

Barnet Children's Services Improvement Action Plan September 2018-September 2019

Version: Final October 2018

1. Introduction

Barnet Council and its partners are committed to the vision to be the most family friendly borough in London by 2020. At the heart of this journey is the building of resilience in children and their families enabling them to bounce back from adversity. We know that we have failed to deliver this aspiration and have let children and families down. This improvement action plan has been developed in response to these failing and 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. It builds on the achievements of the past year, and is informed by evidence collected against actions in the 2017-18 Improvement Plan, the 4 Ofsted monitoring visits throughout the year and feedback from the Department for Education.

Improving the quality of services to children is a key corporate priority we know we need to work collectively across the council to drive the improvements we want. Children in Barnet deserve the best possible services from us and we are committed to doing whatever we can to deliver great outcomes for children and young people across the borough

Most children and young people in Barnet excel, but there are a few children and young people who do not. Effective leadership and partnership is vital to delivering good and outstanding services that keep children and young people safe and give them the right help, at the right time in their lives.

Our commitment to Barnet's vulnerable children is to deliver services that give children and young people the platform to succeed and thrive. We will work closely together with focus and drive to deliver timely and effective services, achieving good outcomes for children and young people in Barnet.

To realise our ambitions for children and young people, we will not compromise:

- on the quality of staff we need to improve the experience of children who need our help
- the rigour applied or,
- on the pace needed to drive the improvements

We have three core strategic objectives that cut across our plans for children, young people and families and underpin the systemic and cultural change needed to drive improvement within the borough:

- Empowering and equipping our workforce to understand the importance and meaning of purposeful social work assessments and interventions with families
- Ensuring our involvement with the most vulnerable children in the borough positively impacts on their outcomes
- Providing effective practice leadership and management throughout the system to ensure progress is made for children within timescales that are appropriate and proportionate to their needs and that practitioners are well supported, curious and child focussed

This single plan sets out the improvement journey and gives us the focus we need to transform our services, especially social care, for our most vulnerable children, young people. We want to rapidly improve from inadequate to good we will not be deflected from that challenge..

Ofsted Recommendations

The 19 recommendations for improvement made by Ofsted are:

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.

Additionally there are five recommendations for the Barnet Safeguarding Children Board

1. Ensure that a programme of quality assurance is established to monitor the quality of frontline practice across statutory work and early help.
2. Ensure that all partner agencies and their staff are aware of thresholds for intervention.
3. Increase scrutiny and challenge of practice for privately fostered children and raise awareness of the notification process.
4. Ensure that the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding training is monitored and evaluated.
5. 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.

2. Improvement Plan

The approach taken in Barnet is to have a series of actions that sit under 6 improvement themes.

3. Themes

Improvement themes

1. Systems leadership for children
 - a. *Strengthened systems leadership for children with sufficient capacity and capability at all levels.*
 - b. *Strengthened governance arrangements that prioritise children and add value to improvements*
 - c. *Corporate support which understands the role of social workers and reflects a collective ambition for children in the borough*
2. Enhancing Practice Leadership for children
 - a. *Strengthen practice leadership through effective management oversight and increased capacity*
3. Right interventions, right time (Thresholds)
 - a. *Effective MASH*
 - b. *Proportionate, effective and timely decision making*
 - c. *Joined up Early Help*
4. Strengthening assessment for children
5. Strengthening planning for children
6. Embedding a child centred culture that improves children's lives

4. Driving Improvement

To achieve change, we must be relentless in our expectations and committed to sustaining and advancing improvements in the way we deliver services and the outcomes we bring about with children and families. We are investing in realising 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.

The change we want to see must be continually modelled, promoted and challenged when it is not evident in children's experiences of our services. 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. We will work with our collegiate improvement partner to support and challenge our approach.

5. Governance and monitoring arrangements





In responding to the inspection report Barnet has changed its improvement board arrangements. The Children's Services Improvement Board will be independently chaired by Dave Hill (DCS, Surrey), and will ultimately be responsible for the delivery of the Improvement Plan through effective scrutiny, challenge and measuring its impact. The Board is made up of the senior leaders from the Council – including Members - and its key partners to bring focus and pace to the implementation of the Improvement Plan. It will act as the primary driver of improvement.

