	<p style="text-align: center;">CHILDREN, EDUCATION and SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">8 May 2019</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Title</p>	<p>Update report on the progress of Barnet Children's Services Improvement Action Plan and other CES Committee Priorities</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Report of</p>	<p>Chairman of the Committee, Councillor David Longstaff</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Wards</p>	<p>All</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Status</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Urgent</p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Key</p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Enclosures</p>	<p>Appendix 1: Family Services Performance Report Appendix 2: Family Friendly Barnet Update</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Officer Contact Details</p>	<p>Chris Munday Executive Director for Children and Young People Chris.Munday@barnet.gov.uk</p>

Summary

Children’s services in Barnet were judged by OFSTED to be inadequate when OFSTED undertook a Single Inspection Framework (SIF) during April and May 2017. The Council fully accepted the findings of the report and is working collectively with the partnership to drive the improvements needed to transform social care services for children, young people and their families from inadequate to good rapidly. In response to the recommendations and areas for improvement identified by OFSTED, the Barnet Children Services Improvement Action Plan was developed and a final version presented to Committee in November 2017.

The OFSTED Improvement Plan is a corporate and committee priority; this report provides an update on progress of Barnet Children's Services Improvement Action Plan to ensure scrutiny by elected members in improving the effectiveness of the local authority in protecting and caring for children and young people in need and caring for children and young people as a corporate parent. This is the ninth update report to be received by Committee and the reporting period for progress is January to March 2019. The update on progress is structured according to the six improvement themes in the action plan, and Family Services Performance Report has been included in Appendix 1.

The report also includes an end of year progress report on the annual outcomes for the CES Committee priorities:

- Ofsted improvement action plan
- Tackling gang activity
- Ensuring the attainment and progress of children in Barnet school remains in the top 10% nationally

Recommendations

- 1. That the Committee note the progress of the Barnet Children's Services Improvement Action Plan as set out in paragraphs 1.10 – 1.48.**
- 2. That the Committee note and scrutinise the performance information provided in Appendix 1.**
- 3. That the Committee note and scrutinise progress against 2018/19 corporate plan priorities, including a detailed summary of the Family Friendly Barnet progress provided in Appendix 2.**

- 1.1 Children’s services in Barnet were judged by OFSTED to be inadequate when OFSTED undertook a Single Inspection Framework (SIF) of these services in April and May 2017.
- 1.2 The Council fully accepted the findings of the report and is working collectively with the partnership to drive the improvements needed to transform social care services for children, young people and their families from inadequate to good rapidly.

- 1.3 To enhance scrutiny by elected members to support and challenge this continuous improvement, it was agreed at Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding (CELS) Committee in July 2017 that an update on the progress of implementing improvements will be a standing item on committee agendas. This is to ensure the local authority is effective in protecting children in need and caring for children and young people as a corporate parent.
- 1.4 Under the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) Framework, local authorities judged as inadequate are subject to ongoing monitoring activity from OFSTED; in Barnet, this has included an action planning visit, quarterly monitoring visits, and will also entail a full ILACS inspection after February 2019 due to satisfactory progress noted during monitoring visits.
- 1.5 Since November 2017, OFSTED have conducted six monitoring visits of Barnet Children's Services, which focussed on 'front door' services, Duty and Assessment, Intervention and Planning, Children in Care, work with vulnerable adolescents and Care Leaver services. During this period, OFSTED have found there to be a steady and strong focus on improving services and the quality of social work practice in Barnet. Although the pace of change has established improved social work practice over the last year, there is more work to do to ensure consistent quality of practice across all services.
- 1.6 A sixth monitoring visit took place on 14 and 15 February 2019, and focussed on the leaving care service, Onwards and Upwards, and young people transitioning to leaving care. OFSTED have confirmed that this was the last monitoring visit for the Local Authority. The next visit by OFSTED will be a full Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) in late Spring/early Summer 2019, which will be a reinspection of all services.

Barnet Children's Services Improvement Action Plan update on key activities

- 1.7 In September 2018, the Barnet Family Services Improvement Board was presented with a revised improvement action plan covering the year September 2018 to September 2019, and this plan was approved by the Improvement Board in October 2018. The new plan reflects the progress made during the first year, and includes emerging priorities. It reflects the rigorous focus on assessment and care planning across Family Services.
- 1.8 As with the previous version, the action plan sets out the improvement journey and gives focus to transform services, especially social care, from inadequate to good rapidly. The action plan is in line with the three core strategic objectives that cut across all 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 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, child curious and focused

1.9 The revised action plan has consolidated the previous turnaround priority and improvement themes into six overarching improvement themes:

1. Systems Leadership for Children
2. Enhancing Practice Leadership for Children
3. Right Interventions, Right Time (Thresholds)
4. Strengthening Assessment for Children
5. Strengthening Planning for Children
6. Embedding a Child Centred Culture that Improves Children's Lives

Update on progress since the last report:

1.10 This is the ninth update report to be received by Committee and the reporting period for progress is January to March 2019.

1.11 The update on progress is structured according to the six improvement themes in the action plan, in the same format as for the September 2017-18 improvement plan. Under each improvement theme there is a description of the theme and an update on key activities since the previous update report.

Priority 1: Systems Leadership for Children

1.12 This theme focuses on strengthening systems leadership for children, and reflects that collective accountability, ownership, understanding and priority need to be given to improving outcomes for children in Barnet.

1.13 The draft Children and Young People's Plan 2019-2023 was submitted to the January Committee and approved for consultation. This is scheduled to finish on 6 April 2019, after which appropriate amendments will be made before being signed off by the Strategic Director.

1.14 Formed under the Children Act (2004) Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) are currently responsible for ensuring agencies effectively work together to safeguard children. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 replaced Local Safeguarding Children Boards with new arrangements that place a shared and equal duty on the local authority, the police and the Clinical Commissioning Group to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This requirement was further reinforced by the Working Together guidance published in 2018.

1.15 The three safeguarding partners must set out how they will work together and with any relevant agencies whose involvement they consider may be required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in particular cases. They must also set out how their arrangements will receive independent scrutiny. Once agreed, the safeguarding partners must publish the arrangements.

- 1.16 Barnet's new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements will be implemented on 29 June 2019, once agreed by CES Committee. A separate report on the arrangements is being presented to this Committee.
- 1.17 These changes build on improvements made to the Barnet Safeguarding Children's Partnership following the Ofsted single inspection, to ensure that member agencies work together to keep children and young people safe, hold one another to account and ensure that safeguarding remains a priority. It has helped to develop a culture where values and priorities are shared and where cooperative and collaborative working is the norm.
- 1.18 We have increased management capacity by recently recruiting two new heads of service in Duty and Assessment Team and Intervention and Planning. This will enable us to further embed and strengthen management oversight and systems leadership within the service.

