is key to understanding how we perform and how we can improve further. Feedback is collated from children, families and carers to inform service development
  - We aim to build on models of co-production by involving young people in the design and development of our services recognising that for services to be effective those that use them should influence their creation and development.
- **Insight & Intelligence**
  - The DU Assurance report requires refinement to ensure it is focusing on quality of practice and management scrutiny and testing of data and information
  - The performance data will provide a basis for managers to explore practice themes and issues and test hypothesis about trends and quality of practice; this will inform thematic quality assurance activities
  - Quality assurance activities will influence workforce development
  - The review quality assurance activity will measure the impact of quality assurance and workforce development on quality of practice and identify obstacles to change

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## 6. Ofsted Recommendations

### Recommendation 1

Ensure a continued and sustained focus on improving core social work practice, strategically and operationally, to equip practitioners and managers to deliver good-quality services to children and their families.

#### Outcomes:

- Children's social care services are prioritised by the whole council and key partners, and there is a shared vision that is embedded into borough, corporate and strategic plans
- Quality assurance and performance management processes are rigorous, robust and analytical
- Critical challenge is provided by senior leaders and partners, based on accurate analytical performance reports
- The life chances of children are good in Barnet and children report a good experience of the services provided

#### Measured by:

- Evidence of partnership engagement, influence and ownership of agreed priorities for children in Barnet in cross-cutting plans and service priorities
- Evidence that multi-agency audits effectively challenge practice and influence responsive and timely changes in practice
- Evidence of proportionate and appropriate use of escalation procedures to challenge practice that is not achieving effective and timely change for children
- Evidence of senior management oversight and influence on casework through scrutiny of data, performance information and oversight of quality of practice
- Feedback from children and their families
- Outcome data for children in mental health, health, education, offending
- Measurement of workforce development impact on practice

#### Objectives:

- Senior leaders promote the development of partnership plans and activities that positively impact on outcomes for children
- Performance data will be used to identify areas of practice that require scrutiny and improvement and monitors change
- Improvement activities are sufficiently focused on improving practice quality and provide robust checks and balances that monitor and scrutinise the impact of what we do
- Children, young people and families in Barnet receive a high standard of assessment and intervention.
- Barnet will have a workforce that is sufficiently skilled to meet the complex demands of practice

**Recommendation 2**

Ensure that partners work together in the multi-agency safeguarding hub to ensure timely and accurate information sharing and a consistent application of thresholds for all children referred to children's services.

**Outcomes:**

- Information about children is made available from partners to inform timely and proportionate decision making
- Children are sufficiently safeguarded as risks are known, assessed and analysed effectively
- Children receive the right help, first time
- historical information is available and analysed for identification of patterns and recurring or unaddressed risk Children are protected when risks are evident and known
- MASH information informs robust assessments, strategy discussions and s47 enquiries
- Management oversight and supervision will promote curiosity, hypothesis and analysis of risk with clear actions and timescales as to what should happen next
- Partners will be held to account for the quality and timeliness of information provided MASH data and decisions will be regularly and robustly scrutinised by Senior managers

**Measured by:**

- QA of contacts and outcomes that track decision making, timeliness and destination of contacts
- Regular Multi- agency audits
- Oversight and scrutiny of data and MASH outcomes
- Oversight and scrutiny by BSCB of partnership engagement and quality
- Sufficient checks and balances by MASH managers of social work practice
- Reduction in re-referrals rates

**Objectives:**

- Children's needs are understood in the context of their history and current circumstances
- Agencies work effectively together to share information and make decisions
- Decisions affect timely and proportionate interventions for children to reduce risk of current or future harm

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**Recommendation 3**

Ensure that social work practice and decision making for children focus on understanding their lived experiences and incorporate their wishes and feelings.

**Outcomes:**

- Social workers spend time with children, undertaking direct work to understand and improve their experiences by obtaining and acting upon their views, wishes and feelings.
- Social workers effectively analyse what they see, hear and read to make sound decisions for children
- Children's views are recorded in their own words on their case notes, assessments and plans
- Chronologies and genograms inform risk assessments and identify support and strengths in the child's system
- Assessments lead to good quality plans for children that are SMART
- Progress against children's plans is routinely and effectively measured to mitigate against drift and delay
- Risk is recognised and responded to effectively and is constantly reviewed, reassessed and responded to in accordance with changing circumstances
- Social workers and managers receive and implement learning from training

**Measured by:**

- Evidence of children's views on their records, assessments and plans
- Audits that regularly monitor and review the quality of assessment, planning, decision making and progress against the child's plan
- High quality supervision records that evidence effective management oversight and case direction

**Objectives:**

- Children are safe and their needs are understood and responded to effectively
- Children's views and wishes are obtained, recorded and used to inform decisions and plans for them
- Children's experiences and the harm they have suffered or are at risk of suffering is well understood, considered and acted upon robustly
- Decisions made about children are timely, proportionate and responsive to changing circumstances and risk
- Children are not left in situations where their outcomes are compromised and their needs are not met
- The quality of social work practice and management oversight and decision making is routinely and effectively scrutinised
- Social work staff and managers are equipped to deliver high quality social work
- Social workers receive high quality supervision from experienced practice leaders and managers

**Recommendation 4**

Ensure that all children identified as being at risk of harm benefit from effective child protection enquiries

**Outcomes:**

- Children at risk have responsive, timely and robust investigations of their circumstances leading to timely and proportionate decisions and actions
- Information held and views shared by partners and key agencies is effectively used to understand and inform risk analysis and decisions
- Children are effectively engaged in enquiries about the risks they may be exposed to
- Clear plans to protect children from harm are implemented swiftly

**Measured by:**

- Audits that monitor the quality and timeliness of S47 enquiries and outcomes
- Quality of Practice Alerts that shift from process to outcomes
- Practice Alerts will evidence issues and themes and as such will be addressed and monitored.

**Objectives:**

- Children and young people are protected from harm
- Risk to children is rigorously investigated leading to timely and safe outcomes
- Social work practitioners and managers demonstrate capacity to recognise and respond to risk arising from a variety of contexts effectively
- Children receive services appropriate to their needs
- Conference chairs effectively challenge social work practitioners, managers and partner agencies to ensure risk is identified, responded to and managed

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**Recommendation 5**

Ensure that strategy discussions include information gathered from all partners, and result in clear planning and recording of actions and the rationale for decisions.

**Outcomes:**

- Strategy discussions and meetings are convened when a child has suffered harm or is at risk of imminent harm
- Key agencies will contribute to the assessment of risk to children
- Risk to children is well understood and responded to
- Children receive timely help that is proportionate to their needs and risks they face

**Measured by:**

- Audits of multi-agency contribution to strategy discussions
- Strategy discussions outcomes
- Quality of assessments and plans for children
- Evidence of management oversight and case direction against agreed actions

**Objectives:**

- Professionals work effectively together by sharing information and contributing to assessment of risk
- Children are effectively safeguarded from harm
- Case recording accurately reflect rationale for decisions made
- Children receive proportionate and timely help
- Children and young people at risk benefit from Assessments and Plans that focus on improving their circumstances and outcomes

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**Recommendation 6**

Ensure that all written records are clear and up to date, and accurately reflect the circumstances of children and their families.

**Outcomes:**

- Information held about children is accurate, up to date and accessible to those that need it
- Children have good quality chronologies that detail significant events in their lives and provide a basis for risk assessment, decision making and life story work.
- Children have comprehensive genograms that accurately detail their family systems and networks
- Assessments accurately detail children's circumstances taking into consideration past harm and the risk of future harm
- Plans are focused on current assessed needs and risks and are informed by information gathered from a range of sources
- Social workers spend time with children, undertaking direct work to understand their experiences, views, wishes and feelings.
- Children and their parents understand and contribute to their assessments and Plans

**Measured by:**

- Audits that pay attention to the quality and accuracy of recording
- Scrutiny and management oversight of assessment quality to ensure that they accurately capture relevant and accurate information about children and their families
- Quality assurance activities that identify, address and remedy inaccuracies in children's data
- Family feedback will be gathered in 100% cases, including from fathers
- Supervision will critically challenge and provide oversight to ensure 100% of assessment and plans are fit for purpose

**Objectives:**

- Children's records will be up to date, accurate and of a good quality
- Accurate records will assist information sharing, decision making, risk assessment and planning
- Children and their families will be able to access and use information held about them to understand what has happened in their lives
- Children's Assessments and Plans will be based upon accurate and up to date information

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**Recommendation 7**

Ensure that the quality of assessments is sufficient to enable an accurate evaluation of the risks posed to children, and that this is regularly updated.

**Outcomes:**

- Children and young people are kept safe through robust assessment of risks and their needs
- Assessments robustly gather up to date and accurate information held about children from a range of sources
- Information gathered is scrutinised and analysed to inform risk assessment and Plans for children
- Social workers actively engage professionals, children and families in assessments and Plans to improve outcomes for children
- Children are kept safe by thorough continually updated Assessments that respond to changing needs and risks
- Children receive the right level of service based on a timely and accurate assessment of their needs
- Social workers are supported and challenged by their managers to complete high quality assessments

**Measured by:**

- Robust tracking and scrutiny of Assessment outcomes
- Scrutiny of the quality of supervision records and management oversight and decisions
- Audit activity that explores quality, timeliness and effectiveness of risk assessment, management and planning

**Objectives:**

- Children are kept safe from harm through robust identification and responses to protect them from risks they face
- Children receive levels of support and services that can effectively address their needs and manage risks
- Key partners work together to identify, assess and manage risk to children
- Children have assessments that thoughtfully consider their lived experiences and lead to appropriate Plans
- Plans continually review and monitor progress made to improve children's outcomes
- A culture of challenge is embedded in the professional system to ensure risk is effectively managed and children are not left in situations that are not achieving positive outcomes for them

**Recommendation 8**  
 Ensure that management decision making is effective and leads to clear, timely and effective care planning that safeguards children and focuses on improving outcomes for them.

<p><b>Outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children are kept safe through robust Assessments that lead to SMART Plans which are rigorously monitored by managers</li> <li>• Social workers are supported and challenged to make sound decisions for children thorough effective regular 1:1 and Group Supervision</li> <li>• Children achieve good outcomes against progress made in their Plans</li> <li>• Children live and thrive in supportive, protective and nurturing environments that meet and respond to their individual and changing needs</li> <li>• Decisions about children are recorded, timely and proportionate to their changing needs and risks they may face</li> <li>• Decisions lead to timely interventions from appropriately skilled professionals</li> <li>• Social workers are equipped to intervene effectively with children and their families and use evidenced based approaches to improve timely outcomes for children</li> <li>• Social workers receive reflective supervision that is frequent, outcome focused, with clear actions and timescales, and where previous actions are reviewed regularly.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Measured by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scrutiny of decision making through case tracking activities</li> <li>• Evidence of high quality social work supervision in children's records</li> <li>• Agreed actions and outcomes sought in children's Plans are tracked for progression</li> <li>• Feedback from children, young people and families</li> <li>• Appropriate use of escalation processes when Plans are not progressing</li> <li>• Evidence of consistently good quality Care Plans that achieve change for children</li> <li>• Clearly communicated standards for Practice</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children's Plans lead to timely and positive change</li> <li>• Practitioners and managers are effective change agents for children</li> <li>• Children benefit from professional systems that work together effectively</li> <li>• Children's voices are heard and influence decisions being made about them</li> <li>• Management oversight is consistent and rigorous to ensure effective assessment, planning, intervention and review.</li> <li>• Plans are robustly reviewed, professionals are held to account through robust reviewing processes</li> <li>• Children's lived experiences are considered at all stages of assessment, planning and reviews</li> </ul>
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**Recommendation 9**

Ensure that children who are victims of chronic long-term neglect and emotional abuse, and who are subject to long periods of child protection planning, have appropriate risk assessments and plans made for them.

**Outcomes:**

- Children and young people do not live in situations of neglect and abuse without strong evidence that progress is being made towards change
- Social workers recognise the damaging impact of accumulative neglect in their assessments and put in place SMART Plans to improve children's outcomes
- Children have good quality chronologies that effectively record, identify and measure the impact of chronic neglect and abuse
- Managers make timely and robust decisions to ensure timely progress is achieved for children and appropriate steps are taken to safeguard their welfare
- Plans include the views of children, their parents/carers and wider professionals with clear accountability for timely actions
- children are safeguarded from harm by timely and effective decisions being made that promote their welfare
- Social workers spend time with children, undertaking direct work to understand their experiences, views, wishes and feelings.
- Social workers recognise behaviours which may indicate disguised compliance, resistance to change, ambivalent or selective cooperation with services, and be able to recognise the need for immediate action, and what steps can be taken to protect children.

**Measured by:**

- Case tracking activities that monitor progress against agreed actions in Plans
- Audits of Care Plans to ensure that they are sufficiently focused on addressing and changing risks to children and improving their outcomes
- Evidence of children's voices being recorded and influencing their assessments and Plans
- Family feedback will be gathered in 100% cases
- Use of Family Group Conferencing to effectively mobilise support networks for children and consider alternative support and care arrangements
- Evidence of supervision and management oversight that critically challenges and acts upon a lack of progress towards change

**Objectives:**

- Children do not live in circumstances that do not promote positive outcomes
- Children, young people and families are involved in the development of their plans
- All children, young people and families will have a plan which reflect a robust assessment of needs and risks
- Plans will be regularly reviewed to ensure timely change is achieved for children and Plans do not drift
- Children, young people and their families have a clear understanding of the concerns and risks identified and what needs to happen to achieve change in agreed timescales

**Recommendation 10**  
 Ensure that timely action is taken to understand and reduce risk to children who go missing from home or care and who are vulnerable to child sexual exploitation. When risk does not reduce, or increases, ensure that effective additional safeguarding action is taken.

- Outcomes:**
- Children missing from home and care have thorough and thoughtful assessments of their needs and the risks they face when missing
  - Risks are quickly identified and responded to in partnership with key agencies such as Police.
  - Missing Children are robustly tracked and monitored to gather intelligence about missing episodes and the risks they face
  - Return Home Interviews are timely and inform risk assessment and actions to improve children's safety
  - The risks and challenges in managing the complex risks associated with gangs, CSE and other forms of exploitation are well understood and effective responses are put into place to keep children and young people safe

- Measured by:**
- Analysis and resulting actions in response to tracking and monitoring missing children activity data
  - Evidence of targeted interventions and Plans to keep children safe
  - Quality, timeliness and analysis of Return Home Interviews
  - Triangulation of activity in MASE meetings and CSE/Gangs trackers with missing children
  - Evidence of strategy discussions being held for children who go missing regularly and for long periods of time

- Objectives:**
- To develop child focused services that effectively respond to the risks children and young people are exposed to when missing from home and care
  - Analysis of the impact of targeted services to manage complex risk, i.e. REACH which works with children at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Gangs and missing
  - Staff and carers are provided with training and up to date procedures to effectively respond to communicate with and engage with children and young people who go missing
  - Partners work collaboratively to share intelligence and minimise risk of harm through disruption activities
  - Risks to children is well understood through timely and effective Return Home Interviews that inform plans and future planning

Draft

**Recommendation 11**

Improve the standard of social work to families under the pre-proceedings phase of the Public Law Outline and ensure that, when there is no improvement within a timescale that is right for children, the local authority issues timely court proceedings to protect them and avoid drift and delay in achieving permanence.

**Outcomes:**

- Children subject to PLO have timely assessments leading to robust plans to improve their outcomes
- Children's whose outcomes are not improving are protected through timely Court proceedings to secure change and permanence for them
- Children who are Looked After will have a clear permanency plan by their second CLA review
- Children's Plans have sufficient focus on timescales for change and contingencies to address lack of progress

**Measured by:**

- Tracking of PLO decisions and outcomes through Permanency Planning Panel
- Evidence of contingency planning on every Care Plan
- Swift progression to permanency for children where change is not being achieved in their timescales
- CP Chairs and Independent Reviewing Officers monitor the progress of Plans and ensure contingencies are available for timely permanence planning
- Quality of Practice Alerts that shift from process to outcomes
- Practice Alerts will evidence issues and themes and as such will be addressed and monitored.

**Objectives:**

- All children will receive timely and robust assessments leading to SMART Plans that drive improvements for them
- Children will not experience delay in achieving outcomes and permanence
- Every child in PLO or who are Looked After will have contingency plan for permanency
- All children will have opportunities to inform and be part of their permanency plan to ensure their wishes, views and feelings are fully considered
- Birth families, carers and wider family will be clear of the local authority concerns and the actions they need to take in timescale to achieve change for children
- Children and their families will be invited to be involved in all planning and decision making when appropriate, to ensure all actions and decision taking is in the child best interest

Draft

**Recommendation 12**

Ensure that connected carers are thoroughly assessed within regulatory timescales.