Reports on progress of the plan will be received by:

- Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee,
- Health and Well-Being Board,
- Barnet Safeguarding Children's Board,
- Community Safety Board.

6. RAG Key

The RAG rating set out in the plan specifically monitors the delivery of the item embedded in the plan. The impact of the plan will be reported to the Improvement Board through a benefits (impact) realisation report. The RAG ratings are defined as follows:

-  Action completed
-  Action on track to be completed in timescales
-  Action unlikely to meet timescales, but plan in place to deliver
-  Action will not be delivered in timescales and no plan in place to mitigate

Theme 1: Systems Leadership for Children

What do we need to fix?

Improving the quality of services for children is a priority in the Corporate Plan, and Senior Leaders are aware of the improvements required but that these remain inconsistent.

Collective accountability, ownership, understanding and priority needs to be given to improving outcomes for children and young people in Barnet.

What do we need to change?

The collective ambition for children in Barnet is harnessed to improve outcomes.

- Senior leaders across the Council, Schools and partner organisations, as well as Councillors, know how they are contributing towards improving frontline practice and supporting better outcomes for children and families.
- Performance reporting needs to be focused on giving Members and senior leaders the right information to be able to monitor the quality of services.
- Systems in family services need to be in place to give social workers and managers the information they need to do their job effectively.
- The systems leadership and governance should create a culture of openness and transparency

What do we want to see?

A plan that is owned, understood and has contributions from leaders across the system.

- Strengthened systems leadership for children with sufficient capacity and capability at all levels
- Strengthened governance arrangements that drive improvement and add value
- Corporate support which reflects a collective ambition for children in the borough and understands the needs of the social care workforce in order to achieve this

Lead: Chris Munday

ID	Actions	Lead	Date of Delivery	RAG
Systems Leadership				
1a(i) 2a(ii), 2b(i), 2(ii), 7c(ii)	Ensure all Chief Officers, Councillors and senior leaders in the partnership understand the Improvement Plan and drive changes to support improvement within corporate directorates and strategic partnership boards and support the development of front line practice and engagement with young people	JH	March 2018	G
1a(ii) 2b(viii)	Develop new Children and Young People's Plan so that Senior leaders across the multi-agency children's system are able to demonstrate how they are strategically contributing towards improving frontline practice and supporting improved outcomes for children and families	CM	November 2018	G

ID	Actions	Lead	Date of Delivery	RAG
1a(iii) 2b(ix)	Implement the BSCP Business and Improvement plan	BT	September 2019	G
1a(iv) 5a(ii)	Monitor the impact of the tri-Borough police reorganisation on our work with child protection processes and vulnerable adolescents	SR	March 2019	G
1a(v) 6b(ii)	Implement the Virtual School Improvement Plan	HM	March 2019	G
Strengthened Governance				
1b(i) (2a(iii)(vi))	Ensure the voice of children is heard in the planning of Barnet services so that their lived experience is reflected in the commissioning and delivery of services by improving children and young people's participation in decision making	BT	Ongoing	G
1b(ii) 7a(v)	Implement Service User Engagement Strategy	BT	Ongoing	G
1b(iii) 2a(v)	Implement the UNICEF Child Rights Programme in Barnet to facilitate the child's voice being heard.	BT	Ongoing	G
1b(iv)	Implement the recommendations of the Barnet Care Quality Commission Inspection	SMc	March 2019	G
1b(v)	Develop, agree and embed the new Working Together arrangements	CM	May 2019	G
Corporate Support				
1c(i) T8	Ensure 'Conditions for Success' are embedded in Barnet	JH	January 2019	G
1c(ii) 2c(ii)	Enhance practice and case recording through a range of developments in the IT systems	YP	September 2018	G
1c(iii) 2c(iii),2a(i),T6	Improve recruitment system to be more effective and efficient enabling to support the service to ensure sufficient support to drive improvements	GL	November 2018	G
1c(iv) 2c(iv)	Systems review of finance to enable social workers to do their jobs efficiently	AD	February 2019	G

ID	Actions	Lead	Date of Delivery	RAG
1c(v) 2c(v)	Review of bureaucracy across the Council and the Service to ensure that systems are efficient and effective to support the social work task.	CS	February 2019	A

Priority 2: Enhancing Practice Leadership for Children

Priority 2: Enhancing Practice Leadership for Children

What do we need to fix?