Improvement theme 2: Enhancing Practice Leadership for Children

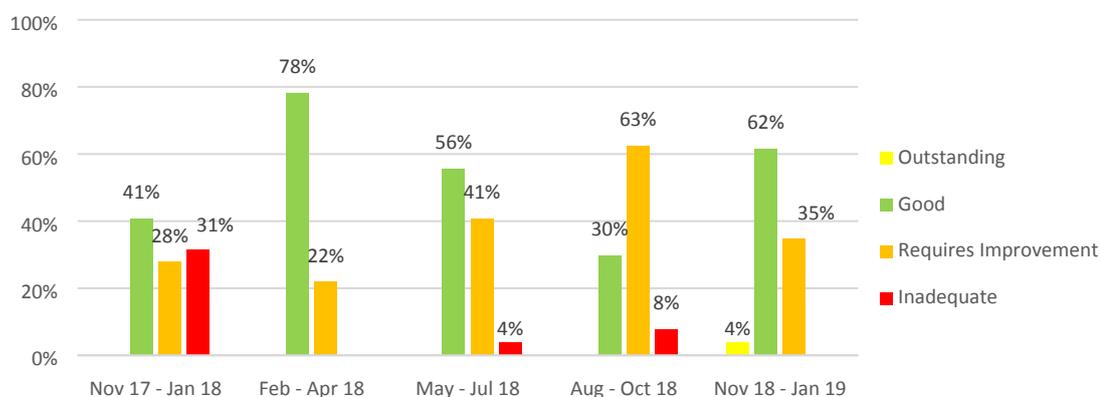
- 1.19 This theme focuses on strengthening professional systems that work together effectively to improve children's lived experience. This includes that children's voices are heard and influence decisions being made about them, that these decisions are recorded to a high standard and that this leads to timely interventions from appropriately skilled professionals across the partnership.
- 1.20 A strong programme of workforce development activity is being delivered via in-house, external and North London Teaching Partnership Practice Development Workers. A workforce development/skills analysis is currently being completed so we can measure take up of training and workforce development activities against improvements in practice. The analysis will provide a framework to ensure that practice development activities are focused on developing specific areas of practice in need of continued improvement and ensure career progression pathways are in place.
- 1.21 The 0-25 Disability service have been working on an improvement plan. They have a management team who have a good understanding of the varied and complex caseload held in the service. The new Children with Disabilities pathway is now established, and provides a clear outline of the packages of support provided to a child across all agencies, and assists in case allocations and keeping caseloads at manageable levels. A new Team Manager is now in post which is allowing the Strategic Manager to provide advice and develop understanding on services for those children with disabilities who are held outside of the 0-25 Disability Service. This will be supported by a 0-25 Social Worker being placed in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for 2 days a week, which will be commencing shortly.
- 1.22 The Team Manager ensures the provision of effective and consistent supervision and brings knowledge of safeguarding and court proceedings, which will be supported by the expertise in working with disabilities held by the Deputy Team Managers. Most practitioners in the team are now permanent, and morale is good with staff reporting they feel supported and motivated.

- 1.23 Transition planning is improving with the allocated social workers working closely with practitioners experienced in Adult social care legislation and practice to ensure Care Act assessments take place in a timely way and sustainable support is put into place as the child enters adulthood. There is also improving partnership working with the over 25 adult teams, with transition planning being tracked and an Advanced Practitioner attending the Adults Allocations Panel. The strategic manager has developed positive partnership working with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) team, and there is now regular attendance at various leading-edge groups and panels. All social workers understand the importance of integrating Education Health and care plans in the wider package of care.
- 1.24 Caseloads are at appropriate levels, with each social worker holding no more than 10 safeguarding cases and 10 disabilities only cases. The frequency of supervision has improved, and work is ongoing in improving the quality. To support this, we have introduced group supervisions, many of which are multi-disciplinary; ensuring that all supervisions are recorded on the child or young person's file is an improvement priority.
- 1.25 A series of training workshops have taken place exploring subjects such as domestic violence from the perspective of disability, and considering additional risk factors. Joint training with Adult Social Care on legislation, practice standards and service requirements is in place.
- 1.26 Actions and decision making in relation to safeguarding is more consistent and the quality of plans is improving. Information from the now established Disability Resource Panel is being used to analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of care packages, which will drive further improvements.

Improvement theme 3: Right Intervention, Right Time (Thresholds)

- 1.27 This improvement theme is focussed on embedding the monitoring and understanding of thresholds across the partnership. The outcomes are to have an effective MASH, effective decision making and joined up Early Help.
- 1.28 MASH audit data shows that there has been a steady and consistent increase in work that is graded as Good and a significant reduction in the proportion of audits graded as 'inadequate' since November 2017 when the current audit process was implemented. The structural and process changes made within the MASH at the end of 2017 are now embedded and sustaining improvements in the quality of the service; this was demonstrated in the positive feedback from the 5th Ofsted Monitoring Visit undertaken in November 2018.

MASH Overall Audit Grading
(November 2017 - January 2019)

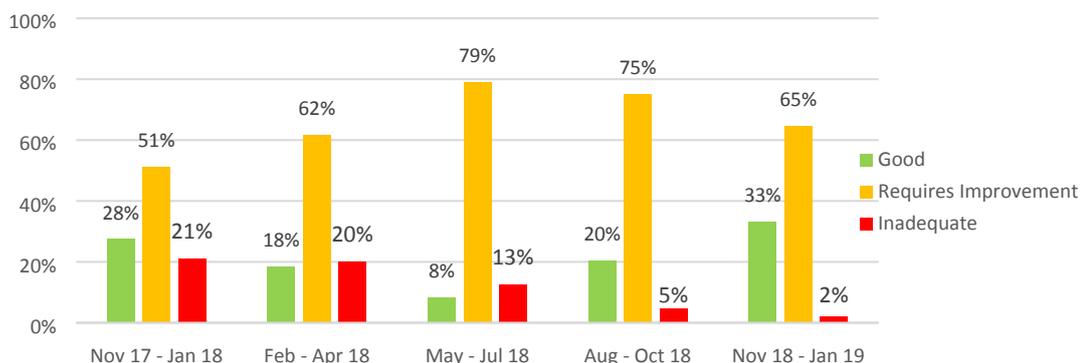


1.29 The MASH signposts and refers children to universal and universal plus services and the 0-19 Early Help locality hubs directly and for families in need of coordinated early help services, through the Multi-Agency Early Help Panels that are held weekly. Operational guidelines have been launched with staff and a new audit tool and process for Early Help is being developed to reflect the integrated delivery model. Early Help Practice Standards have been developed to provide a framework for delivery, workforce development and to support quality assurance activity. Performance management data monitors the workflow from MASH to Early Help Services, outcomes data is being built into the developing recording and reporting systems.

