

DRAFT CHILDREN SOCIAL CARE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

January 2015



DRAFT Post Ofsted Improvement in response to the Ofsted Inspection of Service to Children in Need of Help and Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers.

6th January 2015

Plymouth's Children and Young People's Partnership has a vision in 2020: Britain's Ocean City: a great place to grow up where children and young people are happy, healthy and aspiring.

The Improvement Plan is part of the Council's wider transformation programme and will be delivered as part of the Children and Young People's Service project within the Integrated Health and Wellbeing Programme.

The Improvement Plan set out in this document has been structured to respond to areas of improvement highlighted in the inspection report. In addition to showing the actions we are going to take, the plan demonstrates the outcomes we wish to achieve and lists our objectives. The plan states our key target milestones and target dates, and the measures we will use to monitor our progress.

There will be SMART measurable outcomes in the detailed action plans that underpin this plan.

The progress and delivery of the action plan will be overseen by the Children and Young People's Partnership Board, which is accountable to the Health and Wellbeing Board. The impact of this plan will be monitored quarterly by the Ambitious Plymouth Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

The Improvement Plan will be monitored quarterly by the Leader, Shadow Leader and Chief Executive at the Corporate Safeguarding Assurance Meeting.

The Plymouth City Council action plan does not cover the work of the Local Safeguarding Children Board which is independent of the Local Authority; the Local Safeguarding Children Board is submitting a separate plan to Ofsted.

DRAFT CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE - POST OFSTED IMPROVEMENT PLAN**AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT 1:** Ensure that practitioners have reasonable workloads**OBJECTIVES:**

- Develop better intelligence about the nature of current case loads to ensure Social Workers can fully assess children's needs better, plan help effectively and to inform confident management oversight and decision making;
- Need to analyse current caseloads and the nature of work being undertaken to inform the staffing levels necessary, and ensure that the CSC reconfiguration arrangements are informed by realistic optimum workloads. Ensure appropriate action is taken in the mean time to start to reduce caseloads across all service areas.

OUTCOMES:

- Improved outcomes for children in need of help, protection and in care through improved assessment, and planning for children in need, and child protection and care planning as a result of increased capacity and less pressure from high caseloads for front line managers and practitioners;
- At times of increased pressure anticipatory action is taken to ensure that workloads are effectively managed across the service as a whole; and
- Staff are appropriately supported.

MEASURED BY:

- Reduced numbers of contacts to Children's Social Care;
- Reduced caseloads across all service areas that are sustained;
- Timely high quality assessments;
- Improved quality of Children in Need plans, Child Protection plans and Care Plans for children in care; and
- Improved placement stability

ACTION		PROGRESS MILESTONES	TARGET DATE	DELIVERY LEAD
1.1	Undertake an analysis of current case loads to identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – reasons for recent additional pressures in the 'Advice and Assessment' Service; – issues to address caseloads in the 'Children in the Community' service; and – specific issues in the 'Children in Care' and 'Care Leavers' Services; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Situation Analysis completed; ▪ Consider immediate implications alongside the recent analysis undertaken by the PSW into caseloads. 	TBC	Alison Botham

I.2	Develop and agree caseload action plan to address immediate pressures and continue weekly monitoring arrangements	Case Load Action Plan Agreed	January 2015	Children's Social Care Departmental Management Team
I.3	Progress to stage 1 implementation of the Children's Social Care reconfiguration to begin to reduce the number of changes of social worker	Implementation plan agreed and initiated	February 2015	Alison Botham
I.4	Agree framework and plan for stage 2 of Children Social Care reconfiguration. Ensuring that the plan is informed by analysis of current work (2.1) and the implications of the developments in relation to the TOM for Early Help (1.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agree timescale for the reconfiguration project plan, and TOM; ▪ Agree reconfiguration project plan; and ▪ Agree TOM. 	March 2015 TBC TBC	Alison Botham

AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT 2: Improve management oversight on casework and the quality of staff supervision**OBJECTIVES:**

- Encourage reflective practice which provides effective challenge to social workers around case work;
- Improve the consistency and quality of supervision
- Create speedier improvement planning following audit activity; and
- Create consistency in management scrutiny, driving plans to improve outcomes for children.