- Oversight of practice does not yet provide sufficient guidance or direction to improve practice for children
- Management oversight and supervision is not yet consistent and rigorous to ensure effective assessment, planning, intervention and review.

What do we need to change?

- Practice Leadership improvements should be designed to increase capacity, improve performance and enhance consistency and effective decision making.
- Managers to provide effective and respectful challenge to social work practitioners, team managers and partner agencies to ensure risk is identified, responded to and managed
- Managers to work closely with practitioners to ensure practice improves and any barriers are managed without delay
- Being clear about what we mean about practice leadership across the partnership
- A focus of the Learning and Development Programme to be on practice leadership that leads to improved decision making and outcomes for children
- Performance management is clear, effective and robust
- Our resilience based approach to becomes more systemic

What do we want to see?

A support and challenge practice culture in which:

- Children benefit from professional systems that work together effectively improving their lived experience
- Children's voices are heard and influence decisions being made about them
- Decisions about children are recorded, accurately, timely and proportionate to their changing needs and risks they may face
- Decisions lead to timely interventions from appropriately skilled professionals across the partnership

Lead: Tina McElligott and Brigitte Jordaan

ID	Actions	Lead	Date of Delivery	RAG
2(i) 3a(v)	Implement performance management framework by bringing information together from case audit, practice development and performance data at all levels of the system	DS	November 2018	G
2(ii) 3a(vii)	Provide social workers with reflective supervision that is frequent, outcome focused, with clear actions and timescales that are reviewed regularly.	BJ TMcE	November 2018	G

ID	Actions	Lead	Date of Delivery	RAG
2(iii) 3a(viii), 5a(vi) 6b(i)	Drive development of expertise and knowledge to ensure evidence based practice and the confident use of theoretical models and risk assessment tools through the Workforce Development Programme	DS	January 2019	G
2(iv) T5	Support effective practice challenge from Child Protection Conference Chairs and Independent Reviewing Officers with input from Essex so that plans are appropriately scrutinised and reviewed	DS	November 2018	G
2(v)	Through recruitment activity, ensure a stable workforce in 0-25 Disabled Children's Service who are supported in developing specialist and safeguarding expertise and knowledge	SL	March 2019	G
2a(vi)	Embed the clinical service, to drive improved outcomes for children	TMc	March 2019	G
2a(vii) 3a(x)	Embed a multi-agency workforce development programme through BSCB	BT	February 2019	G
2a(viii) 3a(xi)	Through workforce development, practice development, and in partnership with the BSCP, ensure the partnership understands thresholds and what good child-centred assessments and plans look like.	DS	December 2018	G

Priority 3: Right Interventions, Right Time (Thresholds)**What do we need to fix?**

Thresholds need to be monitored and understanding of them embedded across the partnership

What do we need to change?

- Children and young people get the right help they need at the right time
- Listen to children and act upon what is heard
- Work effectively with children's families, professionals & community systems
- Involve children and families in the decisions being made about them
- Use information held and views shared by partners and key agencies effectively, to understand and inform risk analysis and decisions
- MASH partners work effectively together to share information and make decisions about risk children and young people face and the services they need to improve their outcomes

What do we want to see?