Improvement theme 4: Strengthening Assessment for Children

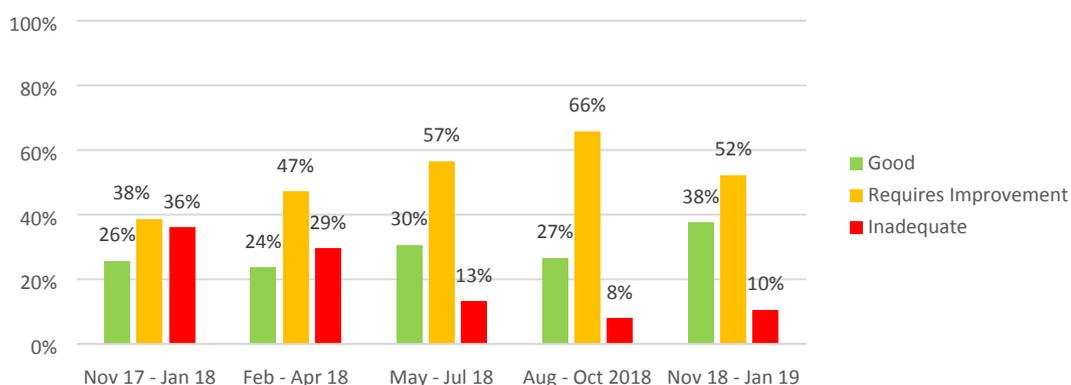
- 1.30 This theme focusses on strengthening assessments, ensuring they are child centred, effectively analyse risk of harm to prevent drift in the system and prevent delays to delivering interventions.
- 1.31 The quality of assessments is improving and this is evidenced in audit outcomes, social workers appropriately identify risk and are making better use of historical context by ensuring chronologies are completed that identify patterns over time. This is an area of work that continues to be supported by the Practice Development Workers. Assessments are appropriately identifying the needs of families and leading to timely and proportionate support.
- 1.32 There is a comprehensive training offer in place for practitioners which provides opportunities for individual, team and service level learning about specific issues relating to management oversight and improving practitioner’s ability to evaluate risk. The impact of focus in this area of practice is apparent in the overall gradings of audited assessments; the chart below highlights a reduction to 2% of assessments graded as ‘inadequate’ since November 2017 and a steady increase in assessments graded as Good.

Duty & Assessment Overall Audit Grading
(November 2017 - January 2019)



Practice Development Workers continue to support social workers to prepare for visits to families and strengthen their practice skills in analysis of risk and need; this is having a positive impact on practice and is evidenced within audit data which demonstrates a 26% decrease in combined assessments graded as 'inadequate' since November 2017. The support of the Practice Development Workers is also improving consideration of children and parents cultural, linguistic and religious influences and belief systems. This is further supported by more consistent use of Signs of Safety tools to assess and analyse risk and to meaningfully engage children and families in their assessments.

Domain Grading: Combined Assessment
(November 2017 - January 2019)



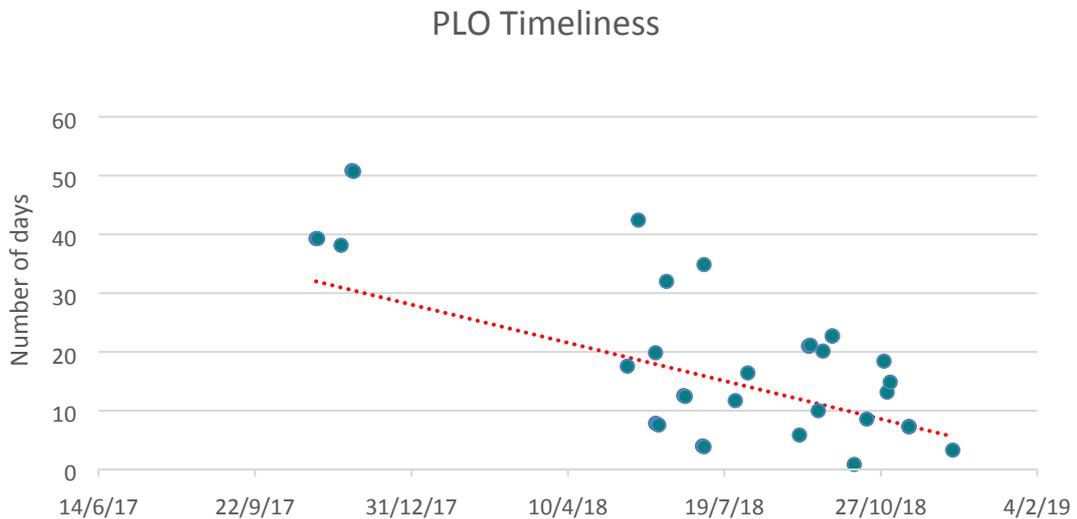
Improvement theme 5: Strengthening Planning for Children

- 1.33 This theme seeks to ensure that planning across the system is consistently focused on outcomes and is responsive when children’s circumstances change or deteriorate. We expect to see plans that are child-centred and that achieve best outcomes, tackling drift and delay.

- 1.34 Performance data demonstrates an overall reduction in the number of inadequate audit gradings across children in care and onwards and upwards, which includes auditing of the quality and timeliness of children’s care and pathway plans. There is a need to accelerate progress in the next quarter as the conditions for progress to Good are in place (targeted permanence planning processes, IRO service development plans, training, practice development work, QA activity and staff and management

changes) to ensure the challenge in the system is relentless and continues to drive practice improvement.

- 1.35 Performance data demonstrates a reduction in children subject to child protection plans for more than two years to zero and the Director Children’s Social Care for Early Help and Safeguarding facilitates an Assessment and Change Forum which was established in November 2018. The Forum provides management and clinical oversight to unborn children, children subject to pre-proceedings Public Law Outline (PLO) and also provides a clinician led systemic space for reflective consideration of complex casework to explore alternative ways of affecting change.
- 1.36 Staff have been provided with training in Public Law Outline (PLO), and a tracking system is in place to monitor timeliness of assessments. The chart below shows that the overall length of time in PLO processes has reduced over time, to an average of 9 weeks since October 2018 which is evidence of improving timeliness of decision making for children.



- 1.37 Additional management capacity has been created in the Onwards and Upwards service to drive improvements in Pathway Planning. These roles are embedding.
- 1.38 The quality of pathway planning in a sample of 25 Care Leaver audits ahead of the February 2019 Ofsted visit was mostly graded as Requires improvement or Good. There was some evidence of comprehensive pathway plans that were written in plain English, reviewed in accordance with statutory expectations and updated in a timely manner. In these cases, the health, education and accommodation needs of the young person were well considered, partner agencies worked collaboratively and clear guidance and support was evident maximizing the likelihood of lasting positive transition to the leaving care service.
- 1.39 Pathway Plan workshops were run in mid-2018 followed up by coaching from a Practice Development Worker during November. Combined with a revised tool including a section on ‘it’s all about me’, we expect that practitioners will be able to articulate the ambitions for young people in a cohesive way; feedback from Ofsted during their February 2019 visit was that recording in case notes is ‘generally more

thorough and provides a better picture of the young person than the key standalone documents’.

