



**Notice of a public meeting of
Children, Education & Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee**

To: Councillors D Taylor (Chair), Webb (Vice-Chair),
Daubeney, Fenton, Fitzpatrick, Heaton and Hollyer

Date: Tuesday, 24 September 2019

Time: 5.30 pm

Venue: The Thornton Room - Ground Floor, West Offices (G039)

AGENDA

1. Declarations of Interest

At this point, Members are asked to declare:

- any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests
- any prejudicial interests or
- any disclosable pecuniary interests

which they may have in respect of business on this agenda

2. Minutes (Pages 1 - 10)

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2019.

3. Public Participation

At this point in the meeting members of the public who have registered to speak can do so. The deadline for registering is **5.00pm on Monday 23 September 2019**. Members of the public can speak on agenda items or matters within the remit of the committee.

To register to speak please contact the Democracy Officer for the meeting, on the details at the foot of the agenda.

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- 4. Attendance of Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education** (Pages 11 - 18)
The Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education will be in attendance to provide an update on his priorities and challenges for the 2019-20 municipal year.
- 5. Local Area Teams - Update** (Pages 19 - 36)
This paper provides an update on the outcome of a multi-agency audit into early help arrangements.
- 6. City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership (CYSCP) Update** (Pages 37 - 44)
This report provides an update on the activity of City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- 7. Overview of Children's Services** (Pages 45 - 84)
The report will explain how the required improvements in City of York Council children's services will be achieved and what conditions must be put in place to ensure longstanding sustained change.

8. Cultural Entitlement for Young People (Pages 85 - 88)

This report provides an update on work to develop a cultural entitlement for young people.

9. Work Plan (Pages 89 - 92)

To consider the committee's draft work plan for the municipal year 2019-20.

10. Urgent Business

Any other business which the Chair considers urgent under the Local Government Act 1972.

Democracy Officer

Louise Cook

Contact details:

- Telephone – (01904) 551031
- Email - louise.cook@york.gov.uk

For more information about any of the following please contact the Democratic Services Officer responsible for servicing this meeting:

- Registering to speak
- Business of the meeting
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- For receiving reports in other formats

Contact details are set out above.

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我們也用您們的語言提供這個信息 (Cantonese)

এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় দেয়া যেতে পারে। (Bengali)

Ta informacja może być dostarczona w twoim własnym języku. (Polish)

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde almanız mümkündür. (Turkish)

یہ معلومات آپ کی اپنی زبان (بولی) میں بھی میا کی جاسکتی ہیں۔ (Urdu)

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City of York Council

Committee Minutes

Meeting	Children, Education & Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee
Date	23 July 2019
Present	Councillors D Taylor (Chair), Webb (Vice-Chair), Daubeney, Fenton, Fitzpatrick, Heaton and Hollyer

9. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Taylor declared a personal non prejudicial interest as he was a non-Executive Director of Make it York.

Cllr Daubeney declared a personal non prejudicial interest in agenda item 5, York Museums Trust Report Against Core Partnership Objectives January to June 2019, in that he was a Trustee of York Museums Trust.

10. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25 June 2019 be approved as a correct record and then signed by the Chair.

11. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

12. Attendance of the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Communities

The Executive Member for Culture, Leisure & Communities was in attendance to provide an update on his priorities and challenges for the 2019/20 municipal year.

The Executive Member highlighted key points around his portfolio area and he thanked council officers and Heads of Service for supporting him in his new executive role. He expressed gratitude to the Head of Community and Equalities,

who had recently taken up a new role outside of the council, and confirmed that the recruitment of an interim Head was in place.

Members noted that:

- The Executive Member had received an excellent introduction to his portfolio area and had enjoyed visiting a large number of organisations across the city.
- Ward committee working was a particular priority.
- The new budget proposals agreed at Council outlined significant investment within the Executive Members portfolio area.