- Effective MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub)
- Effective decision making
- Joined up Early help

Lead: Tina McElligott

ID	Actions	Lead	Date of Delivery	RAG
Effective MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub)				
3a(i) 4a(v)	Ensure improved quality of communication to the MASH from referrers and response from MASH in order to promote information sharing and collaborative working.	SM	February 2019	G
3a(ii)	Improve accuracy of recording in MASH, including the recording of evidence gathered from the partnership	SM	February 2019	G
Effective decision making				
3b(i) 4b(i)	All partners are aware, understand thresholds and make good referrals with consent where appropriate	SM	December 2018	G
Joined up Early Help				
3c(i) 4c(iv)	BSCP establishes effective arrangements, including measures, to monitor and drive improvement on the impact of work undertaken on thresholds and Early Help	BT	Quarterly	G

Priority 3: Right Interventions, Right Time (Thresholds)				
3c(ii)	Implement the Early Help transformation plan	KP	March 2019	G
3c(iii)	Ensure appropriate pathways are in place to ensure the effective identification and assessment of young people at risk of FGM or honour based violence.	BT	March 2019	G
3c(iv)	Implement the Domestic Abuse Action Plan	TMc	March 2018	G

Priority 4: Strengthening Assessment for children

What do we need to fix?

Assessments do not always effectively analyse risk of harm meaning they can drift in the system and be delayed in receiving intervention. This has an adverse effect on the outcomes for children

What do we need to change?

- Children are seen, listened to and effectively helped by all professionals in contact with them; and are provided with opportunities to participate in assessments and decisions made about them
- Children are kept safe through robust assessments that lead to SMART plans that are rigorously monitored by managers
- Having a skilled workforce that can analyse what is seen and read to identify risk, make sound decisions and deliver effective interventions for children
- All assessments hold children at the center, clearly articulating what life is like for the child, detailing risks and what needs to happen to improve their circumstances, and timescales for review
- Children's records accurately reflect their circumstances, risks, plans and rationale for decisions made about them, written so that children can understand
- Swift action is taken to protect children when, by holding multi-agency strategy meetings, the information gathered by a range of source indicates an increase in risk.
- Assessments thoroughly explore and consider family history including the influence of cultural, linguistic and religious beliefs, norms and expectations
- Ensure children's views and wishes are recorded in their own words/pictures
- Young people who are homeless receive a comprehensive assessment and are appropriately supported
- Thoroughly assess connected adults /persons as early in the permanency journey as possible and within regulatory timescales

What do we want to see?

- Strengthened risk assessment
- Child focused assessment tackling drift and delay

Lead: Tina McElligott and Brigitte Jordaen

ID	Actions	Lead	Date of Delivery	RAG
4(i) 5a(i)	Make all strategy discussions compliant with " <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children – update 16 February 2017</i> " to ensure that assessment is timely and effective at managing risk	KPop	November 2018	G
4(ii) 5b(i), 5b(ii), 5b(iii)	Strengthen quality of assessments through encouraging curiosity evidencing the child's voice, consideration of diversity, a collective view of the child's needs and being more analytical	TMcE	November 2018	G

ID	Actions	Lead	Date of Delivery	RAG
4(iii) 5a(viii)	Ensure fostering and connected person assessments are tracked and delivered to a high quality	BJ	December 2018	G
4(iv) 5a(iii), 5a(iv) 5a(v)	Implement and embed the Vulnerable Adolescents strategy ensuring that children missing from care or home are robustly tracked and subject to multi agency assessment of risk, including using evidence from the Barnet Creative Safe Spaces project, return home interviews and SEAM	SM	January 2018	G

Priority 5: Strengthening Planning for Children

What do we need to fix?

Planning needs to be consistently focused on outcomes and responsive when children's circumstances change or deteriorate across all parts of the system.

What we need to change?

- Ensure that 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
- Involve children, young people and families in the development of their plans
- Evidence impact of learning and improvements in children's assessment and plans
- Social workers are equipped to undertake direct work to understand the child's lived experience, wishes and views
- The lives of children, young people and families in need of help and protection are improved by rigorous challenge at all levels through multi-agency planning and reviews of their circumstance
- Escalate interventions to ensure children and young people do not continue to live in situations that are harmful to them
- Swift action is taken when progress is not being made for children in accordance with their plan and agreed timescales
- Ensure plans are consistently reviewed and progress in agreed timescales with contingencies to address lack of progress
- Children subject to pre-proceedings process have timely interventions, leading to improved outcomes
- Children's whose outcomes are not improving are protected through timely Court proceedings to secure change and permanency for them
- Permanence arrangements become embedded
- Children who are Looked After will have a clear permanency plan by their second CLA review
- Ensure children in private fostering arrangements are safe, visited regularly and monitored through regular reviews
- Young people make successful transitions to adulthood and achieve their aspirations through having the care, support and help they need

What we want to see?