OUTCOMES:

- There is evidence of effective challenge in review and case recordings;
- There is evidence of improved outcomes because plans are driven forward as a result of case and thematic Audits;
- There is evidence of effective scrutiny from senior managers in review and case recording; and
- To reduce the rate of re-referrals into the service.

MEASURED BY:

- Frequency of supervision;
- Quality Audits of supervision;
- Reduction in re-referrals;
- Impact on quality of case transfers;

ACTION		PROGRESS MILESTONES	TARGET DATE	DELIVERY LEAD
2.1	Framework for monitoring the quality of supervision, linked to the caseload action plans agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ QA arrangements for supervision agreed; and ▪ Monitoring framework implemented. 	February 2015 March 2015	Naomi Knott
2.2	Review the Performance Framework	Revised Framework agreed	March 2015	Andrew Loton
2.3	Review the framework for post audit improvement plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New improvement plan framework agreed; and ▪ New improvement plan framework implemented. 	May 2015	Siobhan Wallace

AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT 3: Improve the electronic social care record system so that it delivers accurate and timely data and performance information to improve the quality of service

OBJECTIVES:

- To create/review a performance management framework providing a framework for robust quality assurance
- Review requirements of electronic case management system and data reporting to inform commissioning system in line with requirements and developments needed across all children's services, and in tandem with considering requirements for Adult Social Care

OUTCOMES:

- Improvement functionality and ease of use for practitioners;
- Create confidence in our performance framework;
- Greater ownership of data accuracy within service areas; and
- Reduction in the use of manual recording systems.

MEASURED BY:

- Improved quality of records
- Less practitioner and management time on in putting
- Improved data quality;

ACTION		PROGRESS MILESTONES	TARGET DATE	DELIVERY LEAD
3.1	Complete review of service requirements in the context of needs and developments necessary in all linked systems e.g. Learning and Communities and Adult Social Care	To be set through the transformation programme	TBC	IHWB Transformation programme manager
3.2	Progress upgrade of current Care First system to improve ease of use and reporting facilities	Requirements reviewed and necessary upgrade commissioned	March 2015	Laura Harris
3.3	Review mobile working arrangements in service to address some aspects of the capacity issues	Needs identified and plan for implementation agreed	March 2015	Lead Officer DELT

AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT 4: Robustly challenge commissioners to ensure that child protection medical examinations are conducted without undue delay.

OBJECTIVES:

- Children and young people are provided with the medical examinations without inappropriate delays waiting to be seen;
- Children feel safe when undergoing a medical examination.

OUTCOMES:

- All children who require a child protection medical examination are examined promptly; and
- The impact of medical examination on children is minimised.

MEASURED BY:

- Reduced waiting times.

ACTION		PROGRESS MILESTONES	TARGET DATE	DELIVERY LEAD
4.1	Arrange meeting with CCG, Plymouth Hospital NHS Trust to agree new arrangements for CP medicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meeting held and arrangements agreed; and ▪ New arrangements in place. 	February 2015 TBC	Alison Botham
4.2	Other actions to be considered	TBC	TBC	TBC

AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT 5: Improve the quality and analysis of return interviews of missing children so that they are an effective tool to safeguard individual young people and inform the strategic response

OBJECTIVES:

- To ensure that children who have gone missing are safe;
- Information from the 'return interviews' are used to understand patterns and trends and inform the delivery of effective and timely services; and
- Multi-agency arrangements to protect children from Child Sexual Exploitation are in place and sustained.