**Outcomes:**

- Children are not living in unregulated placements
- Connected adults are thoroughly assessed as connected persons carers as early in the permanency journey as possible and within regulatory timescales
- Children live with carers who can meet their individual and diverse needs
- Children are supported to live with people that know them well permanently
- Carers for children in connected persons placements are given timely and adequate financial and practical support to care for children

**Measured by:**

- Use of Family Group Conferencing
- Evidence of joined up viability assessments taking place at the earliest stage of the permanency journey
- Number of children living with carers who have temporary approval as Foster Carers
- Timeliness of Foster Carer assessments
- Audits and tracking of compliance with regulatory timescales for assessment

**Objectives:**

- Children's plans for permanency are achieved through timely and robust assessment of connected carers
- Children are not subject to prolonged uncertainty about their future care arrangements
- Children do not experience multiple placement moves

Draft for

<b>Recommendation 13</b> Ensure that all children who are privately fostered and their carers are regularly visited, that all work is compliant with minimum standards of good practice, and that the awareness of private fostering is raised in the workforce.	
<b>Outcomes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children in private fostering arrangements are safe and monitored appropriately</li> <li>Children in private fostering arrangements will be regularly visited and their carers reviewed in timescales.</li> <li>Private fostering arrangements will be reviewed and will meet minimum standards.</li> </ul>	<b>Measured by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% of private fostering are appropriate and meet minimum standards</li> <li>Applications received and successful</li> </ul>
<b>Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children subject to private fostering arrangements are identified and their living arrangements robustly assessed</li> <li>All agencies operating in Barnet can identify and refer children who may be privately fostered</li> <li>Children living in private fostering arrangements have access to timely and proportionate support to meet their needs</li> </ul>	

Draft for Co

**Recommendation 14**

Ensure that homeless 16-17 year olds are thoroughly assessed and that appropriate ongoing support is offered to them to meet their needs.

**Outcomes:**

- Homeless 16 and 17 year olds will receive a respectful and responsive service when they present as homeless
- Homeless 16/17 year olds will have a joint assessment of their needs that considers their full range of needs, support requirements and risks they might be exposed to
- Young people will be provided with safe, good quality and supported accommodation during assessments when required
- Young people's relationships with their families will be prioritised and promoted in accordance with their best interests.
- Homeless 16/17 years olds will experience positive support and have access to their information about their rights and the local authorities have a good understanding of the ongoing support available to them and will contribute to their plans
- Young people who are assessed as homeless are aware of their rights to services under s17 and s20 Children Act 1989
- Young people who are provided with accommodation under s17 CA'89 or Housing Act are subject to a CiN Plan that coordinates effective support to meet their needs
- Young people who are accommodated under s20 CA'89 receive good quality services as children Looked After

**Measured by:**

- Audits will measure the quality of assessments, plans, support and accommodation for young people
- Feedback from young people is positive
- Evidence that the 16/17 year old homeless protocol is embedded in practice

**Objectives:**

- All young people will have the right assessment and the right plan will ensure timely support is in place
- All young people will have a quality plan which they have been fully involved in
- All young people will have a plan which reflect this assessment of needs and risks
- All young people will be aware of their entitlements and how to access them

**Recommendation 15**  
 Ensure that the oversight of practice by all operational directors, heads of service, team managers, child protection chairs and independent reviewing officers is child focused and effective in achieving positive change for children.

- Outcomes:**
- The lives of children, young people and families in need of help and protection are improved by rigorous challenge at all levels of the authority, including the challenge to partners; and planning and reviews of their situations.
  - IROs and CP Chairs will have a clear footprint on children's files, with a clear escalation process which challenges practice and performance at all levels.
  - Supervision will be reflective and task focused, setting out clear actions and timescales, and reviewing progress against actions.
  - Senior managers will review and scrutinise all cases that are not progressing effectively to challenge practice and ensure the right plan is put in place promptly.

- Measured by:**
- Quarterly and Annual reports around Safeguarding service
  - Practice Alerts will evidence issues and themes and as such will be addressed and monitored.
  - Case audit – target: all cases audited will reach a standard as good or above
  - Monthly Audits will monitor and review the quality of decision making and ensure voice of child/family is present in 100% of Plans
  - Group supervision will enable reflection and critical challenge; underperformance challenged and addressed through individual supervision
  - Quality Assurance Framework which forms part of systematic review processes which are embedded; progress will note sustained improvements and identify areas for continued improvement

- Objectives:**
- Themes and lessons from casework are systematically collated, analysed and learned from.
  - IROs and CP Chairs will work closely with social work staff to ensure practice improves and any issues are managed without delay
  - The progress of all plans is reviewed within target time scales and any issues impacting on progress are addressed.
  - Children, young people and their families have a clear understanding of the concerns and risks identified as plans will be smarter.
  - Conferences and reviews are well informed by good quality information.
  - Conference chairs have oversight of all child protection cases and drive planning and progress.

Draft

**Recommendation 16**

Improve children's participation in all decisions and planning that affect them and in future service developments, including their stronger involvement in corporate parenting.

**Outcomes:**

- Children will be actively engaged in decisions affecting their lives
- Children will contribute to their Plans and Assessments
- Children will influence and contribute to the development of services
- Children will have an active voice in a range of forums
- Children will have access to advocates who can promote their rights and welfare
- Children will be listened to
- Commissioned services are based on identified need and take into account the views of young people
- Services are evaluated and reviewed regularly to ensure they are making a difference and improving circumstances for children, young people and families.

**Measured by:**

- Children's records, assessments and plans evidence children's views, participation and engagement in processes and decisions affecting them
- An increase in the number of children involved in Barnet's young commissioners programme
- Evidence of engagement of children in development of services and commissioning processes
- Feedback from children, young people and families

**Objectives:**

- Children and young people will be provided with opportunities to participate in assessments and plans being made for them
- Children and young people will be provided with opportunities to participate and influence in the design and commissioning of services
- UNICEF Rights Partners Programme is implemented and embedded

Draft for

**Recommendation 17**

Ensure that all children receive help to understand their histories, and that social workers write life story books and later life letters sensitively in a child-focused way.

**Outcomes:**

- Looked After Children will have good quality, child friendly and age appropriate stories developed with them that helps them understand their experiences and journey into and through care
- Social workers will collect memories for children from the earliest point of the permanency journey to contribute to their life story work and later life letters
- Children will be actively engaged in the creation and development of their Life story
- Adopted children will have good quality child focused later life letters prepared for them

**Measured by:**

- Evidence of good quality, child centred life story work being undertaken and completed for all children in care or being placed for adoption
- Audits examine the quality of children's records and to ensure they are clear and accessible to children and young people.
- Independent Reviewing Officers review and monitoring of life story work being completed in children's timescales
- Evidence of supervision that drives completion of Life story work and later life letters within timescales

**Objectives:**

- All children and young people who live in care or who are adopted will have access to information about their lives and their journey
- Children will develop coherent narratives about their experiences
- Children will form a stronger sense of identity
- Children's records provide an accurate, child centred and concise narrative that children can follow

Draft for

**Recommendation 18**

Ensure that children's diversity and identity needs are met and that they are supported to retain their birth language. Ensure that interpreters are used to communicate with them and their families, when needed.

**Outcomes:**

- Social workers spend time with children, undertaking direct work to understand their experiences, views, wishes and feelings.
- Senior managers will review and scrutinise all cases that are not progressing effectively to challenge practice and ensure the right plan is put in place promptly.
- All children and young people will be carefully matched to families that best meet their holistic needs, including their diversity and identity needs.
- All children and young people will be listened to, practice is focused on their needs and experiences and influenced by their wishes and feelings or, where they cannot represent their view themselves, those advocated on their behalf.

**Measured by:**

- Audits will measure the quality of Plans and ensure that 100% of Plans meet child diverse needs, and their wishes and feelings
- Group supervision will enable reflection and critical challenge; underperformance challenged and addressed through individual supervision
- Supervision will critically challenge and provide oversight to ensure all assessment and plans are fit for purpose and result in expected change for children
- Audits will measure the quality of Plans and ensure 100% of Plans meet the assessed needs and risks
- Feedback from children, young people and families – target: improved positivity

**Objectives:**

- All children, young people and families will have a quality plan which they have been fully involved in (including pathway plans)
- All children, young people and families will have a plan which reflect this assessment of needs and risks (including needs led assessments)
- Assessments are conducted in a timely fashion; contain the views of children and young people; and contain a detailed analysis based on research, evidence and impact.

Draft for

**Recommendation 19**

Improve care leavers' ownership of pathway plans and the quality and timeliness of targets, to improve their lives. Ensure that care leavers have the tools, such as money management, to cope with life's challenges and are fully aware of the 'Pledge' and their entitlements.

**Outcomes:**

- Social Workers will fully consider all children and younger people's long term needs at the earliest opportunity
- Young people make successful transitions to adulthood and achieve their aspirations through having the care, support and help they need
- All Care leavers receive the help they need through having well developed Pathway Plans in place
- Young people looked after, will have permanency considered at an early stage and there longer term needs will be fully considered including staying put
- Care Leavers successfully live independently

**Measured by:**

- Audits will measure the quality and long term arrangements of placements
- Child, young person and family feedback to enable us to measure what is working well and what needs to be further improved
- Care leaver pledges: will be measured to ensure Barnet Council promise is adhere to, this feedback will be delivered to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel (CPAP) each quarter
- Data: provides clear analysis of number of care leavers in staying put arrangements or alternative number of care leavers in staying put arrangements or alternative improves
- Care leaver participation in workshops

**Objectives:**

- All children who become looked after have their longer term arrangements considered at an early stage when placed with foster carers, staying put options will be consistently considered for all our children in care.
- All children, young people who are looked after will have a clean, SMART and updated Pathway Plan which is derived from an assessment of their need
- All Pathway Plans will be of high quality, robust and completed in a timely manner
- The progress of all plans are reviewed within target time scales and any issues impacting on progress are addressed
- Barnet to be a learning organisation which is led by practice, family and carer feedback
- All care leavers are prepared for independent living

Draft

## 7. Our Action Plan

Recn.	<b>Objective One:</b> Empowering and equipping our workforce to understand the importance and meaning of purposeful interventions with families <b>Lead Officers:</b> Operational Director Early Help, Children in Need of Help & Operational Director Corporate Parenting, Permanence and Transitions					
	3 months	6 months	9 months	12 Months		
1.01	1, 2, 3,	Thresholds document to be launched to all partners and implemented immediately [completed]	All partners understand their role in delivering improved outcomes for children and young people.	All partners play an active role in improving outcomes for children and young people.		
1.02	2	Monthly Quality assurance activity [multi-agency] demonstrates good multi-agency information gathering to inform timely and proportionate decision making Performance data from MASH is routinely challenged and scrutinised by managers and partners				
		MASH Steering Group fully established and attended by all partners [completed]  MASH partners routinely contribute to decision making and understand their role in delivering improved outcomes for children and young people  Performance data from MASH is available regularly to managers to inform practice development	Quarterly reporting to SMT			
1.03	1, 4, 9, 18	Line Managers to review all open CIN and CP cases and ensure the plans are SMART and of good quality, and work with social workers to improve these	Evidence of the use of the Graded Care Profile (where appropriate) on all cases of neglect.			
		All case files to have chronologies and genograms; to be reviewed by line managers and discussed with social	Quality assurance activity [by the council and LSCB] demonstrates children's views participation and	All open cases evidence children's views, participation and engagement on their records, assessments and		

Recn.	<b>Objective One:</b> Empowering and equipping our workforce to understand the importance and meaning of purposeful interventions with families <b>Lead Officers:</b> Operational Director Early Help, Children in Need of Help & Operational Director Corporate Parenting, Permanence and Transitions			
	3 months	6 months	9 months	12 Months
	<p>(e.g. take off old actions that have been completed, make sure the actions are specific and address the risks, and make sure there are clear timescales for existing actions). The review to also include identifying the contingency plan for each case and clearly recording this.</p> <p>All open cases to evidence children's views, participation and engagement on their records, assessments and plans</p> <p>A full audit of all Child in Need cases to be undertaken by deputy managers and TMs to re-evaluate the risks and urgently escalate any cases that meet the threshold to child protection.</p> <p>Graded Care Profile training to continue to be implemented across the partnership [ongoing]</p>	<p>workers through supervision</p> <p>All open cases evidence children's views, participation and engagement on their records, assessments and plans</p>	<p>engagement in records, assessments and plans</p> <p>All open cases evidence children's views, participation and engagement on their records, assessments and plans</p>	<p>plans</p>
1.04	3, 6,	Quality assurance activity [by the council and LSCB] demonstrates visits, conferences, reviews and assessments are based upon needs and levels of risk to		

Recn.	<b>Objective One:</b> Empowering and equipping our workforce to understand the importance and meaning of purposeful interventions with families <b>Lead Officers:</b> Operational Director Early Help, Children in Need of Help & Operational Director Corporate Parenting, Permanence and Transitions			
	3 months	6 months	9 months	12 Months
15, 18	children.			
	Children's files to be updated with 'danger statements' which ensure history is considered  All service areas work to achieve 100% compliance for visits, conferences, reviews and assessments	All visits, conferences, reviews and assessments are conducted on time  All children's files evidence 'danger statements' which ensure history is considered		
1.05	1, 4, 9, 18	Review a sample of child protection cases that have recently been closed by the Quality Assurance Manager  Quality Assurance Team to undertake a programme of audits of supervision to assess frequency and quality. Full report to SMT  Assurance test of management oversight to be undertaken via all CP case audits and review of cases	Assurance test of management oversight to be undertaken via regular dip-samples of CP cases by Operational Director	
1.06	1, 5, 18	Partners to have a clear understanding of the importance of their contribution to improved outcomes for children and young people through input at strategy meetings.  All partners understand their role in	Partners routinely attend strategy meetings and pro-actively take part in developing assessments and plans for children and young people	Quality assurance activity [by the council and LSCB] demonstrates good multi-agency participation and response to the needs of the child or
			Quality assurance activity [by the council and LSCB] demonstrates good multi-agency participation and response to the needs of the child or	Quality assurance activity [by the council and LSCB] demonstrates good multi-agency participation and response to the needs of the child or

Recn.	<b>Objective One:</b> Empowering and equipping our workforce to understand the importance and meaning of purposeful interventions with families <b>Lead Officers:</b> Operational Director Early Help, Children in Need of Help & Operational Director Corporate Parenting, Permanence and Transitions			
	3 months	6 months	9 months	12 Months
	delivering improved outcomes for children and young people.		young person	young person
1.07	1, 6, 8	All social workers have regular, reflective supervision that is quality assured and focused on timely outcomes for children and more effective social work interventions Management oversight is evident on all casefiles and provides effective direction that improves outcomes for children and young people		
		Write an overview of management oversight expectations outlining how actions are to be tracked by managers between supervision sessions to avoid drift and challenge any poor performance. The document is to be included within the supervision policy  Management briefing to be held with all managers on the importance of supervision and management oversight		
1.08	10	Group supervision will ensure all return home interviews, and the content, is fully considered, recorded and part of the planning and decision making Return home interviews to be included in the monthly DU Assurance report for consideration Practice Development Workers to focus on the risks to the lived experience of children missing		
		Review the function of the child sexual	Return home interviews will be routinely completed and uploaded for all children missing informs planning and decision	

Recn.		<b>Objective One:</b> Empowering and equipping our workforce to understand the importance and meaning of purposeful interventions with families <b>Lead Officers:</b> Operational Director Early Help, Children in Need of Help & Operational Director Corporate Parenting, Permanence and Transitions			
		3 months	6 months	9 months	12 Months
		exploitation and missing sub group and align this with other strategic fora to incorporate children at risk of youth violence and gang affiliation [LSCB action]  Return home interviews will be routinely completed and uploaded for all children missing	making  Newly established strategic partnership group, strategy, profile, scorecard and audit programme designed and operational in response to adolescent risk is developed and understood across the partnership [LSCB action]	Analysis of the effectiveness of the REACH team to be undertaken	
1.09	11	Undertake an analysis on PLO and care proceedings recently reviewed to ensure robust SMART plans are in place and that they are progressing/no drift and put together action plan for any action needed (since Jan 2017)  Analysis of Permanency Court tracker to be developed and reported to the Senior Management Team on a quarterly basis	Permanency Court data to be reported to the Senior Management Team on a quarterly basis		
1.10	12	Undertake an analysis of all Connected Carers to ensure compliance with timescales [unregulated connected	Connected Carer placements tracked through Placement Dashboard and reported monthly through DU Assurance Report		