- Child centred plans
- Plans achieving best outcomes, tackling drift and delay

Lead: Tina McElligott and Brigitte Jordaan

ID	Actions	Lead	Date of Delivery	RAG
5(i) 6a(i)	Ensure all children and young people requiring social care intervention have robust child-centred plans which are timely and reviewed if not effective to mitigate against drift and delay	BJ	November 2018	A

Priority 5: Strengthening Planning for Children				
5(ii) 6a(ii)	Children and families participate in developing their plans, leading to stronger engagement in working towards the agreed goals	TMc	November 2018	G
5(iii) 6a(iv)	Ensure that children in need of protection or in care are aware of advocacy services to support planning	NH	October 2018	G
5(iv) 6a(vii)	Review pathway plans routinely to ensure young person's participation and ownership of plan.	NH	November 2018	G
5(v)	Ensure permanence for all long term fostering cases	BJ	February 2019	G
5(vi) 6a(viii)	Ensure all children in care have life story work to prepare them for independence	NH	February 2019	G
5(vii)	Develop and implement an annual assessment and planning tool for Children in Care	NH	February 2019	G
5(viii)	Ensure all children with disabilities have appropriate plans to meet their identified needs	SL	November 2018	G
5(ix) 6a(x)	Ensure that transfers between teams are conducted according to best practice and in a timely manner so that this does not contribute to drift and delay in plans	All HoS	October 2018	G
5(x) 6a(xi)	Create opportunities for review meetings to be delivered in a way that the child can most effectively participate in the planning	DS	October 2018	G
5(xi) 6b(iii)	Embed an effective and seamless process for identification of Connected Carers and tracking of assessment and approval process	NH	November 2018	G
5(xii) 6b(v)	Evaluate the Life skills project, with young people, to ensure it addresses their needs and improves their outcomes in adulthood	NH	February 2019	A
5(xiii) 6b(vii)	Develop new programmes to reduce levels of NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) care leavers to ensure they have access to employment and training opportunities	CS	April 2018	G

Priority 5: Strengthening Planning for Children				
5(xix) 6b(viii)	Tackle delays in access specialist CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) provision by ensuring children have timely access to CAMHS in line with CAMHS transformation plan	CMc	April 2018	A
5(xx)	Embed new tier 1 and 2 CAMHS arrangements for children and apply to be a trailblazer, developing mental health support teams in schools	CMc	February 2019	G
5(xxi)	Strengthen private fostering arrangements by ensuring the partnership proactively engages with awareness campaigns	BT	March 2019	A
5(xxii)	Review and embed placement sufficiency strategy	BJ	January 2018	G

Priority 6. Embedding a child centred culture that improves children's lives**What do we need to fix?**

All staff need to be fully engaged with the child centred culture and aware of the support available to them from management and senior leaders

What we need to change?

- A culture which focusses on improving the lived experience of children and young people in receipt of social care services from all service providers across the borough
- All staff, managers and leaders know the improvements required, and how to translate this into their practice
- Work across children's services and all services supporting children's services promotes a culture of honesty, escalation and improvement.
- Effective Induction ensures all staff are clear of the vision, philosophy and practice approach.
- Clear line of sight exists from Members, senior leaders through to frontline practice.
- The wider organisation and partners are well engaged in the improvement work, understand their roles within it, and actively contribute.

What we want to see?