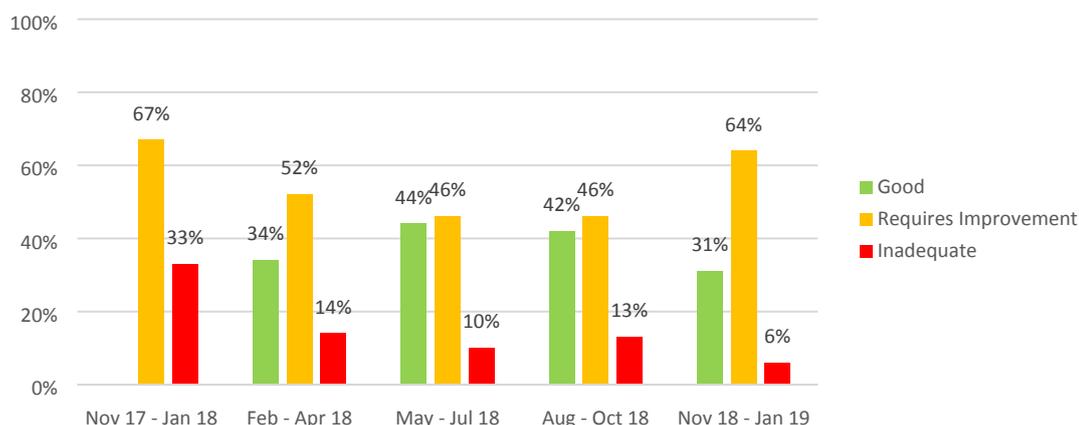
- 1.40 Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) feedback, audit findings and the Ofsted Monitoring Visits have ensured focused activity has taken place to improve the quality of care planning and the participation of children and young people in their reviews.
- 1.41 Between April 2018 and March 2019 there has been increased consultation activity taking place between social work teams and IRO’s in the care planning process. Audits more consistently find that the voice of the child is stronger and evident in their care plans and our performance data is more strongly reflecting that every effort is being made to enable children and young people to participate in their reviews and contribute to their care plans and pathway plans directly or indirectly.
- 1.42 Audits and IRO feedback indicate evidence of increasingly robust care planning and timely transitions; this is evidenced in the reduction, over the past six months, in reported IRO challenge pertaining to delay of transitions to Onwards and Upwards or between placements.
- 1.43 When there is a need to drive improvements in a child’s care planning there is clearer evidence of IRO challenge. This is recorded as discussions, emails and/or face-to-face discussion with the social work teams and in escalation reports. However, the challenge primarily focuses on process issues rather than practice standards and therefore needs to improve to be more robust in driving consistently good risk assessments and quality care planning for children.
- 1.44 The Principal Reviewing Officer role has been created to ensure that IRO’s receive support and challenge to undertake their roles to the highest standards. The Principal Reviewing Officer is providing focused feedback and supporting consistently prompt, and respectful challenge to professionals when care plans are not sufficiently addressing or progressing the support children need to achieve good outcomes. Challenge is tracked and monitored by the Principal IRO to ensure that it remains respectful and leads to a positive impact.
- 1.45 The role also ensures that when good practice is evident through timely implementation of high quality care plans which are effecting positive change, this is acknowledged by IRO’s in writing to social workers and Team Managers.

Improvement theme 6: Embedding a child centred culture that improves children’s lives

- 1.46 This improvement theme will enable and ensure that all staff are fully engaged with the child centred culture and aware of the support available to them from management and senior leaders. This will include building connection via communication within children’s services, across partner agencies.

1.47 Practice Development workers continue to provide training and support for practitioners to undertake direct work with children. The Voice of the Child team delivered 3 multi agency 'voice of the child' workshops during 2018, which were attended by over 30 practitioners. Audit data shows under the domain 'Child's Voice and Engagement' that casework graded as inadequate is consistently reducing.

Domain Grading: Child's Voice and Engagement
(All Services November 2017 - January 2019)



Quantitative performance data

1.48 Quantitative performance data is based on activity in February 2019. Reporting is on indicators that are subject to additional focus through the Improvement Plan, with information about what needs to change and what is being done about it, as well as what is working well. The full Barnet Children's Services Performance Matters report and Director commentary has been included in Appendix 1.

2. ADDITIONAL CES PRIORITIES IN THE CORPORATE PLAN – END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE

2.1 There are two indicators related to the OFSTED improvement specifically in the Corporate Plan. In addition, there is one further indicators related to Family Services delivery of childcare. These are:

Indicator	Polarity	Annual Target	END OF YEAR (EOY) 18/19			EOY 17/18	Benchmarking
			Target	Result	DOT	Result	
Overall progress against Children's Services Improvement Action Plan	Monitor	Monitor	Monitor	Pace of change begun to establish improved social work practice	New for 18/19	New for 18/19	No benchmark available
Findings of Ofsted Monitoring Visits	Monitor	Monitor	Monitor		New for 18/19	New for 18/19	No benchmark available
30 hours free entitlement early years (3 and 4-year olds) places taken for up by	Bigger is better	80%	80%	94%	↑ +38%	56.3%	89% London average

Indicator	Polarity	Annual Target	END OF YEAR (EOY) 18/19			EOY 17/18	Benchmarking
			Target	Result	DOT	Result	
parents/ carers that are eligible for a place							

- 2.2 In addition to the OFSTED update progress reported as part of the priorities in the corporate plan, a brief update is provided against the remaining priorities can be found below.
- 2.3 Since April 2018 OFSTED have conducted 4 monitoring visits. Feedback from each visit indicates sustained improvements against our improvement plan.
- 2.4 During the visit on 25 April 2018, inspectors reviewed the progress made in the area of vulnerable adolescents across a range of teams, including children in need, children subject to child protection plans and children looked after. Inspectors found that “the pace of change has remained consistent and focused. The quality of social work practice is now slowly improving, and inspectors have seen less inadequate practice during this monitoring visit. Senior leaders are fully aware that there are still areas of considerable challenge before practice is of a good standard and the needs of children are well served.”
- 2.5 The monitoring visit on 31 July and 1 August 2018 was the fourth monitoring visit overall. Inspectors reviewed the progress made for children looked after across a range of teams, including the children in care teams and the intervention and planning teams. In their summary of findings, inspectors noted “that an appropriately considered and steady pace of change in the last year has begun to establish improved social work practice for children looked after. Senior leaders are aware that improvements are still inconsistent and require further consolidation and focus across all teams before practice is of a good standard.
- 2.6 The fifth monitoring visit took place on 27 and 28 November 2018, during which inspectors reviewed the progress made in the areas of help and protection. Inspectors found that “social work practice considered during this visit has further consolidated and improved since the previous visit to the ‘front door’. This has led to stronger work with children and their families. Inspectors saw more work of a reasonable standard of practice; risks for children are reduced, they are making progress and there is stronger and better engagement with them and their families. This concurs with the local authority’s own understanding of their performance. Senior leaders are fully aware of the areas of practice they still need to improve to ensure that all practice is of a good standard.”
- 2.7 On the 14 and 15 February 2019 we had our sixth and final monitoring visit before we are subject to a full inspection later this year. During this visit, inspectors reviewed the progress made in the care leavers’ service. Inspectors summarised that “the quality of social work practice is improving steadily, and developments in the service are helping

to make a positive difference to outcomes for young people. Inspectors found appropriate support and help offered to care leavers, with some strong practice for some young people. However, there is more work to do to improve pathway planning, managerial oversight and supervision to ensure practice is consistent for all young people to achieve better outcomes.”