OUTCOMES:

- All children who go missing are interviewed to inform future planning for the child;
- Quarterly performance reports including analysis;
- Annual report on patterns and trends is produced and presented to the corporate parenting group;
- Continue to implement and monitor our multi-agency arrangements to protect children from Child Sexual Exploitation;

MEASURED BY:

- Reduction in children going missing;
- Reduction of repeat episodes of going missing;
- Percentage of return interviews undertaken; and
- Production of an annual report.

ACTION		PROGRESS MILESTONES	TARGET DATE	DELIVERY LEAD
5.1	Performance data requirements identified to inform the analysis of trends and therefore strategic and operational planning	Performance framework agreed	March 2015	John Miller
5.2	Further actions to be agreed	TBC	TBC	John Miller

AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT 6: Accelerate the implementation of the early help framework to prevent the need for escalation to children's social care and ensure that children get help at the earliest opportunity

OBJECTIVES:

- Ensure timely progress of the Early Help Project within the Children and Young People's Integrated Health and Well Being transformation programme. This includes developing an agreed outcomes framework for all aspects of early help provision and a specific implementation plan for the Early Help Framework that will replace the use of the Common Assessment Framework in Plymouth; and
- Reduce the number of inappropriate contacts to CSC.

OUTCOMES:

- Improved school readiness;
- Improved educational attainment;
- Improved safeguards for children and young people through:
 - Reduction of impact of parental substance misuse;
 - Reduction of impact of domestic abuse on children; and
 - Improved parenting capacity;
- Improved health outcomes; and
- Reduction in risk taking behaviour by young people.

MEASURED BY:

- Foundation stage outcomes
- Key stage attainment levels, and increases in young people who are in employment, training or education;
- Successful completion of programmes by parents;
- Children living in Domestic Abuse free households;
- Increased take up of immunisations, breast feeding, ante natal care;
- Reduction in risk taking behaviour such as substance misuse;
- Reduced 'contacts' to Children's Social Care.

ACTION		PROGRESS MILESTONES	TARGET DATE	DELIVERY LEAD
6.1	Agree and deliver the Implementation Plan for the Early Help Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implementation timescale agreed; ▪ Key partners and assessors agreed; ▪ Professional development needs and plan agreed; ▪ Communications plan developed and initiated; ▪ Implementation plan agreed; and ▪ Monitoring arrangements in place. 	January Children's Transformation Board to agree target dates for each milestone.	Jo Siney
6.2	Early Help Target Operating Model (TOM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Early Help TOM agreed; ▪ Communications plan; and ▪ Consulting on the implementation of 	January 2015	Judith Harwood

		the TOM with partners and stakeholders through a series of workshops.		
6.3	Early Help outcomes framework agreed	Proposed outcomes framework developed and agreed	February 2015	Liz Cahill
6.4	Improve understanding of the drivers behind increased contacts and referrals to CSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Raise with partners at PSCB; ▪ Analysis of data workshop led by data analysts in Public Health, performance, and CSC; ▪ PSCB partners solutions workshop; and ▪ Report to PSCB and propose action plan, including specific workforce development issues in partner agencies. 	Dec 2014 Jan 2015 February 2015 March 2015	Alison Botham
6.5	Improve awareness of thresholds in partner agencies and internal response arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action plan from PSCB solutions workshop to inform workforce development needs across all partners and CPD plan agreed; and ▪ Individual and joint partner agencies action plans to be agreed. 	April 2015 April 2015	Chair of PSCB Partner Agency Leads

AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT 7: Conduct a further test of assurance, including a risk assessment, of the dual role of the Director of Children's Services (DCS)

OBJECTIVE:

- Confirmation that the Director for Social Care is able to undertake the whole range of duties and responsibilities expected of them to effectively lead and manage a wide range of services confidently.

OUTCOMES:

- A renewed test of assurance for the role of the DCS scopes the whole range of duties and responsibilities and includes analysis of risk; and
- The local authority is satisfied that the DCS has sufficient capacity to effectively lead and manage the range of services expected.

MEASURED BY:

- Production of the assurance test for the role of the DCS.