Effective Communications and Engagement drive culture change and improvement through:

- Building connection via communication and engagement from the top to the bottom of the children's service
- Strong cross agency engagement and communication
- Strong corporate communication and engagement

Lead: Chris Munday

ID	Actions	Lead	Date of Delivery	RAG
6(i) 7a(ii)	Ensure that senior managers have regular meaningful engagement with front line staff and managers and act and communicate our child centred culture clearly and regularly in order to enhance staff morale	CM	October 2018	G
6(ii) 7a(iv)	Ensure all staff receive an effective induction	DS	October 2017	A
6(iii)	Review corporate and partnership communication activity, improving awareness of the improvement journey	JMcA	March 2019	G
6(iv)	Embed 'All About Me' across the service	CM	November 2018	G

ID	Actions	Lead	Date of Delivery	RAG
6(v)	Ensure the wellbeing of children is the highest context in all staff communications	CM	Ongoing	G
6(vi)	Ensure the 'Voice of the Child' is fed back into the LSCP	BT	February 2019	G

Appendix 1

Conditions for Success

1. Articulating values and vision

Senior managers and other leaders talking and acting as a team. They must have a shared approach and view about their intention to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable children and about the provision of social care for children and families. This includes being clear about what children's social care is seeking to achieve.

A whole systems approach to strategic planning and service delivery for children – from early help through protection to care and adoption – including:

- a) service design and delivery based on learning from experience, including feedback from service users about what works
- b) a coherent mix of interventions, available at the right time and at the right level
- c) the whole system promoting a culture of meeting need in the least intrusive and most universal way, reserving specialist services such as social care for those in the highest need
- d) an adequate resource envelope for each tier of services, based on an analysis of need that promotes targeted evidence-based interventions and prevents escalation of need/risk to the child

This whole system approach needs to be developed, agreed and owned by all statutory partners and all providers of children services.

2. A unifying use of theoretical models of evidence-based social work practice

Approaches should be used that are in line with local values and vision - such as systemic, strengths based, solution focused, motivational interviewing, and social learning approaches. Relational based approaches provide the skill base to enable social workers to help families to change, helping them to find solutions, so that the safety, development and wellbeing of their children is enhanced.

Having a unifying approach to social work across the organisation promotes good evidence informed practice, a coherent and consistent focus on the way the organisation operates and fidelity to an approach that can persist over time. This will lead to embedded cultural change and improvement that is sustainable over the long term.

3. A relentless focus on the recruitment, development and retention of social workers and social work managers in frontline practice with children and families

Clinical social work practice must be valued highly and this should be reflected in the support, qualification and career structure for social workers and their pay grades. Career progression must reflect individual performance – how learning is translated into practice and delivers better outcomes for children.

A strategy must be in place and regularly reviewed to keep good social workers in frontline practice but also, to achieve a healthy level of succession planning – growing high quality supervisors and managers from within the organisation whilst also being seen as an employer of choice by external applicants.

4. Social workers with a manageable workload which is regularly reviewed

Social workers can only work effectively with a limited number of families. Allocating more than they can manage means workers and managers formally or informally decide to prioritise some cases and give limited attention to others. Whilst there is no ideal number because manageability depends on the nature of cases and the professional capabilities of the practitioner, a range should be set beyond which an alert should be made. Controlling workload through high-quality supervision is necessary to promote effective analysis of risk and appropriate intervention. This means that social workers get involved with the most vulnerable children, so work with few cases but more intensely and decisively.

5. Social care teams small enough to allow team managers to know both staff and families well

The complexity of the families that social workers deal with requires them to receive high quality, regular, reflective and appropriately challenging supervision and for cases to have good case management oversight with careful and thoughtful decision making in respect of risk and next best steps.

6. Service design which minimises the number of changes to key worker/transfers between teams and also respects the need for some specialism across children social work teams

There needs to be clarity about the role and purpose of each team from contact and referral through to adoption, with simple rules about the management oversight of the way in which cases flow between teams. Co-location and integration or secondment of multidisciplinary professionals may be appropriate.