Corporate Priority end of year position: Tackling Gang Activity

- 2.8 This is a CES Committee priority within the Corporate Plan Addendum 2018/19.
- 2.9 During 2018/19, partnership arrangements have continued to be in place with MAC UK, Growing Against Violence and Art Against Knives (AAK), which have enabled the delivery of work with young people at risk of exploitation (including in relation to gangs).
- 2.10 Using the learning from our work through the ‘Resilient, Engaging, Achieving Children’s Hub’ (REACH) and the partnerships outlined above, work during the previous period has focussed on developing and implementing a revised operational framework focussed on addressing the early complex indicators which contribute towards the risk of being exploited or going missing, rather than reacting to events.
- 2.11 The operational framework has been supported by:
- The development of a Vulnerable Adolescents Strategy in March 2018
 - An improved training offer for staff and partners, which focusses on building trusting relationships with young people as the primary mechanism to implementing change. The impact of the new training approach will be evaluated.
 - Strengthened data collection and analysis from across the partnership, which enables partners and social care staff to have a clearer understanding of what is happening in Barnet and the lived experience of young people, and where resources should be targeted next.
- 2.12 Barnet continues to deliver using the monies awarded following a bid to the Home Office’s Trusted Relationships programme in September 2018. Barnet’s programme which builds on the provision of schools based gang prevention programmes and community based support delivered by the Voluntary and Community Sector in Creative Safe Spaces.
- 2.13 The project works across a spectrum of services and levels of need, taking an evidence based approach that focuses on relationships and resilience as follows:
- Universal engagement with young people within creative community spaces, providing creative skills training and individual and group support;
 - Targeted / Specialist support in communities based within Art Against Knives creative spaces to provide direct support to those identified through relation working and assessment as at risk of exploitation;
 - Psychologically informed staff at MAC-UK delivering staff learning spaces to the Art Against Knives team and ‘hang out’ in creative spaces with young people;

- In-School preventative evidence based programme delivery to young people.

2.14 Since being announced as a successful applicant, the following progress has been made with the Trusted Relationships project which has progressed with swift momentum during the final two quarters of 2018/19:

- Several planning and preparation meetings between partners have taken place, with the first partnership Steering Group for Barnet's Vulnerable Adolescents taking place in December 2018;
- AAK and MAC-UK have co-produced the multi-agency clinical, safeguarding, information sharing and operational arrangements and frameworks;
- The Vulnerable Young Adults Forum has been established, and looks to draws together the wider partnership offer in this area;
- We have recruited to the Partnership and Engagement Lead post that will lead this project.;
- AAK have engaged young people in the co-production of their creative spaces in the community setting and context. A team of 'Creative Directors' have been established and the process of recruiting 4 Youth Consultants is currently taking place;
- AAK have engaged in youth-led activities and opportunities to build trusted relationships with young people through informal contact time;
- A schedule / timetable of community creative spaces in the places that work for young people has been created, this includes an additional 4th creative space that was established on Grahame Park Estate as of August 2018;
- AAK and MAC-UK have started to implement evaluation measures with young people, partners and Home Office Independent Evaluators to monitor impact of placement team and outcomes for service users.

2.15 The work of the 0-19 Early Help Service (inclusive of Targeted Youth Support and Family Resilience Team), REACH team and Youth Offending Team has been instrumental in delivering progress against this, especially following the recent implementation of the borough's 0-19 Early Help locality based model in October 2018.

2.16 The work of the REACH team is demonstrating positive impact on reducing missing episodes, offending, and family breakdown and is positively supporting young people back to employment, education or training. REACH are instrumental in supporting the attendance of young people at the Old Bailey on the 'No Knives, Better Lives programme with police and the manager has recently trained as a trainer in the AMBIT model which is being rolled out the workforce this year.

2.17 The Strategic Lead for Partnerships, Engagement and Adolescents at Risk has undertaken extensive work with the children's workforce, key partners and schools to strengthen agency collaboration, awareness raising and the implementation of effective risk assessment and management processes. All Social Care teams receive regular 'missing' reports and briefings are held frequently for staff and new starters to ensure learning and awareness is maintained across the landscape of a dynamic workforce. Internal and external partners are provided with regular updates about

gang profiles in Barnet along with bi-quarterly intelligence and thematic reporting from strategic MACE, themes from SEAM strategy meetings and police operations.

- 2.18 As an outcome of our multi agency audit exercise, safeguarding leads within key partner agencies shared findings and build on increasing joined-up working in assessments and planning with vulnerable adolescents. The Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Champions network continues to lead on raising awareness on issues related to vulnerable adolescents in Barnet. A 'voice of the child working group' is due to commence within Health. Partners encourage attendance at the 'vulnerable adolescents at risk of exploitation' training on offer, and the Family Services CSE Lead went on to offer briefings on vulnerable adolescents at risk of exploitation, to Health colleagues and within Schools.
- 2.19 For CSE awareness week, Barnet Vulnerable Adolescents team and key partners from statutory and voluntary sector agencies joined together at Brent Cross Shopping Centre to raise awareness. A multi-agency Learning Event held on 27 March which shared share key messages about the profile of vulnerable adolescents in the local authority and the work of agencies, including the voluntary sector to tackle this, the event was well attended with 65 representatives from statutory and community based sectors.

Corporate Priority end of year position: Delivering the family-friendly Barnet vision

- 2.20 A new draft Children and Young People's Plan was approved by the CES committee in January 2019 and a public consultation concluded in April. Key outcomes supporting our aspiration of a 'Family Friendly Barnet' included a series of mental health initiatives to support children and young people, enhanced plans to prevent young people from getting involved in violence, crime and anti-social behaviour as well as increasing schools in Barnet that are good or outstanding.
- 2.21 The Plan takes account of the changing needs of the large and growing number of children, young people and families in the borough. The approach supplements the ambition to be the most 'Family Friendly Borough' by 2020'. It has been informed by conversations with young people, elected members, council officers, heads of service and partner agencies to drive out the best outcomes. The results enable Barnet Council, its partners and young people to work in a more responsive and empowering way.
- 2.22 In addition, Barnet has a 3-year agreement with UNICEF to deliver Child Rights Partners Programme across the borough, working in partnership, ensuring that all children, including the most vulnerable, can be supported to grow up healthy, happy, safe and resilient. Over 36 months Barnet will be working towards six badges which will be assessed by UNICEF and will underpin the new Children and Young People's Plan.
- 2.23 A Young People's Perception Survey is carried out every two years. The study provides important insight on what young people think about living in the borough, their perception of the council, the services they receive, and also helps with understanding young people's priorities and concerns. The findings are used to inform the Children and Young People's Plan.

- 2.24 Barnet's new Children and Young People's plan which is underpinned by the Borough's participation in UNICEF UK's Child Friendly Cities programme. The approach, which complements the ambition to be the most 'Family Friendly borough by 2020', will embed child-rights in Barnet's services and delivery.
- 2.25 The Annual Young People's Survey showed 84 per cent of young people think Barnet is a family friendly place to live. Top personal safety concerns are gangs, bullying and drug taking. This has helped to inform the new CYPP and responses will assist with better targeting and improvement of services
- 2.26 A draft version of the Plan was presented at the January 2019 CES Committee, and public consultation has been used to shape the final version. The delivery plan was presented at the March CES Committee.
- 2.27 A full update on progress against the family friendly update corporate priority has been included in Appendix 2 and covers a range of updates including early intervention and prevention, children and adolescent mental health and provision for children and young people with disabilities.

Corporate Priority end of year position: Ensuring the attainment and progress of children in Barnet schools remains in the top 10% nationally

- 2.28 An end of year report on this Corporate Priority was included within "Educational Standards in Barnet 2017/18" that was presented at [CES Committee in March 2019](#).