ACTION		PROGRESS MILESTONES	TARGET DATE	DELIVERY LEAD
7.1	Assurance test to be revised and undertaken	New assurance test agreed	April 2015	Tracey Lee

AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT 8: Ensure that Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) and child protection conference chairs carry out their quality assurance roles in a way that provides robust scrutiny of practice and, where necessary, strong challenge.

OBJECTIVE:

- Outcomes for children are progressed because their care planning is adequately supported by the scrutiny and challenged offered by the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer.

OUTCOMES:

- Appropriate caseloads held by Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) caseloads so that they have capacity to track and monitor between reviews so that they are able to provide a level of scrutiny and challenge which is sufficient enough to ensure plans are implemented promptly; and
- There is evidence within review and case records of IRO challenge.

MEASURED BY:

- Number of cases held by IROs and Child Protection Conference Chairs; and
- Case and thematic audits demonstrate that IRO scrutiny is evident.

ACTION		PROGRESS MILESTONES	TARGET DATE	DELIVERY LEAD
8.1	IHWB transformation programme and the CSC reconfiguration project to ensure planning is based on analysis of IRO arrangements and provision so that appropriate caseloads are maintained in the new service arrangements	Target operating model for phase two CSC reconfiguration agreed. TOM implemented	February 2015 TBC	IHWB Programme Manager Alison Botham
8.2	Further actions to be potentially scoped	TBC	TBC	Alison Botham

AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT 9: Ensure that short-term placement stability is improved for looked after children**OBJECTIVES:**

- Children in short-term placements do not experience disruption to their placement; and
- Social workers have a range of providers to match a child to when a child comes in to care in an emergency.

OUTCOMES:

- There is an increase in the sufficiency of foster carers in the city;
- There is an increase in emergency access to short term placement providers through improved commissioning contracts; and
- Placement stability meetings continue to be held for any child where there is a risk of a placement ending in an unplanned way.

MEASURED BY:

- Reduction in moves for children in short-term placements;
- Increase in the availability of emergency placements; and
- Contract monitoring
- School Placement Stability

ACTION		PROGRESS MILESTONES	TARGET DATE	DELIVERY LEAD
9.1	Review and update LAC strategy Placement stability Action Plan	Placement stability plan up dated	February 2015	Anne Osborne
9.2	Commissioning intentions established	Commissioning intentions agreed	February 2015	Liz Cahill
9.3	Business case for wrap around service arrangements	Business case considered	February 2015	Liz Cahill
9.4	Further actions to be agreed dependent on the outcome of the above	TBC	TBC	Alison Botham

AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT 10: Improve analysis to identify trends and ensure sufficiency of placements for children who require adoption

OBJECTIVES:

- There is a continual understanding of the needs of children who require adoption placements so that efforts to increase adoptive placements meet needs; and
- There is a better understanding of the sufficiency of the placements available for children who require adoption; and

OUTCOMES:

- The local authority is able to predict the future need children who require adoption and are able to influence the sufficiency of adoptive placements available; and
- Children who require adoption are match to adopters who most meet their needs.

MEASURED BY:

- Decrease in the need for post adoption support
- Decrease in adoption breakdown

ACTION		PROGRESS MILESTONES	TARGET DATE	DELIVERY LEAD
10.1	Agree framework for improved data and analysis including the necessary requirements for the Care First up grade	New framework and reporting functions agreed	March 2015	Anne Osborne
10.2	Further actions will be identified as the framework is agreed	TBC	TBC	TBC

AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT 11: Develop robust arrangements to monitor the decision making and progress of care planning for children who require adoption

OBJECTIVE:

Arrangements for children who require adoption continue to improve and undue delay is avoided.

OUTCOMES:

- The quality of children's permanence reports continues to improve;
- The existing arrangements for matching children with adopters and adoption support plans continue to improve; and
- Quality assurance within the children in care and adoption services' evidences decision making and monitoring provides support and challenge which accelerates plans.