Recn.		<b>Objective One:</b> Empowering and equipping our workforce to understand the importance and meaning of purposeful interventions with families <b>Lead Officers:</b> Operational Director Early Help, Children in Need of Help & Operational Director Corporate Parenting, Permanence and Transitions			
		3 months	6 months	9 months	12 Months
		carers completed]  Embed an effective and seamless process across all service areas that identify Connected Carers at the earliest point and ensure robust assessments at viability and full-assessment stage			Quality assurance team to undertake thematic audit on connected person placements at least annually
1.11	13	Embed robust Private Fostering assessments that address risk and quality of care  Plan publicity campaign across Barnet raising awareness around Private Fostering	Practice reflects robust Private Fostering assessments that address risk and quality of care  Completion of series of Private Fostering awareness raising events		
1.12	14	Evidence Youth Homelessness protocol is embedded into practice	A full audits of all Youth Homeless cases (by the council and LSCB) demonstrates the impact of the protocol on this cohort of young people	Insight analysis completed to understand cohort of Youth Homelessness in service and experiences for young people	Feedback from young people demonstrates a positive experience

Recn.		<b>Objective One:</b> Empowering and equipping our workforce to understand the importance and meaning of purposeful interventions with families <b>Lead Officers:</b> Operational Director Early Help, Children in Need of Help & Operational Director Corporate Parenting, Permanence and Transitions			
		3 months	6 months	9 months	12 Months
1.13	8, 15	An independent quality assurance audit of LAC Reviews, to scrutinise and challenge IRO practice and ensure LAC reviews meet statutory requirements.	Assurance test of IRO oversight to be undertaken via regular dip-sample LAC case audits and review of cases by Operational Director		
1.14	8, 15	Introduce a revised Practice Alert policy  Safeguarding team to use the practice alert process to introduce challenge into practice  Track on a monthly basis practice alerts and responses	Develop a summary and analysis report of Practice Alerts that is presented as part of the Weekly Performance Reports Themes from practice alerts are fed into the training strategy IRO/CP manager meets regularly with Heads of Service to escalate issues or themes		
1.15	1, 8	The Quality Assurance Framework continues to evaluate the quality of social care interventions and outcomes for families to provide baseline indicators of quality. This will set out the % of cases where interventions and outcomes are good, require improvement, inadequate.	Audits (by the council and LSCB) will demonstrate the quality of social care interventions is improving and there are improving outcomes for individual families.		
			Live auditing is embedded into the service as part of the Quality Assurance Framework		
			The Quality Assurance Framework is implemented into the partnership		

Recn.	<b>Objective One:</b> Empowering and equipping our workforce to understand the importance and meaning of purposeful interventions with families <b>Lead Officers:</b> Operational Director Early Help, Children in Need of Help & Operational Director Corporate Parenting, Permanence and Transitions			
	3 months	6 months	9 months	12 Months
		alongside the LSCB		
1.16	1, 17	Recruit 3 additional social work staff to completed lifestory work across all LAC.	Direct work and lifestory work in progress for all LAC in long-term placements  Track progress and quality of direct work and lifestory work through peer auditing	All LAC to have life story work
1.17	19	Report progress of Corporate Parenting Action Plan to Corporate Parenting Officers Group (CPOG) and CPAP		
		Review the progress of the Care Leavers Strategy and Corporate Parenting Action Plan with stakeholders  The review of the Children in Care Pledge to be communicated to all LAC and Care Leavers.  Develop an information leaflet for care leavers telling them about their entitlements and how to access them; disseminate to all care leavers	Feedback from care leavers evidences their knowledge of entitlements and access to them.	

Recn.	<b>Objective One:</b> Empowering and equipping our workforce to understand the importance and meaning of purposeful interventions with families <b>Lead Officers:</b> Operational Director Early Help, Children in Need of Help & Operational Director Corporate Parenting, Permanence and Transitions			
	3 months	6 months	9 months	12 Months
1.18	Proposals for Children's Home and Intervention Centre to be submitted for Planning Permission	Functionality of the Intervention to be developed and agreed	Work to commence on new Children's Home and Intervention Centre (subject to Planning)	
1.19	Analysis of all sites undertaken to develop proposals for Family Friendly purposeful interventions and meetings	Proposals submitted to SMT for agreement  Implementation of intervention at most suitable sites		Review arrangements

Draft for Consultation

Recn.		<b>Objective Two:</b> Ensuring our organisational culture, systems and tools to support the delivery of high quality child and family interventions <b>Lead Officers:</b> Operational Director Early Help, Children in Need of Help and Protection, Operational Director Corporate Parenting, Permanence and Transitions and Divisional Director Performance and Improvement			
		3 months	6 months	9 months	12 Months
2.01	1, 2	Family Services Practice Standards are reviewed  Family Service Procedures Manual is reviewed	Family Services Practice Standards are refreshed and launched to staff and partners  Refreshed Family Service Procedures Manual is launched	Family Service Procedures Manual is reviewed	Refreshed Family Service Procedures Manual is launched
2.02	ALL	The Improvement Action Plan will be monitored through the Social Work Improvement Board on a bi-monthly basis. The Improvement Action Plan will be a standing agenda item at CELS for members to monitor progress This improvement plan will be updated on a rolling 3 month basis.			
2.03	ALL	Senior managers use data to provide challenge to the system that drives practice improvement			
		A single Assurance Report which combines, performance, improvement, service user feedback and quality assurance is developed and challenged at all levels of the organisation  Team Managers have a thorough understanding of performance and the importance of accurately reporting on	Team Managers actively use data to support service improvement and improve outcomes for children and young people.  Devise a forward plan of insight analysis linked to the Quality Assurance Activity that better informs at all levels  Develop a system to aggregate and/or	Aggregated dataset from return home information and those children at risk of, or being, sexually exploited or involved in gang activity informs planning and risk for children	

Recn.		<b>Objective Two:</b> Ensuring our organisational culture, systems and tools to support the delivery of high quality child and family interventions <b>Lead Officers:</b> Operational Director Early Help, Children in Need of Help and Protection, Operational Director Corporate Parenting, Permanence and Transitions and Divisional Director Performance and Improvement			
		3 months	6 months	9 months	12 Months
		the system  Further develop the dataset for the 0-25 Disability Service to have appropriate information to allow for effective challenge	cross reference information from return home information with those children at risk of, or being, sexually exploited or involved in gang activity  Further develop the Corporate Parenting dataset which ensure corporate parents have appropriate information to allow for effective challenge		
2.04	ALL	Opportunities to improve the social care IT system continue to be identified and improved  Data quality through timely recording improves month on month  Programme of review to be developed and implemented  Pilot mobile working programme across the service; developing mobile	Data quality through timely recording improves month on month  Findings from mobile working to be presented to SMT and programme of implementation to introduce mobile working across the service in place.	Data quality through timely recording improves month on month  'Apps' to support mobile working to go-live	Data quality through timely recording improves month on month

Recn.		<b>Objective Two:</b> Ensuring our organisational culture, systems and tools to support the delivery of high quality child and family interventions <b>Lead Officers:</b> Operational Director Early Help, Children in Need of Help and Protection, Operational Director Corporate Parenting, Permanence and Transitions and Divisional Director Performance and Improvement			
		<b>3 months</b>	<b>6 months</b>	<b>9 months</b>	<b>12 Months</b>
		'apps' for the LCS system			
2.05	ALL	The Service User Engagement Strategy is implemented across the service		The Service User Engagement Strategy is reviewed for effectiveness	
2.06	6	Wright it Right Framework to be introduced across the service	Casefiles evidence impact of Wright it Right framework		

Draft for Comment

Recn.		<b>Objective Three: 3.</b> Retaining, attracting and growing a cadre of effective practitioners who are well supported, child focused, curious and inquisitive about what they are seeing and assessing <b>Lead Officers:</b> Operational Director Early Help, Children in Need of Help and Protection, Operational Director Corporate Parenting, Permanence and Transitions & Divisional Director Performance and Improvement			
		3 months	6 months	9 months	12 Months
3.01	ALL	All staff understand the improvement plan, and their role in delivering improved outcomes for children and young people.	All staff across the council understand the importance of the FS Improvement Plan and their role in supporting it	Progress against the Improvement Action Plan is presented to staff and partners	
3.02	ALL	Recruitment is ongoing to recruit to vacancies within the service.			
		The HoS Performance & Improvement role is developed so it provides challenge and support across the system.  Practice Leaders in post and revised structure implemented across the service  0-25 new structure in place following consultation  Additional manager capacity in place in CiC to support a reduction in caseloads	The proportion of vacancies/agency staff continues to decrease,  Additional resources to support practice development and innovation in post.  Additional admin support in place to support Social Work teams	Workforce is more stable. This will be measured through a reduction in turnover and the social worker staff survey that will consider an improvement in staff satisfaction, how well staff feel supported, and proportion of time spent on meaningful social work.	The proportion of agency staff has reduced to 10%

Recn.		<b>Objective Three: 3.</b> Retaining, attracting and growing a cadre of effective practitioners who are well supported, child focused, curious and inquisitive about what they are seeing and assessing <b>Lead Officers:</b> Operational Director Early Help, Children in Need of Help and Protection, Operational Director Corporate Parenting, Permanence and Transitions & Divisional Director Performance and Improvement			
		3 months	6 months	9 months	12 Months
3.03	ALL	Launch of the Barnet Practice Academy  Learning and development links to the Quality Assurance Framework  Develop an in-depth induction programme for new managers	Measure impact of in-depth induction programme via the Team Managers monthly meetings  All faculties of the Barnet Practice Academy have gone live		Tailored learning and development plans in place for all staff.
3.04	ALL	Signs of Safety to be further embedded and used to ensure children's feelings and wishes are used to inform practice.	All Team Managers to have completed SoS Practice Leadership Training  Develop a programme of Systemic Leadership Training for Team Managers  SoS Practice Leaders (cohort 1) to report on effectiveness of implementation via the Team Managers monthly meeting	Commence Systemic Leadership Training for Team Managers	Senior Management Team completion of Systemic Leadership training  SoS Practice Leaders (all) to report on effectiveness of implementation via the Team Managers

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Draft for Consultation

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## **The Barnet Safeguarding Board Improvement Plan**

The purpose of the Improvement Plan is to ensure that the Barnet Safeguarding Board is able to demonstrate how it is effectively delivering its statutory duties as a safeguarding partnership. This Plan has been written in response to the Ofsted report 7<sup>th</sup> July 2017, LSCB Review May 2017 and the statutory duties as outlined in the Children's Act 2004 and in Working Together 2015, but with an eye to the implementation of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

The Plan is currently in draft for two reasons. Firstly we need to consult with core partners on the breadth and depth of the response to the Ofsted report and LSCB review. Secondly the Plan needs to be reviewed and approved by Ofsted and the Department of Education.

The Plan (Annex 1) will serve as a framework to drive forward the strategic leadership of multiagency safeguarding activities and establishing a system wide approach to improvement so that the LSCB is able to monitor the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements.

The fundamental objectives of this Improvement Plan are:

- Leadership, management and governance arrangements will deliver strong, strategic local leadership that measurably improves outcomes for vulnerable children.
- Professional relationships between the partner organisations will mature and develop so that partners are able to hold each other to account.
- Accountabilities are embedded and will result in confident, regular evaluation and improvement in the quality of help, care and protection that is provided.
- Children, young people and families will clearly benefit from improvements that are made and the impact of their feedback is well evidenced.
- Effective and continuous learning improves professional practice.
- The views and experiences of children, young people and their families are at the centre of service design and influence development and strategic thinking.

The Plan responds directly to the improvement recommendations in the Ofsted report and in the LSCB review. As a consequence by June 2018 the BSCB will be recognised as being effective, ensuring the system works effectively for children and young people.

### **Measuring our success**

Robust performance management is at the heart of any drive to secure continuous improvement and delivery of high quality services and monitoring and effectiveness of what is done by the Local Authority and Board partners, individually and collectively, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

Underpinning the framework is the need to develop clear standards, representing required practice, for all aspects of the BSCBs output. Each standard should have associated specific criteria for meeting the standard.

Objectives and targets for improvement as a safeguarding partnership will be framed within an outcome based accountability approach, reporting performance, and using information to identify problems and taking decisions to solve them against quantity, quality and outcomes.

### **Quantity: What did we do?**

What did we do to deliver the Board priorities? We will assess what we do through the following activities:

- Multi-agency safeguarding data presented in thematic scorecards – linked to priorities and the activities of the Board (LBB, statistical neighbours, national average) – Monthly (Annex 2)
- Multiagency training (quarterly).
- Trend analysis of safeguarding data – (annual)
- Board activity – (bi-annual)
  - Partners engaged and attendance at meetings
  - Communications – newsletters, professional networks

### **Quality: How well did we do?**

We will utilise the following activities to understand how well we delivered the Board priorities:

#### *Feedback*

- Voice of children, young people and parents (quarterly)
- Voice of practitioners (quarterly)
- Escalations to LSCB Chair (annual)
- Complaints (annual)

#### *Reflective learning and Improvements:*

- Peer reviews (as agreed)
- Action from SCRs and CDOP (quarterly)
- External Inspection (monthly)

#### *Audits*

- Self -assessments – S11/S175 (annual)
- Practice weeks – observations and themed audits (quarterly)
- LADO, IRO and CPC, Private Fostering, Corporate Parenting (annual)

### **Outcomes: How will we know we've made an impact?**

The key components to improving multi-agency safeguarding practice are to learn from experience through audits and reviews of our safeguarding practice through the mechanisms above, drive forward improvement actions and then to ensure that we embed learning in practice and evaluate the impact of that learning.

We will achieve this via an annual assessment of the following activities:

- Voice of practitioners – annual survey picking up information sharing, and staff awareness and understanding of neglect, CSE, FGM, DA, thresholds
- Voice of child – do they feel safe, what are the safeguarding concerns of our children and young people
- Safeguarding risk and needs analysis
- Training impact analysis
- CDOP and SCRs actions and impact evaluation – how well did we learn from our deep dives into child deaths and serious case reviews
- Complaints from service users and partners
- Annual reports across thematic priority areas
- Learning and Improvement analysis – what are our strengths, how well did we embed learning, what changes have been made and what improvements do we need to make

Together we will establish new ways of working to safeguard children.