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are asked to note progress to ensure scrutiny by elected members and improve the effectiveness of the local authority in protecting and caring for children and young people as a corporate parent.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 4.1 The continued monitoring of progress and impact of Barnet Children's Services Improvement Action Plan is integral to driving the continuation of the Family Services' improvement 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.

5. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 5.1 As the primary driver of improvement, the Children's Service Improvement Board will oversee the delivery of the action plan and is ultimately responsible for its delivery. The Children's Services Improvement Board is independently chaired by Dave Hill and will provide scrutiny and challenge as well as measure impact.
- 5.2 Operationally the Improvement Plan is driven and directed by the Operational Improvement Group chaired by the Strategic Director of Children's Services with senior

representatives from key partner agencies. The group will oversee the day to day transformation of services and ensure effective communication and engagement with staff, children, young people and their families.

- 5.3 Reports on the progress of the action plan will be received by Children, Education, and Safeguarding Committee, Health and Well-Being Board and Barnet Safeguarding Children's Board.

6. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

6.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

6.1.1 The implementation of Barnet Children's Services Improvement Action Plan is a key mechanism through which Barnet Council and its partners will deliver the Family Friendly Barnet vision to be the most family friendly borough in London by 2020.

6.1.2 This supports the following Council's corporate priorities as expressed through the Corporate Plan for 2019-2024 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 pleasant, well maintained borough that we protect and invest in;
- Residents live happy, healthy, independent lives with the most vulnerable protected;
- Has safe and strong communities where people get along well.

6.1.3 The Barnet Children's Services 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 action 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.

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

6.2.1 Policy and Resources Committee of June 2017 agreed to invest an additional £5.7m in Family Services, some of which has been invested to improve practice to ensure improvements are made which result in better outcomes for children, young people and families. The detailed breakdown of this additional £5.7 million is provided in item 7, CELS agenda 18 September 2017.

6.2.2 Medium Term Financial Savings (MTFS) for 2018 - 2020 have been reviewed in light of the Family Services improvement journey to consider achievability. The original CES Committee target for 2018/19 – 2019/20 was £8.303m has been revised to £4.409m in the 2018/19 Policy & Resource Committee Business Planning Report.

Budget forecasts

6.2.3 Children Services budget forecast at the end of February 2019 based on information available is £1.320m overspend.

6.2.4 This is the February position for the 2018/19 financial year. Any adjustments to the position following the financial year close down will be included in the Strategic Performance Report which will be presented at Policy and Resources Committee in June 2019 which will include an end of year position on the council's revenue and capital budgets.

6.3 Social Value

6.3.1 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.

6.4 Legal and Constitutional References

6.4.1 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, if 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.

6.4.2 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. OFSTED will have monitoring visits on a regular basis in local authorities found to be inadequate. A new OFSTED framework has been in place from January 2018, however monitoring visits are still undertaken for authorities found to be inadequate. In addition to OFSTED's statutory responsibilities, the Secretary of State has the power to direct local authorities. This power of direction includes the power to impose a commissioner, direct the local authority to work with improvement partners and direct alternative delivery options. Subsequent directions can be given if the services are not found to be adequate.

6.4.3 Article 7 of the council's constitution states that the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee has the responsibility for all matters relating to children, schools and education. 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.

6.4.4 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 amended the Children Act 2004, introducing

changes to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements requiring the statutory agencies (local authority, CCG and police) to work together with other relevant agencies for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in their local area, including working together to identify and respond to the needs of children.

- 6.4.5 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 amended the Housing Act 1996 in relation to preventing homelessness, including taking a more personalised approach and requiring local authorities to assess and agree a personalised plan to help secure that accommodation remains available.

6.5 Risk Management

Children's Services Improvement Action Plan

- 6.5.1 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 Barnet Children's Services Improvement Action Plan based on inspection findings and recommendations reduce this risk and drive forward improvements towards good quality services.
- 6.5.2 There is one high level risk linked to the OFSTED Improvement Action Plan priority. This is a strategic (STR) risk.

STR021 - Delivery of Ofsted Improvement Action Plan (residual score 16). Ofsted undertook a sixth and final monitoring visit on 14-15 February 2019, which focused on the quality of practice in the care leavers service. Inspectors found the quality of social work practice is improving steadily and changes to the service are making a positive difference with appropriate support offered to care leavers. Inspectors noted high levels of consistent, regular and skilled planning was helping to achieve positive outcomes for young people but acknowledged that some challenges remain.

6.6 Equalities and Diversity

- 6.6.1 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
- 6.6.2 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
- 6.6.3 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, race and ethnicity, faith or belief, sex, gender reassignment, language, maternity / parental status 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. The percentages of children and young people from minority ethnic groups who receive statutory social care services account for 61% of Children in Need cases, 56% of child protection cases and 60% of all Children in Care. The proportion of children and young people with English as an additional language across primary schools is 44% (the national average is 18%). The trends in the ethnic, age and gender identity of Barnet's looked after children compared to the published population statistics for England can be seen in the children looked after (CLA) graph below. The snapshot is the CLA population as at February 2019.

Comparing CLA demographics
CLA figures compared to published population statistics

Ethnicity

	LA Latest snapshot			LA 2017			Eng 2017		
	CLA	Pop	% difference	CLA	Pop	% difference	CLA	Pop	% difference
White	40	53	lower -25%	42	53	lower -20%	75	75	no dif 0%
Mixed	20	11	higher 87%	17	11	higher 61%	9	6	higher 56%
Asian	6	13	lower -56%	12	13	lower -12%	5	11	lower -58%
Black	18	12	higher 56%	18	12	higher 54%	7	6	higher 25%
Other	16	12	higher 38%	x	12		3	2	higher 44%

Age

	LA Latest snapshot			LA 2017			Eng 2017		
	CLA	Pop	% difference	CLA	Pop	% difference	CLA	Pop	% difference
Under 1	4	6	lower -26%	4	6	lower -25%	5	6	lower -5%
1 to 4	10	23	lower -57%	7	23	lower -70%	13	23	lower -45%
5 to 9	9	30	lower -69%	11	30	lower -63%	19	29	lower -34%
10 to 15	35	31	higher 13%	37	31	higher 19%	39	32	higher 24%
16-plus	41	9	higher 333%	40	9	higher 324%	23	10	higher 126%

Gender

	LA Latest snapshot			LA 2017			Eng 2017		
	CLA	Pop	% difference	CLA	Pop	% difference	CLA	Pop	% difference
Male	62	51	higher 20%	61	51	higher 19%	56	51	higher 10%
Female	38	49	lower -22%	39	49	lower -20%	44	49	lower -10%

6.6.4 Barnet also has an above average rate of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children when compared to statistical neighbours, and the statistical neighbour average. In 2018, Barnet had 66 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, compared to an average of 34 amongst statistical neighbours. The only statistical neighbour which had more was Hillingdon, a London Borough which is within a 10-mile radius of Heathrow airport.

