

# **AMBITIOUS PLYMOUTH SCRUTINY**

## **IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE ON PROGRESS**



### **Overview Briefing**

Following the October/November 2014 Ofsted Inspection (for Children in need of Help and Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers), an Improvement Board was established to monitor an Improvement Plan. This Improvement Plan was sent back to Ofsted on the 14<sup>th</sup> April.

On 11<sup>th</sup> March 2015 the first meeting of the Improvement Board was held. The Improvement Board is a sub group of the Children and Young People's Partnership. The plan is also subject to scrutiny by the Chief Executive (PCC), the Leader and the Leader of the opposition, Portfolio Holders, Chair of the LSCB, Director for Children's Services (PCC), at the quarterly Safeguarding Assurance meeting.

Progress against the plan will be reported formally to the Improvement Board and the Safeguarding Assurance Meeting in June. A short summary update of progress against the plan is contained below:

<b>Improvement Area</b>		<b>Overview</b>
1	Ensure that practitioners have reasonable workloads.	On going monitoring and service area action plans are in place. The issue of social work caseloads is also being addressed under phase 2 of Transformation.
2	Improve management oversight on casework and the quality of staff supervision.	There is a quality assurance framework for supervision in place from June 1 <sup>st</sup> which includes auditing standards, and staff have attended training and workshop events to secure an improvement in quality.
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.	The Care First upgrade was completed bringing us in line with the OLM developments on the 31 <sup>st</sup> March. The Mapping and Business analysis to determine and document further system requirements is underway. The requirements for improved reporting are in test at present.
4	Robustly challenge commissioners to ensure that child protection medical examinations are conducted without undue delay.	Arrangement for child protection medicals have been discussed with Derriford hospital and a new contract for paediatric services is in place to secure the required improvements. This will be monitored by the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).
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.	A performance framework has been agreed and is being shared with partners to determine any further revisions. The membership of the operation MACSE meetings has been reviewed and additional partners have been invited and are attending, for example education welfare. The meetings are held on a fortnightly basis and consider data from 'return interviews'.
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.	The Target Operating Model has been drawn up and this will form part of the Transformation work that is underway in the services for children young people and families.

7	Conduct a further test of assurance, including a risk assessment, of the dual role of the Director of Children's Services (DCS).	The Director of Childrens Services (DCS) Assurance test is currently under review, will be complete in June and will be subject to audit.
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.	Independent chair tasks and case loads will be reviewed in line with Phase 3 of Transformation. However, new ways of working are being piloted in the interim to improve capacity.
9	Ensure that short-term placement stability is improved for looked after children.	Task groups have met to create new action planning in relation to Placement Stability. These will be in place by end of May. The consultation on the Integrated Children and Young People's Commissioning Strategy is complete and an final draft is being developed for publication in June. The in house sufficiency strategy has been reviewed and a business review is underway with commissioning in relation to sufficiency across all fostering and residential provision.
10	Improve analysis to identify trends and ensure sufficiency of placements for children who require adoption.	Adoption TV campaign with peninsula authorities was launched in April for one week and will be repeated in October 2015 and January 2016. The two stage adoption process to assess adopters has been achieved and is being reviewed quarterly. The Care First upgrade requirements for adoption are being mapped at present and will be complete by end of June. A requirements log will then be created and CF6 will be reconfigured to enable appropriate reporting requirements. In parallel the adoption team with performance have created manual reporting systems.
11	Develop robust arrangements to monitor the decision making and progress of care planning for children who require adoption.	A new process for scrutiny around permanence has been developed and a Permanence Decisions Panel will be in place from June.
12	Take action to increase the number of care leavers in education, employment and training (EET).	The virtual school worker is now embedded in the Care Leavers Team and meetings are being coordinated with the University, Careers South West and City College to explore further support for care leavers.
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.	A review of pathway plans has been undertaken and we are working with young people to make the plans more meaningful and user friendly.
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.	A meeting has been held to initiate participation by young people to implement the embedding of the Plymouth Pledge.
15	Ensure that assessments are consistently	There is an action plan in place to improve the

	of good quality, analytical, child- focused, and take into account risk and protective factors.	quality of written assessments. Staff have attended training and a new quality assurance framework will be in place by the end of June.
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.	Actions plans are being created by June to address the implementaion of ‘outcome’ focused care planning and the training and development requirements along with IT required. This will include the role of a young people’s group to contribute to development of plans.
17	Take action to ensure that child protection conferences are held within statutory timescales and are attended by relevant partners.	An action plan is in place to improve the timeliness of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs). A penisular-wide protocol (with attendance targets) has been drawn up to improve the attendance of GPs and Police at ICPCs, which will be ratified at peninsular LSCBs in June. The LSCBs will monitor attendance as part of their data sets and provide challenge where appropriate.