Ofsted recommendation (OR), Comment (OC) or LSCB review (LR)	Improvement recommendations	Action	Milestones	Lead	Objective 4	Progress/RAG
<b>Objective 1:</b>						
OC para 7 and LR	Governance needs to enable effective challenge and alignment across the borough wide strategic partnership arrangements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implement the new governance and partnership structural arrangements for the LSCB</li> <li>2. Develop and agree a constitution for the Board safeguarding partnership arrangements</li> <li>3. Implement an OD programme for partners to ensure effective challenge and subsequently implementation of the improvement journey</li> <li>4. Develop clear protocols across strategic partnerships - and ensure that strategic partners understand and can contribute to the priorities of the Board</li> <li>5. Ensure financial capacity and partner contribution is sufficient to deliver the improvement programme</li> <li>6. Challenge log in place</li> <li>7. Risk register in place</li> <li>8. Review of implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures across the partnership</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. May 2017</li> <li>2. July 17</li> <li>3. July 17</li> <li>4. Aug 17</li> <li>5. Sept 17</li> <li>6. Sept 17</li> <li>7. Sept 17</li> <li>8. Oct 17</li> </ol>	LSCB Chair and Partnership manager	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) increase in effectiveness of early help</li> <li>b) service users and practitioners report more effective partnership arrangements</li> <li>c) partners report tangible improvements how partners work together</li> </ol>	
OC para 11, para 16 and LR	The business plan does not include specific actions on core statutory responsibilities, it covers a wide spectrum of activity, some of which lacks specific outcomes for children, and planning for delivery	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Business plan clearly outlines how the Board will discharge its statutory duties</li> <li>2. Plan approved and operational</li> <li>3. Reporting demonstrates effectiveness of working arrangements on outcomes for children</li> <li>4. Clear work plans are in place to support priorities with nominated leads, performance and outcomes scorecards</li> <li>5. reporting monthly to executive group</li> <li>6. All annual reports will demonstrate a comprehensive and robust analysis of the work undertaken on behalf of the Board and as part</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. July 17</li> <li>2. Aug 17</li> <li>3. Oct 17</li> <li>4. July 17</li> <li>5. Oct 17</li> <li>6. Sept 17</li> </ol>	transformation lead and LSCB Chair	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Scorecards demonstrate improved outcomes</li> <li>2. audit programme demonstrate improved experiences and progress of children</li> <li>3. service user engagement identifies improved experiences</li> </ol>	

		of the Board's work			
OR 5 and LR 2,4	Review the function of the child sexual exploitation and missing sub group and align this with other strategic fora to incorporate children at risk of youth violence and gang affiliation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strategic planning group with police and children and family services to draw up a new approach to the partnership approach to adolescent risk</li> <li>2. Multiagency workshops including young people to understand the current pathways, interventions, and improve our understanding of adolescent risks</li> <li>3. Newly established strategic partnership group, strategy, profile, scorecard and audit programme designed and operational</li> <li>4. Quarterly monitoring by the group with reports through to the executive group, leadership forum and LSCB</li> <li>5. Quality assurance of cases to evaluate impact with recommendations circulated across the partnership</li> <li>6. Six month review led by young people to explore impact on young people</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. July 17</li> <li>2. Sept 17</li> <li>3. Oct 17</li> <li>4. Dec 17, March 18</li> <li>5. June 18</li> </ol>	Police chair for the group	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. earlier identification of risks - reduction in level 2 and 3 CSE, adolescences going into care or becoming known to police,</li> <li>2. improved RHI and reduced repeat missing</li> <li>3. young people report positive on line experiences and state on line</li> <li>4. young people feel less concerned about serious youth violence</li> <li>5. young people report a good understanding and awareness of Prevent</li> </ol>
OC para 24	Deliver the recommendations from the LSCB review not listed elsewhere a) An effective business unit b) Communications c) Wider networks	1. A newly formed Business unit will provide greater capacity to the delivery of the safeguarding partnership	1. Oct 17	Transformation lead and LSCb Chair	1. partners report a better experience of engaging in the partnership
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A new communications plan will be operational and include newsletters, published reports through public forums</li> <li>2. A new web site for the Board will go live and provide an interactive engagement on safeguarding</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Oct 17</li> <li>2. Oct 17</li> </ol>	Transformation lead and LSCB Chair	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analytics demonstrate the engagement of partners and communities across the partnership</li> <li>2. Improved outcomes are demonstrated through an improvement in the accuracy of contacts</li> </ol>

					and referrals	
		<p>1. Enable the wider network of professionals and the community to engage in safeguarding children, by formalising designated safeguarding leads networks for health and for education, VCS Community Together Network for VCS and faith groups and establish locality networks for multiagency frontline practitioners.</p> <p>2. Support our communities to engage in safeguarding through locality networks</p>	<p>1. Sept 17 2. Nov 17</p>	Transformation lead Partnership manager	<p>1. Improved and earlier contacts and referrals. 2. Improved attendance by partners at team around the child, core groups and conferences 3. improved performance across all scorecards 4. practitioners identifying the impact of the networks in safeguarding arrangements</p>	
Objective 2						

OC para 22	Ensure that all partners, including lay members, are able to engage effectively as part of the safeguarding partnership	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Undertake an organisational development learning programme with partners to ensure that we are able to deliver our statutory duties.</li> <li>2. The training and development programme will ensure it includes lay members, elected members alongside practitioners and managers from across the partnership</li> </ol>	1. July 17	Transformation lead and LSCB Chair	1. partners can evidence how challenge is clearly evident across the system and drives improvement in children's outcomes - through case vignettes	
Objective 3						
OR 1	Ensure that a programme of quality assurance is established to monitor the quality of frontline practice across statutory work and early help	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. New quality assurance framework is operational. Quarterly monitoring and reporting by the partnership.</li> <li>2. Schedule of quality assurance activity and multiagency safeguarding audits including statutory functions, early help and JTAI thematics are operational</li> <li>3. Ensure protocols are in place for embedding and evaluating the impact of the learning and improvement programme across partner organisations – 6 month check</li> <li>4. New performance data scorecards developed that are linked to core safeguarding priorities, with clearly identifiable analysis, monthly reporting and regular analysis of trends.</li> <li>5. Partnership quality assurance analyst in post to ensure that data is relevant and up-to-date from across partners for reporting on monthly, quarterly and annual basis</li> <li>6. Learning and Improvement group with Head of QA and performance from each partner - ensures the delivery of the learning and improvement framework and reports through to Executive Group</li> <li>7. Clarity and evidence of challenge, governance and oversight within the Board governance arrangements</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sept 17</li> <li>2. Oct 2017</li> <li>3. Sept 17</li> <li>4. Sept 17</li> <li>5. August 17</li> <li>6. Sept 17</li> <li>7. December 17</li> </ol>	transformation lead Partnership Manager	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Performance scorecards will demonstrate progress within 6 months against all statutory and EH data</li> <li>2. Quality of safeguarding practice across the partnership is evident in experience and progress of children</li> </ol>	

OR 2 and LR	Ensure that all partner agencies and their staff are aware of thresholds for intervention	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Design and Implement a thresholds evaluation programme that draws on wide partnership membership, first check point within 6 months</li> <li>2. Evidence the impact of the threshold document through JTAI on MASH and EH, case tracking and performance scorecard</li> <li>3. Report through to the Leadership Forum, LSCB and Executive Group</li> <li>4. Implement a communications programme with community groups and practitioners.</li> <li>5. Review the impact of the threshold document on a 6 month rolling basis</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sept 17</li> <li>2. Oct 17, Feb 18</li> <li>3. Dec 17, March 18</li> <li>4. from Sept 17</li> <li>5. Nov 17, March 18</li> </ol>	partners	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Scorecard - MASH data, repeat referrals within 12 months,</li> <li>b) JTAI results</li> <li>c) engagement sessions and evaluation with community groups and practitioners</li> </ol>	
OR 3	Increase the scrutiny and challenge of practice for privately fostered children and raise awareness of the notification process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Undertake a deep dive into private fostering and identify recommendations through to the Leadership forum</li> <li>2. Ensure multiagency awareness raising of private fostering- campaign through website</li> <li>3. Case sampling of connected persons arrangements including for children with disabilities</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. January 2018</li> <li>2. October 17</li> <li>3. February 18</li> </ol>	Partnership manager	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) numbers of private fostering arrangements</li> <li>b) survey of agencies and VCS on awareness of private fostering</li> <li>c) case sampling workshop identifies good case work in 75% of cases</li> </ol>	
OC para 14 and LR	Ensure that the LA undertakes a section 11 audit alongside all partners listed in S13 of the Act.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Annual S11 and S175 audits undertaken</li> <li>2. Challenge panels to address gaps and evaluate improvements</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. March 18</li> <li>2. April-June 18</li> </ol>	LSCB Chair and Partnership manager	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. partners report evidence of how statutory duties are being met by each agency</li> <li>2. Outcomes for children across the scorecards clearly demonstrate improved trends</li> </ol>	

OC para 21	Monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of the neglect strategy, training and implementation of the graded care profile 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Undertake a JTAI on neglect as part of the Quality Assurance schedule</li> <li>2. Ensure monthly reporting on the implementation of the neglect GCP2 and on the training programme</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Oct 17, Feb 18</li> <li>2. Oct 17</li> </ol>	Partnership manager	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Numbers of agencies undertaking GCPs as part of assessments</li> <li>2. Reduction in repeat referrals for neglect</li> </ol>	
Objective 5						
OR 4	Ensure that the effectiveness of multiagency safeguarding training is monitored and evaluated	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish a learning and improvement sub group that combines quality, performance, learning and improvement.</li> <li>2. A start and finish task group of training coordinators from across the partnership will design a new training plan, evaluation, and timescales for impact analysis. Clear contributions from partners. This will include the VCS organisation commissioned to deliver safeguarding training to the VCS and faith communities.</li> <li>3. . This working group will be chaired by member of exec group and report through to the executive group</li> <li>4. Online automated training system implemented through the new LSCB web site. On line evaluation via the website.</li> <li>5. Training evaluation undertaken quarterly - impact tracked through performance and quality assurance activity</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sept 17</li> <li>2. Oct 17</li> <li>4. Oct 17</li> <li>5. Jan 18</li> </ol>	Partnership manager	a)Statutory services Scorecards and case audits identify improved use of thresholds, risk assessments, b) service user evaluation indicates that children have experienced improved and earlier support	
OC para 12 and LR	Ensure lessons from SCRs are embedded in front line practice and organisations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Executive group is commissioned by the LSCB Chair to form SCR review groups as they are required</li> <li>2. Learning and improvement group details how recommendations from SCRs are being implemented and monitored.</li> <li>3. Executive group reports to the leadership Forum and Board identifies how learning has been implemented and can be demonstrated</li> <li>4. SCR Toolkit developed</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sept 17</li> <li>4. Sept 17</li> </ol>	LSCB Chair and Transformation Lead	1. practitioners focus group identifies lessons learnt and can identify vignettes for impact on children's experiences as a consequence of recommendations and subsequent learning forums	

OC para 13 and LR para 8	Ensure the CDOP annual report sets out the learning from deaths with modifiable factors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CDOP apply London CDOP procedures</li> <li>2. CDOP annual report clearly reports learning and impact from learning</li> <li>3. Planning for the transition into the new national CDOP arrangements</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. July 17</li> <li>2. Sept 17</li> <li>3. from Nov 17</li> </ol>	Consultant in Public health - Children	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. partners report lessons are implemented and can be evidenced</li> <li>2. practitioners report understanding and can evidence impact</li> <li>3. demonstrable impact on outcomes related to thematic areas</li> </ol>
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**Objective 6**

OC para 20 and LR	Ensure that child's lived experience is understood including children living with domestic abuse	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure that children's experience and progress is understood through quality assurance procedures, analysed and drive improvement via the learning and Improvement framework</li> <li>2. Refocus the engagement of Children, young people and families. Implement the service user engagement strategy across the partnership so that they are able to shape strategic priorities of the safeguarding partnership</li> <li>3. A safeguarding annual conversation and new web site and social media campaigns led by young people will ensure the wider voice of children are heard.</li> <li>4. Ensure that children's lived experiences influence the priorities of strategic partnerships in Barnet including the Community Safety Partnership Board through JTAI schedules</li> <li>5. Making Safeguarding a priority in the UNICEF programme</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sept 17</li> <li>2. Sept 17</li> <li>3. Oct 17, June 18</li> <li>4. Oct 17</li> <li>5. Oct 17</li> </ol>	Transformation Lead, Voice of the Child coordinator	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Children and young people are actively engaged in their plans</li> <li>2. Life story work demonstrates improved outcomes</li> <li>3. Children and young people articulate their experience and progress in case work</li> <li>4. Children and young people engaged in campaigns and in shaping our safeguarding priorities</li> </ol>
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## Performance Framework

### General statistics – Annual report and Business plan

- Number of children under 19 and total of the population
- Number of children living in poverty
- Diversity
- Gender
- Number of children in care placed out of county and where
- Trend – 3 year Number of children in care, care leavers and age breakdown
- Trend Number of children on CPP and CIN
- Trends on CME and EHE – last 3 years

### Core Data set (Please note these will be split into scorecards relevant to the Business Plan Priorities).

- Number of children and families engaged in early help
- Number of early help cases closed where outcomes were achieved
- Number of annual contacts to MASH
- Number and % of Contacts to referrals
- % re-referrals
- % of step downs to early help/% of step ups into social care
- Trends in contacts made from partners over the last 3 years
- Trends in contacts to referrals over the last three years
- Number of open CIN cases
- Number of private fostering arrangements
- Number of children electively home educated
- Number of young carers
- Numbers of young people managed by the 0-25 disabilities team
- Number, ethnicity and age of children missing education
- Number, ethnicity and age of children permanently excluded from education (and CIC)
- Number, ethnicity and age of children persistently absent from school
- Number of children receiving help from CAMHS at any one time
  
- Number of entries to A&E by unintentional or deliberate injury to children 0-17 – split self-harm and DAA
- Waiting times from referral to CAMHS assessment
- Number of children and young people at risk of CSE and levels 1-3
- Number of young people who went missing from home/number of episodes
- Number of young people who went missing from care/missing episodes
- Number of children and young people at risk of or involved in gangs/serious youth violence and offending
- Number of CF assessments completed by children's social care
- Children seen within timescales
- Average timeliness of assessments – number of days

- Number of child protection investigations
- Number of children on a child protection plan
- Duration on a child protection plan,
- Number of cases being managed with domestic abuse as the category of need
- Number of children being managed with neglect as the main category of need
- Number of repeat referrals (split under 12 months and over 12 months) for neglect
- Number of Graded Care profile assessments – and by agency
- % of ICPCs where core partners attended
- Number on CPP for 18months plus
- Number on CPP for second or subsequent time
- Number of repeat on CP plan – and trend over the last 3 years
- FGM – number of referrals
- Number of MARAC meetings involving children and young people living in families with domestic violence
- Public protection orders – trends over 3 year
- Serious sexual offences on children – recorded and detected- trends over 3 years
- Recorded assaults on children – trends over 3 years
- Training – numbers engaged per agency
- Number of allegations made against staff working with children and young people- annual
- Number of issues escalated to chair of safeguarding board – annual

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## Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee

**18<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Education Strategy 2017 - 2020</b>
<b>Report of</b>	Strategic Director of Children and Young People
<b>Wards</b>	All
<b>Status</b>	Public
<b>Urgent</b>	No
<b>Key</b>	No
<b>Enclosures</b>	Appendix A: Education Strategy 2017 – 2020
<b>Officer Contact Details</b>	<p>Chris Munday, Strategic Director of Children and Young People  <a href="mailto:Chris.munday@Barnet.gov.uk">Chris.munday@Barnet.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Ian Harrison, Education and Skills Director  <a href="mailto:Ian.j.harrison@Barnet.gov.uk">Ian.j.harrison@Barnet.gov.uk</a>;                      0208 359 7692</p>

### Summary

This report seeks approval for the Education Strategy for Barnet for the period 2017 to 2020 (Appendix A). The Education Strategy sets out the shared ambition of the strategic partnership between the council, schools and Cambridge Education to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people in Barnet.

### Recommendations

- 1. That the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee approve the Education Strategy 2017 – 2020 as set out in Appendix A.**

## **1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED**

1.1 This report sets out the Education Strategy for Barnet for the period 2017 to 2020. The strategy reflects the changes that have taken place both locally and nationally during the period since our previous strategy was developed. These include:

- The strategic partnership with Cambridge Education that commenced in April 2016 to deliver statutory education services as well as offering a range of traded services for schools to purchase.
- The development of school improvement partnerships across the borough through which schools challenge and support each other to continuously improve outcomes for their pupils.
- An increasingly diverse range of education providers operating in the borough as a result of new free schools opening and schools becoming sponsored Academies.
- An increasing school population as a result of demographic growth.
- Developments in services for children with special educational needs and disabilities as a result of legislative changes
- Increasing focus on the financial sustainability of schools as a result of inflationary pressures.
- A move towards a national funding formula for schools that may potentially impact the balance of funding between local authorities.

1.2 The strategic partnership is governed by a number of boards with representatives from the council, Cambridge Education and schools. Through these partnership boards as well as through regular meetings with headteachers and chairs of governors, the opportunities and challenges in delivering education services are regularly shared and discussed with schools. The Education Strategy is a vehicle to articulate clearly our shared ambition for what we want to achieve through working together to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people in Barnet.

1.3 The vision within the strategy has been developed through this partnership approach and it reflects the ambition for Barnet to be a family friendly borough. It builds on the council's commitment to put resilience at the heart of improving outcomes for children and young people. It recognises that schools provide a unique opportunity to promote and embed resilience in the day to day life of children and their families. The shared partnership vision is:

*Resilient schools – resilient communities: We want Barnet to be the most successful place for high quality education where excellent school standards result in all children achieving their best, being safe and happy and able to progress to become successful adults.*

1.4 In order to deliver this, the strategy proposes that we work in partnership so that:

- Every child attends a good or outstanding school, as judged by Ofsted
- The attainment and progress of children in Barnet schools is within the top 10% nationally
- There is accelerating progress of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils in order to close the gap between them and their peers.

1.5 To achieve this, our strategic partnership aims to

- ensure **sufficient school places** in the right place at the right time, including high quality **local specialist places** for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- ensure that school organisation and governance arrangements are **financially sustainable**
- secure a **high quality educational** offer through a **pro-active approach** to school improvement that includes:
  - School partnerships and school to school support
  - Choice and diversity over governance models
  - A Learning Network Inspectorate team offering differentiated support to maintained schools and academies
- achieve high levels of attainment and progress in all phases
- maintain a relentless focus on meeting the needs of vulnerable pupils including those with Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities (SEND), children looked after, children in need and children eligible for free school meals.