Members thanked the Executive Member for his detailed report and as a result of questions raised he responded and it was noted that:

- The Safer Community Fund total was £250,000 and it would be devolved to Ward Committees allowing ward councillors, in combination with local partners, to determine their own priorities to make their wards a safer community.
- Consultation was still in process to deliver a new library in Haxby.
- Increased partnership working would support young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) and would ensure better provision in the future.
- Community centres could bid for up to £4000 from the council's grants fund.
- The 100k budget allocated from central government to support local authorities to develop connections with communities most impacted by EU exit, would be used to fund a post and resources.
- GoodGym had done some excellent work and do maintain appropriate measures regarding safeguarding.
- Park and open spaces crossed Executive Member portfolio areas.

Members thanked the Executive Member for his update and the Chair congratulated Professor Chris Bailey and his colleagues for developing York as a City of Arts, for building a relationship with Unesco and producing a report that received the highest rating possible.

Resolved:

- (i) That the update from the Executive Member on his portfolio area be received and noted.
- (ii) That the reason for the delay on repairing park facilities within Millennium Park be investigated and emailed to the Ward Member.

Reason: To update the Committee on the challenges and priorities within the Executive Members portfolio areas.

13. York Museums Trust Report Against Core Partnership Objectives January to June 2019

Members considered a report that updated them on York Museums Trust (YMT) core partnership objectives between January and June 2019.

The Chief Executive of York Museums Trust was in attendance to present the report. She highlighted their key objectives and Members noted that the 2018/19 financial year had been very challenging.

Members noted that:

- The Rose Theatre had lowered its hoardings this year so the impact on visitor numbers to the Castle Museum had not been affected.
- The planning for the redevelopment of the Castle Museum and the Castle Gateway continued in close collaboration with City of York Council and the Castle Gateway Masterplan.
- Prices had increased slightly including charging for children but this charge did not apply to children who resided in York.
- Burton Green Primary School had curated its own exhibition and it was on display in the Art Gallery.
- The Ruskin, Turner and the Storm Cloud Exhibition had doubled visitor numbers at the Art Gallery.
- The number of active volunteers had improved.
- The Viking: Rediscover the Legend exhibition was still on loan to Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery, which had enabled a successful partnership with the British Museum.

The Chief Executive answered Members questions regarding revenue opportunities in the Museum Gardens, engagement with schools, online ticketing, gift aid and their relationship with English Heritage.

Members thanked the Chief Executive and Head of Strategy, Finance and Corporate Services for their update and welcomed the excellent exhibitions held at the Art Gallery.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To keep the Committee updated on the work of YMT.

14. 2018/19 Finance and Performance Outturn Report - Children, Education and Communities

This report analyses the latest performance for 2018/19 and forecasts the financial outturn position by reference to the service plans and budgets for all of the services falling under the responsibility of the Corporate Director of Children, Education & Communities.

The Finance Manager was in attendance to give an update and he highlighted the finance and performance headlines and Members noted that the finance position showed a draft outturn overspend of £896k which represented a small improvement of 47k compared to the position at quarter 3.

He brought to Members attention some significant financial pressures in children social care, particularly within the special educational needs (SEN) element of home to school transport, dedicated schools grant and the high needs budgets supporting alternative provision and SEN.

Members raised concerns regarding the significant home to school transport overspend and it was noted that this was a challenge nationally and officers were considering options to address this pressure. Some Members suggested that this concern could be a potential scrutiny review topic but officers felt it would be more appropriate to revisit next year following the Inclusion Review.

The overspend on placement costs were also addressed and the independent foster carer agencies were a concern to Members as they appeared to be favoured routes for carers,

rather than the local authority, due higher payments made by independent agencies. Officers confirmed that the challenge in recruiting foster carers was a national issue and they were working on ways to improve this and would be providing a more intense training and support package to foster carers as well as improving recruitment and marketing campaigns.

Members thanked the Finance Manager for his update and the Scrutiny Officer reminded Members that in order for a scrutiny review to be carried out Councillors must complete a scrutiny topic registration form outlining the reasons behind the need for the review. On receiving a completed registration form, the Scrutiny Officer would then produce a feasibility report in consultation with Councillors, relevant officers across the Council and where necessary relevant partner organisations.