MEASURED BY:

- Thematic audits evidence robust decision making and monitoring;
- Reduction in disruption of adoption placements;
- Plans moving to adoption

ACTION		PROGRESS MILESTONES	TARGET DATE	DELIVERY LEAD
11.1	Continue to improve timescales through the implementation of the two-stage adoption process to assess adopters	Quarterly review	TBC	Alison Botham
11.2	Review and revise current monitoring and analysis arrangements	Revised monitoring arrangements in place	March 2015	Anne Osborne
11.3	Care First upgrade includes appropriate reporting arrangements in place for all adoption requirements	Care First upgrade requirements established	March 2015	Anne Osborne
11.4	Further actions to be confirmed	TBC	TBC	Anne Osborne

AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT 12: Take action to increase the number of care leavers in education, employment and training (EET)**OBJECTIVE:**

All Care Leavers receive the appropriate level of education, employment or training.

OUTCOMES:

- Care Leavers are prioritised in schemes and programmes designed to increase the number of young people in education, employment and training;
- Continue to deliver plans which support care leavers in to education, employment or training through the re-introduction of mentors;
- Continue to provide priority places on the Summer Mix Programme, helping them to make decisions about their future careers;
- Continue to provide apprenticeships to care leavers at the local authority; and
- There is a plan in place to address the deficit of 19 year old care leavers in Education, employment and training.

MEASURED BY:

- Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training;
- Percentage of 19 year old care leavers in education, employment or training;
- Percentage of care leavers participating in programmes delivered jointly with Job Centre Plus and Plymouth University;
- Percentage of care leavers participating in Summer Mix;
- Number of apprenticeships awarded to care leavers at the local authority; and Number of schemes and programmes where priority to care leavers is considered.

ACTION		PROGRESS MILESTONES	TARGET DATE	DELIVERY LEAD
12.1	Agree additional actions for care leavers to improve their take up of education, training or employment	Action plan agreed and implemented	tbc	John Miller
12.2	Social care reconfiguration planning includes care leavers	See milestones above for improvement 2 and TOM	TBC	Alison Botham
12.3	Further Action within the Skills Plan	TBC	TBC	Judith Harwood

AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT 13: Ensure that care leavers have detailed pathway plans that are up to date and set out clearly significant steps that will help them in their transition to independence

OBJECTIVE:

Care Leavers are supported in achieving independence through clear and detailed pathway plans

OUTCOMES:

- Care Leavers continue to receive appropriate information about their entitlements;
- Pathway plans consistently include medical histories; and
- Continue to issue Health Passports to care leavers

MEASURED BY:

- Thematic audits of pathway plans evidence quality; and
- Number of care leavers who have been issued Health passports.

ACTION		PROGRESS MILESTONES	TARGET DATE	DELIVERY LEAD
13.1	Review and revise current protocols, and ensure that implementation is effectively monitored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review and revised protocol in place; and ▪ Effective monitoring arrangements agreed and in place. 	TBC TBC	John Miller
13.2	Further actions will be identified as the framework is agreed	TBC	TBC	John Miller

AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT 14: Work with care leavers and looked after children to develop a local care leaver 'pledge' that reflects their needs and that is in clear and accessible language

OBJECTIVE:

All care leavers are aware of our local pledge to care leavers

OUTCOMES:

- A care-leaving booklet is given to all young people when they become a care leavers which is written in a style that is accessible to them; and
- Personal Advisors continue to explain the pledge commitment to them.

MEASURED BY:

- Exit interviews for care leavers (TBC)
- Improved participation

ACTION		PROGRESS MILESTONES	TARGET DATE	DELIVERY LEAD
14.1	Work with Care Leavers and the Listen and Care Council to agree a local care leavers pledge	Pledge agreed Pledge implemented and monitoring arrangements in place	April 2015 May 2015	John Miller

AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT 15: Ensure that assessments are consistently of good quality, analytical, child- focused, and take into account risk and protective factors

OBJECTIVE:

The quality of assessments is consistently good, include analysis, consider all risk factors, include research to inform practice and include clear and detailed decisions.