1.6 The governance boards of the strategic partnership will drive and oversee the delivery of the Education Strategy and monitor the key performance measures set out within the strategy. Information on educational performance, school places and school funding/finance issues are shared with the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee through its work programme.

## **2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Education Strategy articulates and drives the shared ambition of the council, schools, and Cambridge Education to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people in Barnet.

## **3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED**

- 3.1 None.

## **4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION**

- 4.1 The Education Strategy will form the work programme for the strategic partnership's governance boards on strategic planning, school improvement, SEND services and school organisation.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION**

### **5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance**

- 5.1.1 The quality of the education offer is at the heart of Barnet's continuing success as a place where people want to live, work and study. It plays a crucial part in making Barnet family friendly, with many families attracted to the area by the good reputation of Barnet's schools. Excellent educational outcomes and ensuring children and young people are equipped to meet the needs of employers are key to deliver the Council's vision set out in its Corporate Plan 2015-20 for:

- Barnet's schools to be amongst the best in the country, with enough places for all, and with all children achieving the best they can
- Barnet's children and young people to receive a great start in life and
- For there to be a broad offer of skills and employment programmes for all ages

### **5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

The work to respond to, and drive the delivery of the council's contribution to the Education Strategy is led from within existing resources of the Education and Skills Service, delivered in partnership with Cambridge Education.

### **5.3 Legal and Constitutional References**

- 5.3.1 As set out in the responsibility for functions (Annex A) of the Council Constitution (Section 15a), the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee has responsibility for services within Children's Services, including education and schools and is responsible for considering for approval of any non-statutory plan or strategy within the remit of the

Committee, subject to this not being reserved to Full Council or Policy and Resources.

5.3.2 Section 13 of the Education Act 1996 place a duty on local authorities to secure efficient primary, secondary and further education are available to meet the needs of the population of their area. Section 13A requires local authorities to ensure that their functions are exercised with a view of promoting high standards, ensuring fair access to opportunity for education and training and promoting fulfilment of learning potential for children and young people in its area. Section 14 requires local authorities to secure sufficient schools and sufficient is defined by reference to number, character and equipment to provide appropriate education based on age, ability and aptitude, as well as ensuring diversity of provision. These duties are overarching duties and apply regardless of whether schools are maintained by the local authority or independent of local authority support.

5.3.3 Part 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 contains powers and duties in relation to schools causing concern. The powers of intervention apply in relation to maintained schools only. For Academy schools, local authorities should raise any concerns with the Department for Education. Section 72 of this Act requires local authorities to have regard to Government guidance when exercising its functions under Part 4. The latest guidance, Schools Causing Concern, published in March 2016, confirms that school improvement should be led by schools. The local authority role should be to champion excellent education, including monitoring performance, taking swift and effective action in maintained schools, intervening early, encouraging good and outstanding schools to support others and securing strong leadership and governance. This revised guidance also sets out the role and powers of Regional Schools Commissioners in relation to both Academies and underperforming maintained schools, in particular those that meet the Department for Education's definition of 'coasting' and those judged by Ofsted to be inadequate.

#### 5.4 **Risk Management**

None

#### 5.5 **Equalities and Diversity**

The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010; advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups; foster good relations between people from different groups.

The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day to day business and to keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services.

School improvement monitoring, supporting and challenging arrangements

ensure that the quality of education in Barnet is maintained and improved. Outcomes for all groups of children and young people are monitored including children with special educational need, children in receipt of free school meals and children looked after. Barnet's Children and Young People Plan and the Education Strategy, both have a strong focus on improving outcomes for disadvantaged groups of children and young people.

## 5.6 Consultation and Engagement

The strategic partnership's shared ambition at the core of the Education Strategy was developed in consultation with headteacher representatives. Together with the proposed aims to deliver the ambition, it has been subject to consultation with all headteachers and chairs of governors.

## 5.7 Insight

A range of data sources including national assessment results, school census returns, pupil premium data and demographic projections are used in the development of priorities and in monitoring outcomes

## 6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee, 15<sup>th</sup> September 2014 (Item 9) *School Improvement in Barnet – an update and a new approach.*

Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee, 21<sup>st</sup> September 2016 *School Performance in Barnet, 2016 (provisional)*

Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee, 21<sup>st</sup> September 2016 *Planning for new school places 2017/18 to 2019/20*

Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee, 21<sup>st</sup> February 2017 *Annual report on School funding in Barnet for 2017/18*

Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee, 21<sup>st</sup> February 2017 *School Admission arrangements for 2018/19*

## **Appendix A - Barnet Education Strategy (2017 to 2020)**

### **Introduction**

Barnet is well known for the excellent quality of its schools and the diversity of its educational offer. These are at the heart of Barnet's continuing success as a desirable place where people want to live, work and study. Excellent educational outcomes and ensuring children and young people are equipped to meet the needs of employers are vital to Barnet's future success.

Barnet has 125 schools serving 54,524 pupils. There are 22 secondary schools, 90 primary schools, 3 all through schools, four nursery schools, four special schools and two pupil referral units. There is also one sixth-form college and one General Further Education College. The number of pupils is growing and although there has been a substantial investment programme to provide new school places, more still are required as we move towards the end of the decade.

In recent years children's achievements in Barnet's schools at all key stages have been among the very best in the country and a high proportion of Barnet's young people progress on to higher education. Over 90% of Barnet pupils are at schools which were graded good or better at their last Ofsted inspection.

### ***Resilience***

We want to make Barnet the most Family Friendly Borough by 2020. Our strategy to achieve this is to focus on developing families' resilience, which evidence tells us is pivotal to delivering the best outcomes for children and young people. The role that schools play in the day to day life of children and their families provides a unique opportunity to promote and embed resilience. Resilience based practice sits at the heart of improving outcomes for children and young people; an approach that is based on looking for strengths and opportunities to build on, rather than for issues or problems to treat.

At the same time our education vision recognises the barriers facing many disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people and includes a clear commitment to accelerating their progress and closing the gap between them and their peers.

### ***Partnership***

In April 2016, the council entered into a seven-year strategic partnership with Mott Macdonald, trading as Cambridge Education, for the provision of its education services, an arrangement that is governed in partnership with schools. Partnership with schools, between schools and between the education service and other agencies is key to the continuing success of our schools and young people.

The council is committed to maintaining an active role in working with schools to ensure the continued and growing success of education in Barnet. We recognise and welcome the growing diversity of governance models amongst our schools and the changing role of the local authority but we believe in investing in education, in championing the needs and aspirations of children and young people and in taking a strategic pro-active approach to ensuring we have sufficient school places, a high

quality educational offer in all our schools and that we and schools work together to meet the needs and promote the achievement of all pupils, including the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

The partnership with Cambridge Education aims to maintain Barnet's excellent education offer and the good relationship between the Council and schools, whilst also achieving the budget savings required by changes in local authority funding. This is a significant challenge but we have made a good start in addressing it. There was a smooth transfer of all services previously provided to schools and the council, and new governance and performance monitoring regimes have been put in place. We have also completed a number of service reviews in order to identify opportunities for service improvement, business development and efficiency savings.

### ***Financial challenges***

The education service, including schools, faces major financial challenges now and over the next few years and we will work together to find ways to make sure schools are financially sustainable and to minimise any potential negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning and outcomes for children and young people.

### ***Resilient schools***

Resilient schools will help us to build resilient communities - working together in partnership, the council and Cambridge Education will work with schools to ensure the best deal and the best outcomes for all of Barnet's children, young people and their families.

### **Ambition and aims**

Barnet is a growing borough and the quality of education plays a crucial part in making the borough a popular and desirable place to live. Our strategic vision for education in Barnet is:

*Resilient schools – resilient communities: We want Barnet to be the most successful place for high quality education where excellent school standards result in all children achieving their best, being safe and happy and able to progress to become successful adults.*

In order to achieve this, our mission is: To ensure:

- Every child attends a **good or outstanding school**, as judged by Ofsted
- The attainment and progress of children in Barnet schools is **within the top 10%** nationally
- There is accelerating progress of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils in order to **close the gap** between them and their peers.

To do this we need:

- Enough school places
- All schools to be good or outstanding
- High levels of attainment and progress in all phases

- A relentless focus on meeting the needs of vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), children looked after, children in need and children eligible for free school meals.

## **Strategic goals**

To deliver this, we need to pursue a number of strategic goals around the key themes of access, inclusion and achievement:

- **Strategic goal 1 - Access**  
To ensure there are sufficient high-quality school places to meet the needs of Barnet residents, including local specialist provision when required for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and that school organisation and governance arrangements are financially sustainable.
- **Strategic goal 2 - Inclusion**  
To ensure the provision of high quality local placements and support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged from 3 to 25.
- **Strategic goal 3 – Achievement - School Improvement**  
To ensure that every school is good or outstanding.
- **Strategic goal 4 – Achievement - Educational outcomes**  
To improve the educational progress and outcomes for all children and young people across all phases and types of institution from early years to post-16, including progress into Higher Education, Apprenticeships or employment.
- **Strategic goal 5 – Achievement and Inclusion - Closing the gap and building resilience**  
To close the gap in attainment and progress between the most disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils and their peers by accelerating their progress and building resilience.

## **Key drivers – how will we seek to achieve these strategic goals**

Detailed plans will be set out in separate strategies for school places, SEN and school improvement but some of the key drivers for achieving these goals are:

### **Access**

- Partnership working with schools to identify the best locations for school expansions and bulge classes
- Close liaison with the Department for Education (DfE), the Education and Skills Funding Agency (EFSA), the Regional Schools Commissioner and potential sponsors of Free Schools to secure additional Free Schools where they are needed and when they are needed
- Partnership with schools, including Special Schools and Pupil Referral Units, and with post-16 providers to ensure we can offer high quality local specialist places

to children and young people with SEND who need them and to those in need of Alternative Provision

- Keeping the financial sustainability of schools and groups of schools under review and working in partnership with schools to identify possible new school organisation or governance models, where needed to ensure ongoing financial resilience.

### **Inclusion**

- Increased focus on the quality of Education, Health and Care Plans with greater co-production with schools, parents and children and young people.
- Improvements in the consistency and quality of SEN Support Plans.
- Improvements in the integration of processes across education, social care and health.
- Improved tracking and planning for post-16 young people with SEN and an earlier focus on preparation for adulthood.
- A focus on building resilience in children and young people with SEND and those in Alternative Provisions and their families.
- Continuing to identify those at risk of becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and supporting them to make a successful transition.

### **Achievement**

- Maintaining a core Learning Network Inspector (LNI) service to monitor and challenge, and, where necessary, intervene in, maintained schools, whilst keeping in touch with Academies. If necessary, LNI support services will be offered as a traded service to schools.
- The continuing development of quality traded services in order to support school improvement.
- Building on the work of School Improvement Partnerships and Teaching Schools.
- Working with schools on strategies for recruiting and retaining the best teachers and headteachers. This includes supporting governing bodies with the recruitment of new headteachers/principals and supporting headteachers with the recruitment of deputy headteachers/vice principals.
- Focus on good leadership and governance
- Active promotion of good behaviour and good safeguarding practices
- A strong focus on improving attendance, especially in Primary schools
- Collaboration between the council's Early Years Standards Team, Cambridge Education, schools and settings to ensure high quality early years provision in all of our settings and effective transition.
- Continued intervention to support young people at risk of being Not in Employment, Education or Training and work with providers to ensure suitable progression pathways including high quality technical and vocational provision.

### **Governance**

The implementation of this strategy will be overseen by the Barnet with Cambridge Education Strategic Partnership Board (SPB), which consists of representatives from the council, Cambridge Education and schools.

Underpinning this strategy will be three sub-strategies, each overseen by a Partnership Board that reports into the SPB. The sub-strategies will set out progress to date and key objectives, actions and milestones for the year ahead and will be reviewed annually.

Each Board includes representatives of the council, Cambridge Education and schools. There are also a number of stakeholder boards feeding into the strategic planning and oversight roles of these partnership boards.

The sub-strategies, Boards and lead officers are set out in the table below:

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Board</b>	<b>Lead officer</b>	<b>Strategic goals</b>
School Places	School Organisation and Place Planning (SOPP)	Programme Director, Education and Learning and Assistant Director, Access and Corporate Services	1
SEND and Inclusion	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)	Assistant Director, SEND and Inclusion	2
School Improvement	School Standards (SSPB)	Assistant Director, School Improvement and Traded Services	3, 4 and 5

### **Performance measures and targets**

Progress towards the strategic goals and in implementing strategies will be measured against a number of performance indicators and targets. These are set out in Appendix 1, which also shows which strategic goal each performance indicator and target relates to. Some contextual issues and current performance against a number of key measures are summarised in Appendix 2. The strategic priorities agreed by each of the sub-boards and by the Strategic Partnership Board are set out in Appendix 3. These appendices will be reviewed and updated annually.

## Education Strategy – Key Performance Indicators and Targets

	Performance indicator	2016-17 (School year 2015/16)	Target for 2017-18 (School year 2016/17)	Target for 2018-19 (School year 2017/18)	Target for 2019-20 (School year 2018/19)
<b>Strategic Goal 1: Access – school places</b>					
1	Percentage of children who applied on-time for a Reception place made an offer on national offer day	100%	99.8%	99.8%	99.9%
2	Percentage of secondary children made an offer of a school place by statutory deadlines	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Strategic Goal 2: SEND and Inclusion</b>					
3	Percentage of final EHC plans issued within 20 weeks	53.5%	90%	90%	100%
4	Percentage of SEN statements transferred to EHC Plans in accordance with the council's Transition Plan	Target of 553 transfers between 1.4.16 and 31.3.17. Total transferred was 615.	100% of remaining transfers complete by 31.3.18.	N/A	N/A
5	Percentage of all EHC plans issued in the year that are judged as good or better through the internal quality assurance process	N/A	80% of all new EHCPs are quality assured and at least 60% are assessed as good	90% of all new EHCPs are quality assured and at least 70% are assessed as good.	90% of all new EHCPs are quality assured and at least 80% are assessed as good.
<b>Strategic Goal 3: Achievement – school improvement</b>					
6	Percentage of primary schools rated as 'good' or better	93%	95.5%	97.7%	100%
7	Percentage of secondary schools rated as 'good' or better	92%	95.8%	95.8%	100%

	<b>Performance indicator</b>	<b>2016-17 (School year 2015/16)</b>	<b>Target for 2017-18 (School year 2016/17)</b>	<b>Target for 2018-19 (School year 2017/18)</b>	<b>Target for 2019-20 (School year 2018/19)</b>
8	Average percentage attendance levels in Primary schools for the Autumn and Spring terms	95.9%	London average	London average	London Top Quartile
<b>Strategic Goal 4: Achievement – outcomes</b>					
9	<u>Primary attainment (KS2):</u> Percentage of primary pupils achieving the 'expected standard' in English Reading, English Writing and Mathematics (combined) at the end of Key Stage 2	59%	Top 10% in England	Top 10%	Top 10%
10	<u>Primary progress:</u> Primary pupils average progress in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English Reading</li> <li>• English Writing</li> <li>• Maths</li> </ul>	1.5 0.3 1.7	Top 10% in England	Top 10%	Top 10%
11	<u>Secondary attainment and progress (GCSEs):</u> a) Average Attainment 8 Score b) Average Progress 8 Score c) Percentage of pupils achieving the threshold in English and mathematics (In 2016, the threshold is grade C, in 2017 the threshold is grade 5) d) Percentage of pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate	a) 56.1% b) 0.33% c) 73.1% d) 43.7%	Top 10% in England	Top 10%	Top 10%

	Performance indicator	2016-17 (School year 2015/16)	Target for 2017-18 (School year 2016/17)	Target for 2018-19 (School year 2017/18)	Target for 2019-20 (School year 2018/19)
<b>Strategic Goal 5: Achievement – closing the gap</b>					
12	<p><u>Narrowing the Primary FSM (disadvantaged) gap and FSM (disadvantaged) attainment:</u></p> <p>a) % of disadvantaged pupils (this includes Free School Meal 6 and Children Looked After pupils) achieving the 'expected standard' in English Reading, English Writing and Mathematics (combined) at the end of Key Stage 2</p> <p>b): Difference between attainment level of disadvantaged pupils (this includes FSM 6 and Children Looked After pupils) and their peers nationally ('expected standard' in RWM combined) at the end of Key Stage 2</p>	<p>a) 46%</p> <p>b) -15 percentage points</p>	Top 10% in England	Top 10%	Top 10%