Resolved: That the Committee be updated on the performance position for 2018/19.

Reason: To update the committee on the latest financial and performance position for 2018/19.

15. Refresh of Ward Committees

Members considered a report that sought their initial views on key issues concerning the council's approach to Ward Committees.

The Assistant Director of Communities and Equalities gave an update and confirmed that Members comments would help shape a forthcoming report to the Executive on 29 August 2019.

Members discussed the potential issues within ward funding, resident engagement, highway schemes, ward committee meetings and the value of ward working and made the following comments:

- **Safer Communities Funding:** Members advised that criteria for the funding should not be too prescriptive and that it was important that Wards demonstrated how their schemes contributed towards the creation of safer communities.
- **Resident Engagement:** It was felt that some Member sessions to exchange best practice on engagement and ideas on ward schemes would be helpful. It was also

suggested that Community Involvement Officers could produce updates for Members with examples of good practice and that the approaches used in recent financial inclusion projects be extended more widely.

- **Communication Methods:** It was noted that there was no longer any print communication with residents notifying them of ward engagement events. A new approach to contacting and engaging with residents, particularly hard to reach groups, was required.
- **Ward Highways:** A structure was required to ensure Ward Members had a good understanding of the funding available, the process and the timely manner of highway schemes. It was suggested that examples of schemes funded could be shared and that it should be noted that this funding could be spent on wider infrastructure than simply roads.
- **Sharing Good Practice:** Members agreed that case studies should be shared amongst wards and that new Members should receive a more detailed overview of their wards.

Resolved: That Members comments be noted on the key issues to be included in a forthcoming report to the Executive.

Reason: To help shape the Executive paper.

16. Food Poverty Scrutiny Review

This report invited the Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee to nominate a Member to sit on an Ad-Hoc Scrutiny Committee established by the Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee (CSMC) to investigate food poverty in York.

The Scrutiny Officer highlighted the background to the proposals and confirmed that CSMC had agreed the following remit:

- Identify indicators and measures for York to monitor the impact of food poverty.
- Identify areas of best practice within these activities.

- Identify opportunities to coordinate activities to increase impact and carry out an assessment of current service provision and sustainability.
- Identify opportunities to target activities at the lowest income households to more effectively prevent food poverty.

Members confirmed that food poverty was an important issue that crossed a number of scrutiny committees and they discussed which Member should be appointed.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report and annex be noted.
- (ii) That the Chair investigate the political balance of the Ad-Hoc Scrutiny Committee investigating food poverty in York and nominate either Cllr Fitzpatrick or Cllr Hollyer or both should more than one nomination be permitted.

Reason: To understand and help tackle issues related to food poverty in York.

17. Work Plan

The Committee considered its draft work plan for the municipal year 2019-20.

Following discussion, it was noted that:

- Finance and performance monitoring reports were to be received on a bi-annual basis.
- The County Lines report expected on the 28 October 2019 Housing and Community Safety Policy and Scrutiny Committee agenda should also be circulated to Members of this Committee and that Members be invited to contribute to the County Lines discussion at that meeting.

Resolved: That the work plan be approved subject to the above amendments/additions.

Reason: To keep the committee's work plan updated.

18. Scrutiny of York Learning

Members considered a report that proposed strengthened scrutiny arrangements for York Learning through the establishment of a Stakeholder Governance Board to support the strategic leadership of the service.

The Scrutiny Officer gave an update and confirmed that the recommendations within the report were not constitutionally in line with the Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee's remit so the report was just for noting. Members were informed that appointments to Committees were agreed at Annual Council and that Staffing Matters & Urgency Committee had the authority to deal with any in year changes and appointments to any Committees or outside bodies.

The Assistant Director of Communities and Equalities highlighted the background to the proposals and informed Members that the new Board would produce a report for this Committee to consider annually on the performance of York Learning and that Members could comment on the proposed terms of reference for the new Board.