6.6.5 Unaccompanied young people experience separation and loss from their families, and in addition to this they are also likely to have experienced further trauma, such as abuse and exploitation whilst travelling to the UK. There have been several practice and service developments to ensure the needs of this group are met, many of whom arrive in the UK without being able to speak English. In 2018,

- an education programme was commissioned from Whitefields School to induct unaccompanied young people into the UK and education system;
- an initial health assessment pathway was created that included specific processes for unaccompanied young people, to accommodate the range of checks that need to be undertaken for this group;
- a new unaccompanied asylum-seeking children specialist Personal Advisor role was created in Onwards and Upwards. The worker speaks Pashtu and Albanian – the two most common languages spoken by Barnet’s unaccompanied young people – and has experience in dealing with the Home Office and dealing with tasks such as Human Rights Assessments, which has been invaluable in supporting this vulnerable group of young people;
- Practice improvements in life story work resulted in a former unaccompanied young person creating a video work as an outcome of his successful life story work and foster placement;
- All newly arrived unaccompanied young people are now allocated to a worker in Onwards and Upwards upon arrival to reduce the number of workers and times a young person has to repeat their story.

6.6.6 In Barnet, we have a higher percentage of children in need with a recorded disability compared to the London and England rat. As at 31 March 2018, the rate of disability was as follows:

Local authority	Number of Children in need episodes at 31 March	Number of children in need episodes at 31 March with a disability recorded	Percentage of children in need episodes at 31 March with a disability recorded
England	404,710	49,770	12.3
London	72,810	9,460	13.0
Inner London	31,460	3,900	12.4
Outer London	41,350	5,560	13.4
Barnet	2,107	317	15.0

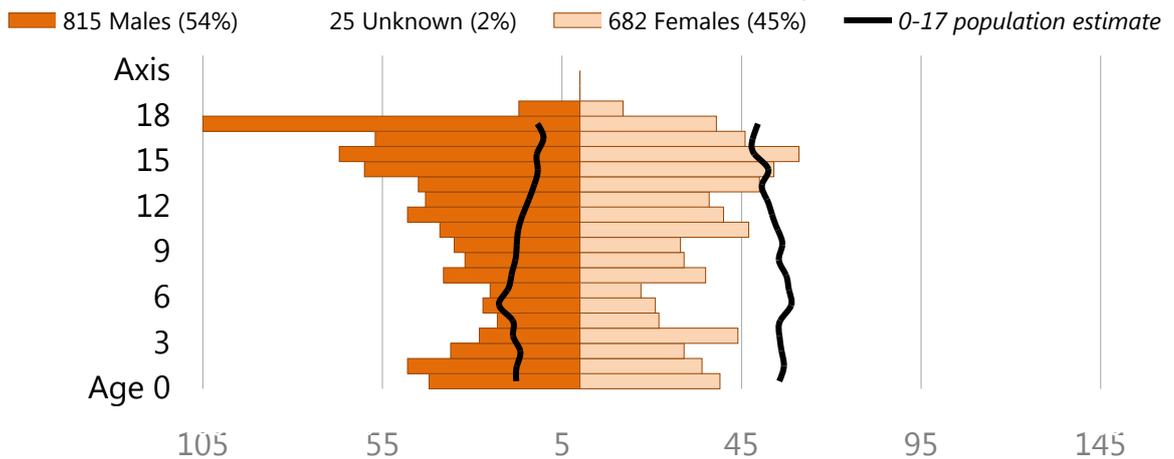
6.6.7 One key service which supports disabled children, young people and families is the 0-25 service. The service was reorganised in September 2017 and consists of a team of social workers, family support workers, direct payment workers and occupational therapists who work with young people as per the Children Act 1989 and Care Act 2014. The service supports a strength based model of practice that aims to build families strengths, resilience and capacity. The service intervenes and supports families earlier and throughout young people’s transition to adulthood, building their capacity and resilience.

6.6.8 Since the service’s introduction, and the inadequate Ofsted rating, practice has improved across children and adult cases, and there is significantly better partnership working with Adult services, SEND, Health and parents - with the aim to achieve effective co-production. There is a better understanding of safeguarding within the service which means that children with disabilities are better protected.

6.6.9 The focus for 2019 regarding support for disabled children, young people and families pertains to practice development, data and systems and support for families, such as recommissioning the Short Breaks service. These fall under the OFSTED improvement plan themes of ‘enhancing practice leadership for children’ and ‘strengthening planning for children’, which will lead to better outcomes for children, young people and families.

6.6.10 As at 20 December 2018, there are more children in need aged 14 to 18 than any other age group, as illustrated in the graph 1 below.

Graph 1: Age/Gender of all Children in Need (1522) (including Child Protection and Looked after Children)



6.6.11 The number and needs of adolescents has resulted in several services being invested in to ensure that emerging and existing issues are supported to prevent them becoming more serious problems; data shows that this age group are more likely to be affected by issues such as exploitation, criminality and poor mental health. As at 30 November 2018, of 27 young people identified as known to the Youth Offending Team and vulnerable (gone missing, those with an open Child Sexual Exploitation or gang flag, and those who have been the subject of a Sexual Exploitation And Missing meeting, within a selected time period) 96% (n=26), were aged 15 to 17, one was 12 years old.

6.6.12 One of the services that has been invested in to engage vulnerable young people in this age group is the REACH Team. This team was set up in April 2017 to provide multi-agency wrap-around support to young people at high risk of criminal or sexual exploitation. Further to this the Trusted Relationships Project will be delivered in 2019 following a successful bid to the Home Office in September 2018; more details about this can be found in 2.10 to 2.19.

6.6.13 A further way in which the service is attempting to meet the specific needs of this age group, is through the provision of mental health support at Onwards and Upwards, which includes 1:1 appointments with trainee psychotherapists from Terapia which is available for care leavers in need of emotional support.

6.6.14 Some areas of social work practice in relation to inequalities and disadvantage still remain inconsistent. Learning from audits and practice week has highlighted attention to diversity and the cultural context in assessments is an area of practice in need of immediate support from management, the Practice Development Workers and

targeted training. The Ofsted improvement action plan addresses the additional work which needs to be done to ensure that children's diversity and identity needs are met; "5b(ii) Strengthen consideration of diversity in assessment so that assessments thoroughly explore and consider family history including the influence of cultural, linguistic and religious beliefs, norms and expectations", and training is ongoing to ensure this work is embedding.

6.6.15 Additional equalities and diversity information and data in relation to service improvements that have, and continue to be made following the 2017 OFSTED inspection, are outlined within the Self-Evaluation Framework presented at the November 2018 CES Committee. For example, a new programme of diversity training for social workers has been introduced, which has resulted in improvements in this domain of practice, as evidenced by audit grades.

6.7 Corporate Parenting

6.7.1 In July 2016, the Government published their Care Leavers' strategy *Keep on Caring* which outlined that the "... [the government] will introduce a set of corporate parenting principles that will require *all departments* within a local authority to recognise their role as corporate parents, encouraging them to look at the services and support that they provide through the lens of what a reasonable parent would do to support their own children.'

6.7.2 The corporate parenting principles set out seven principles that local authorities must have regard to when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and young people, as follows:

1. to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people;
2. to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;
3. to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;
4. to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;
5. to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;
6. for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and;
7. to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

Care leaver local offer consultation

6.7.3 In April 2017, the Children and Social Work Act 2017 (CSWA) came into force, which aims to improve support for looked after children, especially those leaving care, and introduced various duties for local authorities. Section 2 of the Act requires each local authority to consult on and publish a local offer for its care leavers. The local offer should provide information about all the services and support that is available to care leavers from the local area, including information about both their statutory entitlements

as well as any discretionary support that a local authority chooses to provide, in areas such as health, education, employment and accommodation.