	<b>Performance indicator</b>	<b>2016-17 (School year 2015/16)</b>	<b>Target for 2017-18 (School year 2016/17)</b>	<b>Target for 2018-19 (School year 2017/18)</b>	<b>Target for 2019-20 (School year 2018/19)</b>
13	<p><u>Secondary FSM attainment and achievement and narrowing the gaps:</u></p> <p>a) Average Attainment 8 Score for pupils eligible for FSM in the past 6 years (disadvantaged pupils)</p> <p>b) Average Progress 8 Score for pupils eligible for FSM in the past 6 years (disadvantaged pupils)</p> <p>c) Attainment gap between pupils eligible for FSM (disadvantaged) and other pupils nationally (Average Attainment 8 Score for pupils on FSM in Barnet - Average Attainment 8 Score for pupils not disadvantaged nationally)</p> <p>d) Achievement gap between pupils eligible for FSM (disadvantaged) and other pupils nationally (Average Progress 8 Score for pupils on FSM - Average Progress 8 Score for pupils not disadvantaged nationally)</p>	<p>a) 47.1%</p> <p>b) 0.06</p> <p>c) -6.4</p> <p>d) -0.04</p>	Top 10% in England	Top 10%	Top 10%
14	<p><u>Progress and attainment of looked after children at KS4:</u></p> <p>a) Average Attainment 8 score of looked after children</p> <p>b) Average Progress 8 score of looked after children</p> <p>c) KS2 performance (expected standards in RWM)</p>	<p>a) 19.5%</p> <p>b) -1.66</p> <p>c) 45.5%</p>	National average	5 percentage points above National Average	10 percentage points above National Average

	<b>Performance indicator</b>	<b>2016-17 (School year 2015/16)</b>	<b>Target for 2017-18 (School year 2016/17)</b>	<b>Target for 2018-19 (School year 2017/18)</b>	<b>Target for 2019-20 (School year 2018/19)</b>
15	<p><u>Attainment and progress of SEND pupils with a statement or EHCP:</u> The percentage of SEND pupils with a statement or EHCP:</p> <p>a) Attaining the 'expected standard' in English Reading, English Writing and Mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2</p> <p>b) Average attainment 8 score pupils with a statement of SEN or EHCP</p> <p>c) Average progress 8 score pupils with a statement of SEN or EHCP</p>	<p>a) 10%</p> <p>b) 23.2</p> <p>c) -0.72</p>	Top 10% in England	Top 10%	Top 10%
16	<p><u>NEETS:</u></p> <p>a) % not in education, employment or training (16 to 18 year olds)</p> <p>b) % combined percentage of 16 to 18 year olds who are NEET and those whose current activity is not known to the LA</p>	<p>a) 1.8%</p> <p>b) 3%</p>	London top quartile	London top quartile	London top quartile

### Current performance and context

#### School standards

- 94.6% of pupils in Barnet primary and secondary schools attended a good or outstanding school, compared to a London average of 92%.(September 2016)
- 95.4% of Barnet primary schools are good or better. At secondary school level, including all-through schools, 91.7% of schools are good or better (September 2016).

#### Attainment and achievement

- In 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving a Good Level of Development by the end of Reception in Barnet is in line with the national average.
- Key stage 1 relative attainment has historically been within the top 15% nationally but relative attainment in 2016 is outside of this boundary for all KS1 subjects.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in Reading, Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling and Maths is ranked within the top 25% of LAs nationally, above the national average and statistical neighbour average (2016). The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in Writing is in the lowest quartile nationally.
- At the end of Key Stage 4 in 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving an A\*-C in English and Maths is consistently in the top 10% nationally. Highlights for 2016 are: the proportion of pupils achieving the English baccalaureate ranked 3rd nationally, the average attainment 8 score ranked 5th and the average progress 8 score ranked 4<sup>th</sup>.

#### Closing the gap

- Within this performance, some groups of pupils perform consistently below their peers at both key stages although there is evidence that for some groups this gap is closing.
- Children with special educational needs continue to perform well in Barnet and proportionally, more pupils with SEND are educated in mainstream schools than nationally. Implementing the national SEND reforms has been challenging and has required additional resource and effective local leadership and management.
- Improving outcomes for children who are looked after remains stubbornly challenging, an experience shared with many other local authority areas. We are increasingly focussing on all children in need.

#### Post-16

- In 2016, the proportion of pupils gaining A levels (% AAA+ grades, AAB+ grades and AAB+ grades with two facilitating subjects) is ranked 7th nationally.
- The generally accepted threshold to Level 3 studies at GCSE was not reached by just over 32% of learners in 2016. It is recognised that the majority of Barnet secondary schools offer an academically focussed curriculum and that young

people need to be well supported to make appropriate choices of alternative options post 16.

- The recent changes to A level provision and the move to a linear model has already led to an increase in the applied general offer in schools.
- The increased emphasis on apprenticeships and the introduction of the apprenticeship levy offer a new range of opportunities for young people in Barnet. Currently the 16 and 17 year old participation in Apprenticeships in Barnet is 1.1%, the lowest in London, so it is important for the council, schools and other partners to work together to raise awareness of opportunities.
- In 2016 the average progress scores for English and Maths (from GCSE to A Level/Level 3) demonstrated that overall, pupils in Barnet made less progress than similar pupils nationally for both English and Maths.
- Overall, the number of Barnet young people who are not engaged in education, employment or training is low.

### **Attendance and exclusions**

- Whilst secondary attendance compares well, primary attendance is below our expectations; ranked in the 3rd quartile nationally
- Over the last five years, there have been on average 44 permanent exclusions each academic year at the secondary level. In 2015/16, there was a decrease in the number of permanent exclusions to 36. No primary pupils have been excluded.

### **School places**

- Over 8,000 new school places have been provided since 2009 that has ensured, so far, that every child has had a school place. The majority of these places have been in the primary phase and as these children move through to the secondary phase, new secondary places will be required.
- Within this growth, the number of children with SEND is projected to grow requiring new specialist provision.

### **Delivery through partnership**

Whilst the role of local authorities in education is changing nationally, Barnet is determined to continue to champion the quality of education for its children and young people, working in partnership with all local education providers, parents and key partners.

Some of the key recent partnership developments include:

- New school improvement partnerships, bringing together the increasingly diverse range of education providers across primary and secondary phase is helping to ensure that best practice, resources and responsibility for the quality of teaching and learning in schools is shared across the partnership. As a result, schools are increasingly taking the lead to support and challenge each other to drive improvement.
- A new Multi-Academy Trust is being formed in partnership with schools and other providers, to develop and improve the alternative education offer in Barnet and provision for young people with social, emotional and mental health needs,

bringing together existing provision at Oak Hill, Northgate and the Pavilion PRU that can be commissioned to respond to the needs of Barnet's schools and to offer appropriate post-16 pathways.

- Schools have supported the development of a data analysis tool to identify early those pupils at most risk of not engaging with education, employment or training (NEET) when they leave school. This has enabled the delivery of targeted programmes and individualised support to help this cohort to remain engaged. Barnet and Southgate College has now agreed to develop a college Risk of NEET Indicator, the first in the country for a Further Education provider.
- Successful Free School applications have resulted in three new secondary schools approved to open by the Regional Schools Commissioner to meet Barnet's need for school places. A detailed mapping and analysis of the future needs of pupils with SEND supported the successful free school application by Oak Lodge Special School to open a new all-through Special Free School for children with autism.
- A thriving partnership between education, social care, the health service, parents' groups and young people to review and support improvement in provision for children and young people with SEND and a comprehensive review of all local authority education services and surveys of key stakeholders' views and requirements undertaken by Cambridge Education, leading to significant improvements in services for children with SEND.
- A Virtual School, supported by a Challenge Committee drawing on representation from schools and a range of partner agencies, to promote and support the progress and attainment of looked after children.
- Closer collaboration between the Education and Skills service and Teaching Schools both within and outside Barnet to support teacher recruitment and school improvement.

## Priorities for 2017/18

### School Places – strategic priorities

1. Ensure sufficient early years places are available across the borough including sufficient childcare places providing 30 hours free entitlement
2. Support the establishment of free schools to meet basic need at the primary and secondary level (Ark Pioneer, the Saracen's High School Trust and The Compton (Cricklewood)).
3. Identify appropriate locations for the further expansion of between one and three existing primary schools where admissions data indicates that the need is greatest
4. Ensure the successful delivery of expansions at St James and St Mary's and St John's
5. Support the establishment of The Windmill free school to meet the needs of children with SEN and the development of new ASC provision in primary and secondary phases (including Cromer Road)
6. To deliver the spectrum of support for alternative provision through the AP MAT, including the rebuilding of the Pavilion PRU, the establishment of Oak Hill as a special Academy and the development of appropriate post-16 pathways.
7. Keep the financial sustainability of schools and groups of schools under review and work in partnership with schools to identify possible new school organisation or governance models, where needed to ensure ongoing financial resilience.

The council, schools and other partners working together to create post 16 pathways through traineeships and other pre apprenticeship programmes as a route into apprenticeships.

### SEND and Inclusion – strategic priorities

Four major priorities themes are driving the current improvement programme:

1. Performance in Completion of EHCPs, Transition Plan and Annual Reviews
  - Completing new EHCP assessment in 20 weeks (previously 26 weeks)
  - Conversion of the remaining Statements into EHCPs over the next year (estimated number between 600 and 700)
2. Participation and Co-production
  - To ensure engagement with stakeholders in SEN processes and decision-making.
3. Joint Working
  - To ensure effective working across partner agencies in order to deliver high quality integrated services to children and young people with SEND.

#### 4. Strategic Planning and Provision

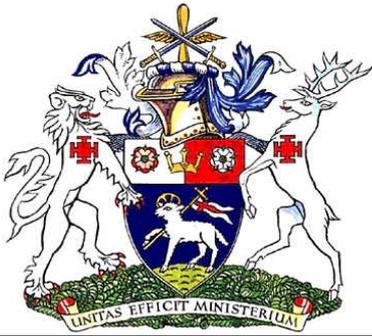
- To ensure sufficient specialist places provided locally to meet current and future needs.
- To develop work based opportunities through supported internships and similar initiatives to maximise work outcomes for those with EHCPs

#### **School improvement – strategic priorities**

Priorities agreed by SSPB for 2017/18:

1. Good and Outstanding Schools: Although Barnet now has more good and outstanding schools than it has had for some years there is always the risk that some schools will be judged to require improvement when they are inspected.
2. Primary Attendance: despite some slight improvement, this remains a focus
3. Early Years: Barnet's national ranking has fallen over the past 3 years from 21st in 2014 to 87th in 2016, as other LAs have gradually caught up with Barnet.
4. Key Stage 1 Maths - KS1 relative attainment (ranking) has historically been within the top 15% of LAs (under the previous framework) but relative attainment in 2016 is outside of this boundary for all KS1 subjects. Maths is ranked the lowest (55th) for the proportion of pupils achieving at least the expected standard.
5. KS2 Writing - Attainment is below the national average and Barnet's School Improvement Team are exploring systemic issues with the implementation of the new assessment framework.
6. Achievement of Disadvantaged Pupils - This remains a priority for improvement to eliminate differences in the performance of groups of pupils.
7. Looked After Children - Although there is no confirmed data available on the performance of looked after children in 2016, results collected from schools indicates the performance of this group of young people remains significantly below that of non-looked after children.
8. Transition - Transition between all Key Stages and at 16+ was identified as a priority by the School Standards Partnership Board.
9. Recruitment - Recruiting and retaining good quality teachers and school leaders is a challenge for schools across Barnet, as in other LAs. The Recruitment and Retention Working party is working to address these challenges.
10. Progress and Progression Pathways of low attaining pupils across all key stages.

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	AGENDA ITEM 9
	<p><b>Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee</b></p> <p><b>18<sup>th</sup> July 2017</b></p>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Annual report on the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee commissioning plan and outcome measures</b>
<b>Report of</b>	Strategic Director of Children and Young People
<b>Wards</b>	All
<b>Status</b>	Public
<b>Urgent</b>	No
<b>Key</b>	No
<b>Enclosures</b>	Appendix A: Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee Commissioning Plan – Annual Performance Report 2016/17
<b>Officer Contact Details</b>	Chris Munday – Strategic Director of Children and Young People <a href="mailto:Chris.munday@barnet.gov.uk">Chris.munday@barnet.gov.uk</a> 0208 359 7099

### Summary

This report gives an overview of performance relating to the committee’s remit over the last year. It details progress against the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee’s commissioning intentions and performance from the addendum, agreed by the Committee on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2016, to the Commissioning Plan 2015 - 2020.

### Recommendations

- 1. That the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee note the performance in 2016/17 in delivering the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee Commissioning Plan.**

## 1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 At its meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2016, the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee approved an addendum to its Commissioning Plan 2015-2020 setting out its priorities and targets for the year 2016/17. This report sets out the performance achieved in 16/17 and updates the committee on progress in delivering these commissioning intentions, set out in Appendix A.

### **Safeguarding**

- 1.2 The implementation of the Family Services Practice Improvement Plan (PIP) was our key priority over 2016/17 to ensure effective safeguarding of the borough's vulnerable children and young people. This plan was overseen by the Social Work Improvement Board, chaired by the Chief Executive and attended by the Strategic Director of Children and Young People, senior leaders from HR and IT and Barnet's Practice Improvement Partner, Essex County Council.

- 1.3 All 56 actions in the Practice Improvement Plan have been delivered or are on track to be delivered and there is evidence of achievement within the ten conditions of success. These include;

- Clear overarching partnership vision of Family Friendly Barnet with 98% of staff surveyed in January knowing the model of resilience
- A more stable workforce, with a lower turnover rate from 39% (30 Sept 2015) to 12.76% (March 2017) which reflects the focus on the recruitment, development and retention of social workers and social work managers in frontline practice
- Social workers with a manageable workload which is regularly reviewed - reduction in caseloads from 37.5 in Duty Assessment Teams (DAT) and 18.7 in Intervention and Placement teams (I&P) (January 2016) to 12.7 in DATs and 14.6 in I&P (April 2017)
- Social care teams small enough to allow team managers to know both staff and families well - reduction in ratio of managers to social workers from 1:13 in April 2016 to 1:6 in April 2017

- 1.4 However although there is emerging evidence of practice improvement this is not sufficiently consistent or embedded. The focus of the improvement programme in 17/18 is improving the quality and consistency of core social work practice.

### **Building resilience**

- 1.5 The Resilient Futures project has looked to safely reduce the rate of children in care through targeted and specialist interventions to support adolescents on the edge of care. A number of recommendations were made and implemented. This included new Children's Wellbeing workers within the Family Resilience Team and a new REACH team which provides services for adolescents at the edge of care, especially young people at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation, gang-involvement and who go missing from home. The implementation of further recommendations will continue in 17/18.

- 1.6 There have been developments in building resilience in children, young people, families, and communities by putting the voice of young people at the heart of what we do. In late 2016, Barnet became a UNICEF Child Rights Partner in recognition of progress on the participation agenda. Aimed at helping making Barnet a place where all children, including the most vulnerable, feel safe, heard and nurtured, this partnership will be a key tenet of our plans to make Barnet the most Family Friendly borough in the capital by 2020. Barnet's Corporate Parenting Pledge was also implemented in May 2016. Impact has shown strengths in positive educational progress at Key Stages 1 and 2, children are likely to be placed near to family and there is regular contact with social workers. Improvements are needed in boosting post 16 participation rates and increasing the take up rate of 'Staying Put' arrangements.

#### **Quality of social work practice**

- 1.7 A successful options appraisal of social work tools and frameworks was undertaken and Signs of Safety was identified as a tool that would enable resilience based practice. Training commenced in November 2016, and to date the majority of family services staff, senior managers and BSCB partners have received the two-day training. Workshops for Practice Leaders have also commenced.
- 1.8 In addition to this, systemic training has also commenced for leaders to develop the resilience-based model of practice, and a series of internal workshops took place in early 2017 to support purposeful practice, identified through our assurance activity.