OUTCOMES:

- Continue to ensure the voice of the child is evident in all assessments;
- Assessments include analysis, risk factors and research to inform care planning; and
- Assessments are completed in a timely manner.

MEASURED BY:

- Case and thematic Audits evidence impact on the ongoing improvement in quality of assessments; and
- Number of assessment completed within timescales.

ACTION		PROGRESS MILESTONES	TARGET DATE	DELIVERY LEAD
15.1	Agree quality assurance and audit framework for assessments	Framework agreed and implemented	April 2015	Joy Howick
15.2	Review and monitor the impact of action plans as a result of audits with quarterly reporting	Monitoring periods established and implemented	First report June 2015 and then quarterly	Joy Howick
15.3	Quarterly QA reporting mechanisms agreed for IROs as part of reconfiguration	Framework agreed and implemented	TBC	Siobhan Wallace

AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT 16: Ensure that children's plans are outcome-focused, specific and include timescales; are reviewed and updated following significant events; and are written in straightforward language that parents, carers and children can understand

OBJECTIVE:

Plans for children are effective documents for families which include clear outcomes, specific, achievable targets with timescales and contingency plans.

OUTCOMES:

- Plans contain important information to inform appropriate decision making;
- Plans are explicit about children's needs and provide good analysis;
- Child protection reports and minutes are written in a clear style so that families can understand them;
- Plans include evidence of IRO scrutiny and challenge;
- Plans are updated following significant events;
- Issues of equality and diversity are evident within care plans when they are effectively considered;
- Management oversight ensures that children's plans are realistic and deliverable within acceptable timescales; and
- Management oversight and sign off of plans ensures that there is consistency across the service in the quality of children's plans.

MEASURED BY:

- Case and thematic audits evidence improve quality of children's plans; and
- Children's Plans are completed within timescales.

ACTION		PROGRESS MILESTONES	TARGET DATE	DELIVERY LEAD
16.1	Current CP Plan improvement is reviewed and up dated	Revised improvement plan implemented and monitoring agreed	April 2015	Joy Howick
16.2	LAC strategy specifically reviewed in relation to improving the quality of care planning for children in care	Revised plan in place	April 2015	Anne Osborne
16.3	CIN Plans improvement plan agreed	Plan agreed and monitoring agreed	April 2015	Joy Howick

AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT 17: Take action to ensure that child protection conferences are held within statutory timescales and are attended by relevant partners

OBJECTIVE:

Important information about children's lives is shared at Child Protection Conferences which are well attended and timely

OUTCOMES:

- Child Protection conference are held within 15 working days of strategy discussions; and
- The police and GPs regularly attend Child Protection Conferences;

MEASURED BY:

- Case and Thematic Audits evidence that there has been an improvement in the written style of child protection reports and minutes;
- Number of child protection conferences held within timescale; and
- Number of Police and GPs attending Child Protection Conferences.

ACTION		PROGRESS MILESTONES	TARGET DATE	DELIVERY LEAD
17.1	Identification of current issues impacting on the timeliness of initial CPC's	All issues identified	February 2015	Joy Howick and Siobhan Wallace
17.2	Action plan in place to address issues	Action plan agreed and implemented	March 2015	Joy Howick and Siobhan Wallace
17.3	Agreed arrangements for improving attendance of police at CPCs agreed between police and CSC	Improvement plan agreed, presented to PSCB and implemented	January 2015	Alison Botham
17.4	Arrangements agreed to improve GP attendance at CPCs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with NHS England to agree a plan to improve GP attendance and contributions to CPCs; Plan agreed and presented to PSCB; and Plan implemented and improved attendance and contributions achieved. 	<p>February 2015</p> <p>March 2015</p>	Alison Botham