6.7.4 The Local Offer requirement came into effect on 1 April 2018, but involves the local authority first consulting young people, before publishing their local offer.

6.7.5 Since the introduction of the CSWA, work has been underway to develop Barnet's local offer; this has been done in conjunction with the Voice of the Child Team who are creating a new Children in Care website, part of which will feature the published local offer. There have been several consultation and engagement activities undertaken with care leavers across several areas that will be included in the local offer; such as council tax, education, mental health and housing.

6.7.6 A draft version of Barnet's Care Leaver local offer was presented at Committee in November 2018. The draft offer has since been subject to consultation with care leavers and professionals. Results have since been collated and analysed, and presented some clear themes for considerations, including:

Care leaver responses

- Respondents are most concerned about accommodation, fitness and health and employment.
- Young people feels least informed about how to get involved and have their say in the development of local services.
- Education, Employment and Training is the only category about which at least one care leaver strongly disagreed that enough information had been included in the local offer.
- Life skills and general support is the area where the majority of respondents would like information included within the offer. A statistically significant number of young people also responded that they do not want information on family and relationships included.
- Young people would prefer information about the local offer to be shared through their PA and via email.

Professionals, Partners and Carer responses

- Staying fit and healthy is the only category where a statistically significant proportion of respondents (>25%) did not agree that sufficient information had been included within the draft offer.
- Other than regarding early help, there was clear support for information on a broader range of topics to be included in the local offer.
- Almost 1/3 of respondents do not agree that the information is easy to understand.
- Additional information on sexual health, drugs, prescriptions, supported housing and support for young people aged 18+ were some of the areas highlighted by respondents as necessary for the local offer.

6.7.7 The consultation responses are now being developed by the service and will be included within a final version of the offer which is due to be published by April 2019.

6.7.8 Other activity as part of the OFSTED improvement journey and to ensure that Barnet has due regard to the Principles and improves on the delivery of corporate parenting to its children in care and care leavers includes:

- A Children in Care survey relaunch in December 2018 resulted in a 60.9% increase in responses from children and young people when compared to the previous survey. Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel will use a more in-depth analysis of the results, alongside the results of the other work with young people over the last 12 months to agree what will happen as a result of the messages from the survey.
- Barnet have committed to supporting children and young people to achieve their best in childhood, adolescence and adulthood within the Corporate Parenting Pledge for children in care and care leavers, as approved by full council on 29 January 2016. The Pledge can be found in section 6.3.
- Learning and development for elected members and senior officers has and will continue to be delivered, to ensure that there is a clear understanding of their duties and responsibilities to children and care and care leavers and ways in which the Principles can be embedded and sufficient challenge provided regarding work and decisions of the council. The last training session for members was delivered on 31 May 2018.
- Improved our Mental Health offer for Children in Care and Care Leavers, in partnership with the Barnet Integrated Clinical Service and Terapia.
- To ensure that Barnet has due regard to the Principles and improves on the delivery of corporate parenting to children in care and care leavers in Barnet, the administering of council tax relief was approved at Full Council on 31 July 2018 and backdated to April 2018 when implemented in September 2018. This scheme helps care experienced young people have a more successful transition to independence, through the provision of guaranteed relief in their first two years of independent living.

Young people, key services and senior officers developed the policy, which was amended based on feedback received from the care leavers that responded to the public consultation.

The introduction of the care leavers council tax policy aims to help improve the emotional and physical health of care experienced young people and contribute to the achievement of the best outcomes for this cohort.

- A Care Leaver Participation Coordinator has been recruited to lead on a targeted participation project which seeks to improve the education, employment and training (EET) outcomes of Barnet's Care Leavers. The Coordinator's role includes working with key stakeholders to develop and implement an appropriate and accessible EET Pathway for Barnet Care Leavers, action EET related tasks within the Corporate Parenting Plan and work with staff and care leavers to increase skills and opportunities available to care leavers. This project has been funded by the

Council's Chief Executive until March 2021.

- We ensure elected members, senior officers and partners can monitor and challenge the performance of the council and its partner agencies pertaining to consideration of the Principles and outcomes for children in care and care leavers through the appropriate channels. This includes the Children, Education, and Safeguarding Committee (bi-monthly), Corporate Parenting Advisory (quarterly) Panel and Corporate Parenting Officers' Group (monthly).

6.8 Consultation and Engagement

- 6.8.1 Consultation and engagement with children and young people is central to social work practice and service improvement across the Safeguarding Partnership. A service user experience strategy has been developed and was launched on 19th February 2018. The strategy ensures that how we work with children and young people is child centred, that we know, understand and can capture the lived experience of children and feed lessons learnt into service improvement. We have nominated Voice of the child champions across partner agencies and within Family Services to promote and lead on the Service User Engagement agenda within their respective areas.
- 6.8.2 Our Voice of the Child Strategy Group enables the wider engagement of children and young people in service design and commissioning of provision across the partnership. This includes youth forums such as Barnet Youth Board and Youth Assembly, the SEN forum (to co-design services) and Children in Care Council (to improve the support children in care receive). The team have been working closely with UNICEF UK to deliver the Child Friendly Communities and Cities initiative. This is a global programme that aims to advance children's rights and well-being at the local level. More recently the team have had a change in staff with a newly appointed Voice of the Child Coordinator and Child's Rights Lead. The team are reviewing the current Youth Voice Offer to develop a structured action plan to focus on increasing reach and impact for children and young people in Barnet.
- 6.8.3 The Barnet Children's Services 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 action plan also includes actions to strengthen how the views and experiences of children, young people and their families influence service design. Messages from the Children in Care survey will be used both in service design, and also as part of monitoring the impact of improvement activity.
- 6.8.4 Improving the quality of services to children is a key partnership and corporate priority and collective work is needed across the partnership and the council to drive improvements. The action plan was completed in consultation with various stakeholders. Staff engagement activities have included monthly staff briefings, team meetings, staff conference. Partners have been engaged through the safeguarding partnership board. Senior leaders are members of the Improvement Board and their continued engagement is assured through core multiagency groups and specific forums such as head teacher's forums.

6.9 Insight

- 6.9.1 Insight data will continue to be regularly collected and used in monitoring the progress and impact of Barnet's Children's Services Improvement Action Plan and to shape ongoing improvement activity.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Single 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 report, OFSTED, 7 July 2017
https://reports.OFSTED.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/local_authority_reports/barnet/051_Single%20inspection%20of%20LA%20children%27s%20services%20as%20pdf.pdf
- 7.2 Barnet's Corporate Parenting Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers (2016)
[https://www.barnet.gov.uk/dam/jcr:c33f12a5-86d9-4215-9c89-a8c82675fba4/Pledge%20for%20Children%20in%20Care%202016%20\(digital\).pdf](https://www.barnet.gov.uk/dam/jcr:c33f12a5-86d9-4215-9c89-a8c82675fba4/Pledge%20for%20Children%20in%20Care%202016%20(digital).pdf)