#### **Education**

- 1.9 Education services successfully transitioned to Cambridge Education on the 1st April 2016. Governance arrangements involving headteacher representatives have been put in place to steer and oversee the strategic partnership. Cambridge Education has developed its traded service offer to schools, re-shaping the offer in response to feedback from schools and the strategic partnership delivered the anticipated level of savings in 2016/17.
- 1.10 A new Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) has been established, led and governed by Barnet schools to bring together Barnet's alternative provision offer. Oak Hill provision, previously part of Mill Hill County High, was established as a special Academy in May 2017 and is the first school in the new MAT. The MAT will lead on the further development of the spectrum of support available to Barnet pupils including exploring the potential of virtual classroom learning and reviewing arrangements for primary aged pupils. Plans for the rebuilding of the Pavilion Pupil Referral Unit are progressing, a project that is being delivered on behalf of the Department for Education as part of its capital investment programme to improve the condition of school buildings.
- 1.11 During the year, significant improvements were delivered by Cambridge Education in relation to services for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is illustrated by the increase in timeliness in completing Education, Health and Care plans (including exceptions) from 16.85% in 2015/16 to 53.5% in 2016/17. This

improvement is projected to continue and is on track to achieve the target of 90% in 2017/18.

- 1.12 The Committee will be receiving its annual report on school places at its meeting in September 2017. For this report, the headline success is that all children who require a school place have been provided one, an achievement of close partnership working with headteachers and governors.

### **Libraries**

- 1.13 The new library at Colindale opened in September 2016 and work on the new library at Gateway House has progressed throughout the year, scheduled to open towards the end of summer 2017.
- 1.14 Consultation on proposals to re-locate East Barnet library were undertaken during Autumn 2016 and a decision to co-locate the library with the new planned leisure centre in Victoria Park was taken by the council's Policy and Resources Committee in January 2017.
- 1.15 Four Partnership libraries successfully established, ready to open their doors on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017. NW7 Hub are operating Mill Hill library, Kisharon are operating Child's Hill library and Inclusion Barnet are operating East Barnet and South Friern.
- 1.16 Work to reconfigure the buildings and install the self-service opening technology was started during the year and will continue at some sites through summer 2017/18. As each site re-opens, staff are on hand to register people to use self-service opening and to explain how the new arrangement works. By end of May 2017, over 7,000 residents had registered to use self-service opening.
- 1.17 During the year, the library staffing establishment was restructured and the number of posts were reduced ahead of the implementation of the new library offer in the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017.

## **2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

Theme committees review performance against their commissioning priorities on an annual basis. The commissioning plan sets out the council's strategy for delivery quality services and enabling good outcomes for residents whilst addressing budget and demand pressures.

## **3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED**

There is no statutory duty to publish Committee Commissioning Plans but it is considered to be good practice to have comprehensive business plans in place for each Committee – which set out priorities and how progress will be measured – to ensure that the council's vision for the future is clearly set out and transparent.

## **4 POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION**

Work to implement the Commissioning Plan and respond to performance challenges will continue.

## **5 IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION**

### **5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance**

The Commissioning Plan reflects the priorities contained within the corporate plan and Barnet's Children and Young People Plan.

### **5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

5.2.1 In addition to continuing budget reductions, demographic change and the resulting pressure on services pose a significant challenge to the council. The organisation is facing significant budget reductions at the same time as the population is increasing, particularly in the young and very old population groups.

5.2.2 The Commissioning Plan has been informed by the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, which sets out the need to make savings by 2020.

### **5.3 Social Value**

5.3.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. Before commencing a procurement process, commissioners should think about whether the services they are going to buy, or the way they are going to buy them, could secure these benefits for their area or stakeholders.

### **5.4 Legal and Constitutional References**

5.4.1 All proposals must be considered in terms of the council's legal powers and obligations, including its overarching statutory duties such as the Public Sector Equality Duty.

5.4.2 The Council's Constitution, in Part 15 Annex A, Responsibility for Functions, states the functions of the Adults and Safeguarding Committee, including: To receive reports on relevant performance information on Delivery Units providing services under the remit of the Committee.

### **5.5 Risk Management**

5.5.1 The council has an established approach to risk management. Key corporate risks are assessed regularly and reported to Performance and Contract Management Committee on a quarterly basis.

## **5.6 Equalities and Diversity**

- 5.6.1 The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
  - advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
  - foster good relations between people from different groups

## **5.7 Consultation and Engagement**

The Corporate Plan and Commissioning Plans were informed by extensive consultation through the Budget and Business Planning process. The consultation aimed to set a new approach to business planning and engagement by consulting on the combined package of the Corporate Plan, Commissioning Plans, and budget. Consultation on the Council's plans for 2016/17 was undertaken following the decision by Policy and Resources Committee to proceed to consultation on the 2016/17 Budget, on 16 December 2015.

## **6 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee 23rd March 2016  
*Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Commissioning Plan  
2016/17 addendum*

<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=697&MIId=8261&Ver=4>

## Appendix A: CELS Committee Commissioning Plan - Annual Performance Report 2016/17

The tables below provide an update on the CELS Committee Commissioning Plan for 2016/17 against each of the Commissioning Priorities:

- **SAFEGUARDING** - When children are at risk, by intervening early, the council will improve outcomes for children, young people and families, enabling them to thrive
- **BUILDING RESILIENCE** – In children, young people, families, and communities
- **QUALITY SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE** - Developing national models of good social work practice
- **EDUCATION** - Excellent school standards result in all children achieving their best, being safe and happy and able to progress to become successful adults
- **LIBRARIES** - Children and adults benefit from reading, learning opportunities and easy access to the wider world of knowledge and information; and community groups are able to access community spaces and resources.

SAFEGUARDING			
Commissioning Intention	RAG	Commentary	Service
Effective safeguarding of the borough's vulnerable children and young people	RED	<p>The implementation of the Family Services Practice Improvement Plan (PIP) was our key priority over 2016/17 to ensure effective safeguarding of the borough's vulnerable children and young people. This plan was overseen by the Social Work Improvement Board, chaired by the Chief Executive and attended by the DCS, senior leaders from HR and IT and Barnet's Practice Improvement Partner, Essex County Council.</p> <p>Activity for this commissioning intention is on track as all 56 actions in the PIP have been delivered or are on track to be delivered. However although there is emerging evidence of practice improvement this is not sufficiently consistent or embedded. The focus of the improvement programme in 17/18 is improving the quality and consistency of core social work practice.</p>	Family Services

Ref	Indicator	Polarity	Period Covered	2016/17 Target	2016/17 Result	2015/16 Result	DOT Long Term (From 2015/16)	Benchmarking
CPI FS/S6	Percentage of children in London Borough of Barnet foster care	Bigger is Better	As at 31 March 2017	42.5%	44.0% (G)	43.5%	Improving	No benchmark available

Ref		Indicator	Polarity	Period Covered	2016/17 Target	2016/17 Result	2015/16 Result	DOT Long Term (From 2015/16)	Benchmarking
CPI	FS/S4	Number of referrals to social care (per 10,000 of the under-18 population)	Monitor	As at 31 March 2017	Monitor	345	396	Monitor	England: 548.3 London: 477.9 Statistical Neighbours: 467.48 (2014/15, LAIT)
CPI	FS/S16	Number of children in care per 10,000	Monitor	As at 31 March 2017	Monitor	39.8	New	Monitor	England: 60.0 London: 52 Statistical Neighbours: 43.1 (2014/15, LAIT)
CPI	FS/S5	Number of children adopted	Bigger is Better	Apr 2016 - Mar 2017	10	8 (GA)	12	Worsening	No benchmark available
8 adoption orders have been granted in 2016/17, which is a drop from 12 last year. However, 12 children are currently placed for adoption with orders anticipated.									
SPI	FS/S12	Number of new Common Assessment Frameworks opened in quarter	Bigger is Better	Apr 2016 - Mar 2017	448	1212 (G)	908	Improving	No benchmark available
SPI	FS/C14 (Annual)	Number of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10 to 17 (per 10,000 of the population).	Smaller is Better	Oct 15 - Sep 16	326	226 (G)	281	Improving	National: 334 London: 395 (2016, YJB 86)

## BUILDING RESILIENCE

Commissioning Intention	RAG	Commentary	Service
When children are at risk, by intervening early, the council will improve outcomes for children, young people and families, enabling them to thrive, ensuring needs are met through appropriate interventions that prevent them from escalating	Green	Resilient Futures is a demand management project within the Family Services 2020 programme. In the initial stage of the project data analysis was undertaken and a range of demand-management programmes were evaluated. A number of recommendations were made and implemented. This included new Children's Wellbeing workers within the Family Resilience Team and a new REACH team which provides services for adolescents at the edge of care, especially young people at risk of CSE, gang-involvement and who go missing from home. The implementation of further recommendations as part of the Resilient Futures project will continue in 17/18.	Family Services

Increase the size and effectiveness of in-house foster care service, helping a greater number of children and young people to move to foster care placements	<b>Amber</b>	In 2016/17 7 families were approved as foster carers. A policy was also developed whereby loans and grants are made available for foster carers to extend their homes to provide additional placements for the most difficult-to-place children including teenagers, children with disabilities and siblings. Funding has been agreed for a minimum of 4 years and the initiative has been welcomed by foster carers. Barnet has also successfully launched a new therapeutic care training programme to develop and upskill approved carers interested in supporting older children with complex needs.	Family Services
Explore opportunities to develop a social work-led, not-for-profit organisation to provide some services for children and young people	<b>Green</b>	The Strategy for Change Project has investigated the potential to deliver Barnet's Family Services through a new whole-of-service delivery model. The overall objective is to identify the most appropriate model and, if there is a sufficiently strong business case for it, develop a transition pathway. Over 16/17, the Outline Business Case (OBC) for the project was developed, with the Light version finalised and reported to the SCB in March 2017. No further work is being progressed at this time.	Family Services

Ref		Indicator	Polarity	Period Covered	2016/17 Target	2016/17 Result	2015/16 Result	DOT Long Term (From 2015/16)	Benchmarking
CPI	FS/S17 (Annual)	Percentage of young people in care who know about the Corporate Parenting Pledge	Bigger is Better	Apr 2016 - Mar 2017	Monitor	Not available	New for 2016/17	New for 2016/17	No benchmark available
The framework to record this indicator has not been fully implemented therefore an annual result cannot be returned. Plans are in place to begin recording in 2017/18.									
CPI	FS/S8	Percentage of the target groups that are registered with the children centre within the area it serves	Bigger is Better	As at 31 March 2017	65%	86% (G)	76%	Improving	65%+ of Deprived Children 0-5 should be known to be deemed as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' (April 2014, Ofsted)
CPI	FS/S15	Percentage of care leavers age 19 – 21 in education, employment or training	Bigger is Better	As at 31 March 2017	55% Above our statistical neighbours	59.8% (G)	55.0%	Improving	Statistical Neighbours: 51.8% London: 53% England: 48% (2014/15, LAIT)
CPI	FS/S18	Proportion of care leavers age 19 – 21 in suitable accommodation	Bigger is Better	As at 31 March 2017	90%	98% (G)	95.9%	Improving	Statistical Neighbours: 79.8% London: 83% England: 81% (2014/15, LAIT)

Ref		Indicator	Polarity	Period Covered	2016/17 Target	2016/17 Result	2015/16 Result	DOT Long Term (From 2015/16)	Benchmarking
SPI	FS/C16	Percentage of families with children under 5 within the borough are registered and accessing services at children's centres	Bigger is Better	As at 31 March 2017	80%	82.7% (G)	83.5%	Worsening	No benchmark available
SPI	FS/C15	Young offenders in education, training or employment	Bigger is Better	As at 31 March 2017	66% (Above London and National Averages)	79% (G)	75%	Improving	No benchmark available

QUALITY OF SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE			
Commissioning Intention	RAG	Commentary	Service
Put hearing the voice of the child at the heart of what we do, including through implementing the newly developed corporate parenting pledge	Green	<p>Over 16/17 there have been a number of developments to put hearing the voice of the child at the heart of what we do. In late 2016, Barnet became a UNICEF Child Rights Partner in recognition of progress on the participation agenda.</p> <p>A young people's survey was undertaken alongside the Resident's Perception Survey. Findings are being used to influence future service delivery - including the 0-19 and CAMHS review which also had a separate consultation programme with children and young people.</p> <p>The embedding of Signs of Safety, which includes tools to support child-focused practice, has strengthened the voice of the child. Audit findings demonstrate an improvement in capturing the child's wishes and feelings on file. LAC involvement in reviews has been high (93-98% participation rate) over the past year.</p> <p>There has been an increase in participation, quality and reach for the Children in Care Council (named #BOP).</p> <p>The Corporate Parenting Pledge was implemented and monitored by the Voice of the Child Strategy Group. Feedback from young people was also gathered through the biannual survey of children in care.</p>	Family Services

Work with social workers to consider the options to implement models of good practice, such as Signs of Safety, where they can help to achieve better outcomes	<b>Green</b>	An options appraisal of social work tools and frameworks was undertaken. The Signs of Safety model was identified as one of the tools to enable resilience based practice. Training commenced in November 2016, and to date the majority of family services staff, senior managers and BSCB partners have received the two-day training. Training for Practice Leaders has also commenced. Systemic training has also been commissioned and implemented for leaders to develop the resilience-based model of practice. A series of internal workshops took place in early 2017 to support purposeful practice, based on priorities identified through our assurance activity.	Family Services
Consider working with neighbouring authorities and across London to drive good practice and efficiencies	<b>Green</b>	The Regionalisation of Adoption programme is a London-wide project run under the Association of London Directors of Children's Services and chaired by Barnet's DCS, Chris Munday. Consultation was undertaken with relevant stakeholders, including staff, and CELS approved the continuation of working collaboratively with the LRSG with the intention of joining the new London Regional Adoption Agency when it becomes operational. Workstreams are being advanced and the project is on track to meet the Government's deadlines.	Family Services
Work with providers to deliver high quality early education places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds	<b>Green</b>	The take up of free two year old places is currently 60% with a clear strategy to improve the upwards trajectory. Barnet is in a good place to meet the anticipated demand for the expansion of 15 hours free early education for 3 and 4 year olds (including child minder places) having secured capital funds. This is underpinning the work with providers and parents to develop sufficiency for the 30 hour roll out in September 2017.	Family Services

Ref		Indicator	Polarity	Period Covered	2016/17 Target	2016/17 Result	2015/16 Result	DOT Long Term (From 2015/16)	Benchmarking
CPI	FS/S1	Number of children made subject to Child Protection Plans	Monitor	Apr 2016 - Mar 2017	Monitor	260	310	Monitor	Statistical Neighbours 265 (2014/15, CIN Census)
CPI	FS/S2	Children made subject to Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time	Smaller is Better	As at 31 March 2017	Perform in line with statistical neighbours (currently 15.6%)	14.8% (G)	12.3%	Worsening	Statistical Neighbours: 15.64% London: 13.8% England: 16.6% (2014/15, LAIT)

Ref		Indicator	Polarity	Period Covered	2016/17 Target	2016/17 Result	2015/16 Result	DOT Long Term (From 2015/16)	Benchmarking
CPI	FS/S3	Number of children subject to Child Protection Plans for two or more years	Monitor	As at 31 March 2017	Monitor	10	7	Monitor	Statistical Neighbours: 9 (2014/15, CIN Census)
CPI	FS/S7	Percentage of free entitlement early years places taken up by parents/carers that are eligible for a place	Bigger is Better	Apr 2016 - Mar 2017	63% (London average)	60% (R)	60%	Same	No benchmark available
The children's centres have hosted a range of activities across the localities and invited families of eligible two year olds to attend. However, some parents have chosen not to access early education until their child is three, others want a specific setting and prefer to be on a waiting list, and some communities do not access their entitlement. An action plan has been implemented to positively promote the two year old offer, along with plans for the increase to 30 hours for three and four year olds from September 2017									
SPI	FS/S13 (Annual)	Annual social care quality assurance report	Bigger is Better	Apr 2016 - Mar 2017	Year on year improvement	Not available	Not available	Not available	No benchmark available
SPI	FS/C17	Number of Children Missing from Care (during reporting period)	Monitor	Apr 2016 - Mar 2017	Monitor	82	New for 2016/17	New for 2016/17	No benchmark available
SPI	FS/S11	Percentage of children in external residential placements	Smaller is Better	As at 31 March 2017	9.2%	10.4% (R)	9.2%	Worsening	No benchmark available
This indicator has shown a small increase in Q4 as a result of the need to place a group of adolescent girls who were the victims of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) outside the borough to ensure their safety.									
SPI	FS/C18	Percentage of children in care with three or more placements during the last 12 months	Smaller is Better	As at 31 March 2017	10%	10.6 (GA)	New for 2016/17	New for 2016/17	Statistical Neighbours: 11.33% London: 11% England: 10% (2014/15, LAIT)
This indicator has shown a slight improvement and is performing better than London and statistical neighbours, however remains just outside the target.									
SPI	FS/C19	Number of Children in Care further than 20 miles from Borough	Monitor	As at 31 March 2017	Monitor	79	New for 2016/17	New for 2016/17	No benchmark available