7. An operational culture of dialogue, reflective thinking, feedback, learning and support

The organisation needs to be proactive in respect of the risks that present in children's social work and to promote sensible approaches to growing confidence and expertise. High quality performance should be expected from all staff, and learning and accountability woven into the fabric of operating approaches. This includes having clearly understood systems, supported by the culture, of delegation in respect of decision making in respect of casework and financial management, promoting accountability and responsibility at the appropriate level right through the organisation

8. An aspirant and system-wide approach to improvement and performance

In addition to action to address specific issues identified by inspections, peer reviews, self-audits and local performance analysis, a broader and long-term approach about the total

improvement journey to 'outstanding' is needed. This should be supported by a comprehensive performance approach, with good and timely information across a range of indicators and outcomes at individual, team and service level.

A good quality case audit process will reliably look at quality of practice, the outcome for the child and family and the business processes.

9. Appropriate practical support

Such as adequate working space, good ICT systems and strong administrative support to reduce the bureaucratic burdens on social workers and social work managers.

Appendix 2

Voice of the Child

The Barnet Service User Engagement Strategy will enable us to better understand the experience of children and families who we work with. The following methods will assist us in demonstrating that the actions within the improvement plan are making a difference.

These include:

- General satisfaction feedback forms for both children and young people;
- Child Protection Conference evaluation forms for both children and young people;
- Children Looked After Review evaluation forms for both children and young people;
- Learning from complaints
- Advocacy feedback
- MOMO (Mind of My Own) app. feedback
- Social worker and team self- assessments of capturing the voice of children
- Case audits check if social workers have captured the child's lived experience as part of their assessment and planning
- Timeliness and engagement checks on visits, engagement at meetings, being seen alone

Each team will review feedback from children, young people and families and consider their team and individual development plans.

Working with #BOP, our children in care council we will identify key themes and priorities for children in care teams and the leaving care team to consider, oversee and report these through to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel.

The safeguarding youth panel will consider the themes arising from across these engagement activities and report to the safeguarding partnership for actions to be taken forward.

Appendix 3 Reporting arrangement and timescales

Reporting arrangements and timescales

The Children's Services Improvement Board, SCB and CES Committee will each receive the full data suite from the Performance & Data Quality Report, and the whole improvement plan.

The comments from the Children's Services Improvement Board will feed into the final report that is submitted to CMT following this meeting (usually the last CMT meeting of each month). The CES Committee will also receive Performance Matters as an update at each CES Committee meeting.

Family Services will submit the reports and will copy the Corporate Performance and Risk Team to ensure everyone is working from the same version.

Appendix 5: Named Officers

JH	John Hooton	Chief Executive Officer
CS	Cath Shaw	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
JMcA	Jenny McArdle	Assistant Chief Executive
CM	Chris Munday	Strategic Director of Children's Services
Cllr L	Cllr Longstaff	Lead Member
Cllr C	Cllr Cornelius	Leader
DH	Dave Hill	Director of Children's Services, Surrey County Council
TMcE	Tina McElligott	Operational Director Early Help and Children in Need of Help and Protection
BJ	Brigitte Jordaan	Operational Director Corporate Parenting, Permanence, & 0-25 disability
KP	Karen Pearson	Head of Service Early Help and Early Years
SM	Sarah Marshall	Head of Service Duty & Assessment and MASH
KPop	Karen Popely	Head of Service Duty & Assessment and Intervention & Planning
NH	Nikki Hale	Head of Service Children in Care & Permanence
SL	Sarah Lowe	Head of Service Placements, Transitions and 0-25 disability
YP	Yogita Popat	Head of Service Performance, Improvement and Inspection
DS	Donna Swanberg	Practice Development, Innovations and Programmes Manager
BT	Ben Thomas	Strategic Lead, Children and Young People's Service
GL	Nicola Roberts	HR
BW	Bryan Webb	Capita IT Director
OR	Simon Rose	Police
CMcC	Collette McCarthy	Divisional Director Commissioning
IH	Ian Harrison	Education – Director of Education and Skills
SMcG	Siobhan McGovern	Safeguarding Lead CCG
KM	Katie Mayers	Head of Communications
AD	Anisa Darr	Director of Resources (£151 Officer)
KM	Kay Matthews	Chief Operating Officer, Barnet CCG
HM	Helen Morrison	Education