EDUCATION			
Commissioning Intention	RAG	Commentary	Service
Cambridge Education will continue to provide the full range of council services currently available to support schools and families, including school improvement, school admissions, and services for children with special educational needs and will build on the strong relationship with local schools to generate income growth by selling services to more schools and other local authorities		Education services successfully transitioned to Cambridge Education on the 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2016 and the full range of service have been delivered throughout the year. Governance arrangements involving headteacher representatives have been put in place over the year to steer and oversee the strategic partnership. Cambridge Education has developed its traded service offer to schools, re-shaping the offer in response to feedback from schools and governing bodies.	Education
Partnership with Cambridge Education is guaranteed to save the council £5.4 million by 2019/20 - achieved through a mixture of efficiency measures, and income growth as a result of marketing and selling services to more schools and to other local authorities		The strategic partnership has delivered the anticipated level of savings in 2016/17	Education
The development of School Improvement Partnerships to support schools-led self-sustaining school improvement system, enabling schools to challenge and support each other and share best practice to ensure all school are good or outstanding		School Improvement Partnerships are in place for all primary schools and for those secondary Academies that are keen to participate. Detailed education performance data has been provided for each partnership to enable them to effectively challenge and support each other.	Education
Improve the range of alternative education support for children and schools		A new Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) has been established, led and governed by Barnet schools to bring together Barnet's alternative provision offer. Oak Hill provision, previously part of Mill Hill County High, was established as a special Academy in May 2017 and is the first school in the new MAT. The MAT will lead on the further development of the spectrum of support available to Barnet pupils including exploring the potential of virtual classroom learning and reviewing arrangements for primary aged pupils. Plans for the rebuilding of the Pavilion Pupil Referral Unit are progressing, a project that is being delivered on behalf of the Department for Education as part of its capital investment programme to improve the condition of school buildings.	Education

Commissioning Intention	RAG	Commentary	Service
Continue to develop appropriate education, health and care plans, where required, to better co-ordinate services around the needs of each child		Cambridge Education, on assuming responsibility for statutory services for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, implemented an improvement plan that has seen the timeliness of preparing Education, Health and Care plans improve significantly during the year. Schools and parents report that they have experienced improving services and are working closely with Cambridge Education to ensure that further service development best meets their needs.	Education
Extend close working with schools that identifies and provides early support to young people at risk of not making a successful transition into either education, employment or training to working with Barnet and Southgate college to identify and support vulnerable college leavers		Barnet and Southgate College has now adopted Barnet's approach to early identification of young people at risk of risk of NEET (not in education, employment and training) through the use of data. This work with the College and schools has continued to help the borough maintain a low proportion of NEET young people. A particularly successful project this year has been working with Public Health England to support a number of internships for vulnerable young people.	Education

Ref	Indicator	Polarity	Period Covered	2016/17 Target	2016/17 Result	2015/16 Result	DOT Long Term (From 2015/16)	Benchmarking	
CPI	CES/S13-1 (Annual)	Average attainment 8 score	Bigger is Better	Academic Year 2015/16	53.50 (Top 10% in England)	56.10 (G)	New for 2016/17	New for 2016/17	England 48.5 London 51.9 Statistical Neighbours 53 (2016, DFE)
CPI	CES/S13-2	Average Progress 8 score	Bigger is Better	Academic Year 2015/16	0.23 (Top 10% in England)	0.33 (G)	New for 2016/17	New for 2016/17	England 0 London 0.16 Statistical Neighbours 0.16 (2016, DFE)
SPI	CES/S13-3	Percentage of pupils achieving the threshold in English and mathematics at Key Stage 4	Bigger is Better	Academic Year 2015/16	70.1% (Top 10% in England)	73.1% (G)	New for 2016/17	New for 2016/17	National 59.3% London 66.4% Statistical Neighbours 68.9% (2016, DFE)

Ref		Indicator	Polarity	Period Covered	2016/17 Target	2016/17 Result	2015/16 Result	DOT Long Term (From 2015/16)	Benchmarking
SPI	CES/S13-4	Percentage of pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate	Bigger is Better	Academic Year 2015/16	34.2% (Top 10% in England)	43.7% G	New for 2016/17	New for 2016/17	National 23.1% London 31.9% Statistical Neighbours 34.4% (2016, DFE)
SPI	CES/S8	Primary pupils' average progress in English Reading	Bigger is Better	Academic Year 2015/16	Rank 13, 2016 (Improve national ranking)	1.5 (Baseline Year)	New for 2016/17	New for 2016/17	National 0 London 0.9 Statistical Neighbours 0.7 (2016, DFE)
SPI	CES/S9	Primary pupils' average progress in English Writing	Bigger is Better	Academic Year 2015/16	Rank 71, 2016 (Improve national ranking)	0.3 (Baseline Year)	New for 2016/17	New for 2016/17	National 0 London 1.1 Statistical Neighbours 0.3 (2016, DFE)
SPI	CES/S23	Primary pupils' average progress in Mathematics	Bigger is Better	Academic Year 2015/16	Rank 17, 2016 (Improve national ranking)	1.7 (Baseline Year)	New for 2016/17	New for 2016/17	National 0 London 1.5 Statistical Neighbours 1.17 (2016, DFE)
CPI	CES/S24	Percentage of primary pupils achieving the 'expected standard' in English Reading, English Writing and Mathematics (combined) at the end of Key Stage 2	Bigger is Better	Academic Year 2015/16	Rank 24, 2016 Improve national ranking	59% (Baseline Year)	New for 2016/17	New for 2016/17	England 53% London 59% Statistical Neighbours 59% (2016, DFE)
CPI	CES/S11-1	Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals in the past 6 years (FSM6) achieving the 'expected standard' in English Reading, English Writing and Mathematics (combined) at the end of Key Stage 2	Smaller is Better	Academic Year 2015-16	Rank 25, 2016 (Improve national ranking)	46% (Baseline Year)	New for 2016/17	New for 2016/17	England 39% London 49% Statistical Neighbours 44.8% (2016, DFE)

Ref		Indicator	Polarity	Period Covered	2016/17 Target	2016/17 Result	2015/16 Result	DOT Long Term (From 2015/16)	Benchmarking
SPI	CES/S1-2 (Annual)	Difference between achievement level of pupils eligible for free school meals in the past 6 years (FSM6) and their peers ('expected standard' in Reading, Writing and Maths combined)	Bigger is Better	Academic Year 2015-16	Rank 25, 2016 (Improve national ranking)	-15% (G)	New for 2016/17	New for 2016/17	National -22 London -12 (2016, DFE)
CPI	CES/S15	Average Attainment 8 score of looked after children	Bigger is Better	Academic Year 2015-16	22.8 (National Average)	19.5 (R)	New for 2016/17	New for 2016/17	England 22.8 London 23.2 Statistical Neighbours 20.85 (2016, DFE)
CPI	CES/S16	Average Progress 8 score of looked after children	Bigger is Better	Academic Year 2015-16	-1.14 (National Average)	-1.66 (R)	New for 2016/17	New for 2016/17	National -1.14 London -1.02 Statistical Neighbours -1.14 (2016, DFE)
<p>The Virtual School has prioritised specific areas of intervention to ensure rapid and sustainable improvements over time. These have included raising attendance to ensure all pupils were in school at least 96% of the time, and driving up standards in English and Maths so that pupils can access the next phase of their life in education or employment. The DfE's latest release shows attendance increased from 93.6% in 2015 to 96% in 2016 (in line with the national average for all pupils) and the proportion of pupils who achieved an A*-C grade in English and Maths rose from 14% in 2015 to 21.9% in 2016. Barnet schools have much stronger outcomes for Looked After Children with attainment 8 rising to 29.6 and progress 8 rising to -0.6 (both above the national average for looked after children and above target), out-borough schools do less well.</p>									
CPI	CES/S1	Percentage of primary schools rated as 'good' or better	Bigger is Better	As at 31 March 2017	95%	93% (GA)	93%	Same	England 90% London 93% (April 2017, Watchsted)
<p>Barnet's monitoring and challenge policy sets out how schools are supported to achieve a good or outstanding grade at their next Ofsted inspection.</p>									
CPI	CES/S3	Percentage of secondary schools rated as 'good' or better	Bigger is Better	As at 31 March 2017	92%	92% (G)	84%	Improving	England 78% London 89% (April 2017, Watchsted)

Ref		Indicator	Polarity	Period Covered	2016/17 Target	2016/17 Result	2015/16 Result	DOT Long Term (From 2015/16)	Benchmarking
CPI	CES/S25	Percentage attendance levels at primary schools	Bigger is Better	Academic Year 2015/16	95.9% (London Average)	95.9% (G)	95.9%	Same	England 96% London 96% Statistical Neighbours 96% (2016, DFE)
CPI	CES/S18-1	Percentage of 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training	Smaller is Better	As at January 2017	2.5% (London Top Quartile)	1.8% (G)	2.0%	Improving	England 2.8% London 1.8% Statistical Neighbours 2% (2016, DFE)
SPI	CES/S18-2	Combined percentage of 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training and those whose current activity is not known to the local authority	Smaller is Better	As at January 2017	7.6% (London Top Quartile)	3% (G)	4.7%	Improving	England 5.7% London 4.7% Statistical Neighbours 4.4% (2016, DFE)
SPI	CES/S21	Percentage of children who applied on – time for a Reception place made an offer on national offer day	Bigger is Better	National Offer Day (18 April) 2016	99.9%	100% (G)	100%	Same	National 99.6% London 99.1% (2016, DFE)
SPI	CES/S26	% pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan or statement of special educational needs achieving the 'expected standard' in English Reading, English writing and Mathematics at Key Stage 2	Bigger is Better	Academic Year 2015-16	11% (Top 10% in England)	10% (GA)	New for 2016/17	New for 2016/17	National 7% London 9% Statistical Neighbours 10.4% (2016,DFE)
This indicator has just fallen short of the target but is ahead of the London and national average scores									
SPI	CES/S27-1	Average attainment 8 score for pupils with pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan or statement of special educational needs	Bigger is Better	Academic Year 2015-16	21.4 (Top 10% in England)	23.2 (G)	New for 2016/17	New for 2016/17	National 17 London 18.7 Statistical Neighbours 19.3 (2016,DFE)

Ref		Indicator	Polarity	Period Covered	2016/17 Target	2016/17 Result	2015/16 Result	DOT Long Term (From 2015/16)	Benchmarking
SPI	CES/S27-2	Average progress 8 score for pupils with pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan or statement of special educational needs (new national measure)	Bigger is Better	Academic Year 2015-16	-0.68 (Top 10% in England)	-0.72 (GA)	New for 2016/17	New for 2016/17	National -1.03 London -0.87 Statistical Neighbours -0.92 (2016,DFE)

Progress is ranked 18<sup>th</sup> nationally. Barnet's school improvement and SEND team continue to work in partnership with schools to maintain high expectations.

LIBRARIES			
Commissioning Intention	RAG	Commentary	Service
Maintain the same number of libraries (14), as well as the home, mobile, schools, archive services and an extended digital service		Works on a number of libraries have been completed during 2016/17 and for others, work will continue through the summer of 2017/18. The new library at Colindale opened in September 2016 and work on the new library at Gateway House has progressed throughout the year, scheduled to open towards the end of summer 2017. Consultation on proposals to re-locate East Barnet library were undertaken during Autumn 2016 and a decision to co-locate the library with the new planned leisure centre in Victoria Park was taken by the council's Policy and Resources Committee in January 2017.	Family Services
Increase access to libraries by using new technology to extend opening hours across the service, alongside a reduction in staffed opening hours		Work to reconfigure the buildings and install the self-service opening technology was started during the year and will continue at some sites through summer 2017/18. As each site re-opens, staff are on-hand to sign people up to use SSO and to explain how the new arrangement works. By end of May 2017, over 7,000 residents had registered to use SSO.	Family Services
Harness local community support through more volunteering opportunities in libraries		Four Partnership libraries successfully opened during the first week of April. NW7 Hub are operating Mill Hill library, Kisharon are operating Child's Hill library and Inclusion Barnet are operating East Barnet and South Friern.	Family Services

Maximise income generated through better commercial and other use of library buildings		Works to re-configure libraries to release space for commercial or other use is continuing. Commercial discussions are in progress to let space as it becomes available.	Commissioning Group
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**Key:**

**Activities**

RAG Rating	Description
Green	Action on track or met
Green Amber	Action delayed, Low Impact
Red Amber	Action delayed, Medium Impact
Red	Risk of Not Delivering Or High Impact

**Indicators**

Ref	RAG Rating	Percentage of Targeted Improvement Achieved	
CPI = Corporate Plan Indicator for 2016/17	<b>Green</b>	100% or more	Target is met or exceeded
SPI = Commissioning Plan Indicator for 2016/17	<b>Green Amber</b>	>80% <100%	Target not met, but 80% or more of targeted improvement achieved
	<b>Red Amber</b>	>65% <80%	Target not met, but 65-80% of targeted improvement achieved
	<b>Red</b>	<65%	Target not met, and less than 65% of targeted improvement achieved

**London Borough of Barnet  
Children, Education, Libraries &  
Safeguarding Committee  
Forward Work Programme  
June 2017 – May 2018**

Contact: Abigail Lewis 020 8359 4369 [abigail.lewis@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:abigail.lewis@barnet.gov.uk)

Title of Report	Overview of decision	Report Of ( <i>officer</i> )	Issue Type (Non key/Key/Urgent)
18th July 2017			
Ofsted Report and Action Plan	Ofsted Report and an action plan to be agreed.	Strategic Director, Children and Young People	<b>Key</b>
Education Strategy Report		Education and Skills Director	<b>Non-key</b>
Annual Performance Report - reflecting on Commissioning Plan 2016/17	Committee to receive an Annual Performance Report - reflecting on the Commissioning Plan 2016/17.	Strategic Director, Children and Young People	<b>Non-key</b>
18th September 2017			
Ofsted Report Update	The Committee to receive an update on the Ofsted Report.	Strategic Director, Children and Young People	<b>Non-key</b>
Annual Safeguarding Board Report	Committee to consider the Annual Safeguarding Report	Strategic Director, Children and Young People	<b>Key</b>
Early Years Performance Report	Committee to receive a performance report regarding Early Years Performance.	Strategic Director, Children and Young People	<b>Non-key</b>

Title of Report	Overview of decision	Report Of ( <i>officer</i> )	Issue Type (Non key/Key/Urgent)
Social Care Performance Report	Committee to receive a performance report regarding social care.	Strategic Director, Children and Young People	<b>Non-key</b>
School Place Planning	Committee to receive an annual update on school place planning	Strategic Director, Children and Young People	<b>Non-key</b>
15th November 2017			
Arts and Culture Paper	Committee to consider a paper relating to cultural activities in the Borough.	Strategic Director, Children and Young People	<b>Non-key</b>
Update on Libraries transformation	Committee to receive an update on the libraries transformation plans.	Strategic Director, Children and Young People	<b>Non-key</b>
Ofsted Report Update		Strategic Director, Children and Young People	<b>Non-key</b>
Business Planning Report 2018/2019	Committee to consider a paper relating to Business Planning for the Committee. This will incorporate Finance Planning and a Capital Report, which both relate to the functions of the Committee.	Strategic Director, Children and Young People	<b>Key</b>

Title of Report	Overview of decision	Report Of ( <i>officer</i> )	Issue Type (Non key/Key/Urgent)
Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities Strategy	Committee to consider a strategy for meeting the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)	Strategic Director, Children and Young People	<b>Non-key</b>
School Funding Report 2018/19	Committee to consider the Annual Report from the Schools Forum.	Education and Skills Director	<b>Non-key</b>
<b>16th January 2018</b>			
Fees and Charges Report	Committee to consider above inflation Fees and Charges relating to the remit of the Committee.	Strategic Director, Children and Young People	<b>Non-key</b>
School Improvement Strategy	Committee to consider a strategy for school improvement	Strategic Director, Children and Young People	<b>Non-key</b>
<b>7th March 2018</b>			
Annual Report from the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel	Committee to consider the Annual Report from the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel.	Strategic Director, Children and Young People	<b>Non-key</b>
<b>16th May 2018</b>			
Youth Assembly 2017/2018 Cohort Report		Head of Governance	<b>Non-key</b>