The Acting Head of York Learning highlighted how the proposed strengthened scrutiny arrangements must demonstrate to Ofsted that it had secure and robust governance arrangements in place and that the new Board would help to support the strategic leadership and direction of the service by providing appropriate challenge on performance.

In answer to Members questions it was confirmed that:

- York Learning would report back to this Committee.
- The appointments to the new Board would be agreed at Staffing Matters and Urgency Committee.
- A self-assessment report would be considered by this Committee, before it was submitted to Ofsted
- The appointments made to the Board would be clear and transparent.

Resolved:

- (i) That the proposed strengthened scrutiny arrangements for York Learning, through the establishment of a Stakeholder Governance Board

to support the strategic leadership of the service, be noted.

- (ii) That Members be informed on the appointments made to the Board.

Reason: In order to be updated on the scrutiny arrangements for York Learning.

Cllr D Taylor, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.35 pm].

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Children, Education and Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee

24 September 2019

Report to Children, Education & Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee from the Executive Member for Children, Young People & Education

1. By the date on which the Committee considers this report, almost exactly four months will have elapsed since the Annual Council at which I was appointed to this position. Since that point, I have spent most of my time on three tasks: firstly in familiarising myself with the work covered in this very significant portfolio, secondly in getting up to speed with recent developments and with what is happening now and thirdly in starting to meet the Council's staff and the other people involved in delivering it. Across the board, there has been a warm and open welcome from our own staff, from head teachers and their staff, health professionals and voluntary sector colleagues alike; I am grateful to them all for this and I look forward to working with them and with others who I have yet to meet.
2. The three main areas covered in the portfolio are given in the title of the post and this report aims to describe the challenges and priorities that have so far been encountered in each.

Education, Skills and SEND

3. The overarching aims here can be described as:
 - Every child has a place in a 'good' (or better) setting or in a school that fosters their joy in learning
 - Every child is in a provision which meets their need and allows them to achieve to the best of their ability
 - Ensuring every setting/school promotes well-being and is trauma- and mental health-informed in its practice

- Every child and family is listened to and engages in decisions about how their needs are met
- Every young person is enabled to develop the confidence, knowledge and skills needed to make a secure transition to adult life

4. The current assessment of priorities is:

- The future role of the Local Authority in education is an important strategic driver for our city, its people and its economy. Nationally, our education system has suffered from the fragmentation arising from academisation, although York has been able to avoid this to some extent. Having a good relationship with (and between) all our schools is particularly important to ensure that our city retains an inclusive school system. To me, the role of the Executive Member is particularly important in maintaining, promoting and developing this to underpin the collegiate approach that has been such a feature of York's education system during the last two decades
- We should continue to develop and refine the York Schools and Academies Board (YSAB) to create a sustainable sector led school improvement system in York; I hope to attend a meeting of YSAB shortly asunder will cover this in a later report
- We should commission and monitor the impact of school support plans to ensure that all schools are at least 'good'
- We should support schools to meet the challenges of the new Ofsted education inspection framework. This has a specific focus on curriculum and in 2019-20 York will be working to promote the importance of curriculum design to support the achievement of all children but also how it supports their social emotional health and well-being through a focus on the creative and cultural curriculum
- We should work with partners to deliver sufficient places in good and better settings and schools. While York has an effective and strongly-performing school place planning team, demographic challenges coming from changes in the birth rate and the economy, from population movement and new housing developments, are expected to continue

- We need to improve speech, language and communication skills gained during the early years through the successful implementation of the social mobility action plan during 2019-20. Achieving this should help narrow the gap for children from disadvantaged families and contribute to reducing the inequalities that we know affect children later in life but which are already evident by the end of Year 1
 - We must continue with our efforts to narrow the gap by maintaining high educational standards for all children, yet ensuring that outcomes for children from disadvantaged and vulnerable groups are at least as good as those for similar children nationally
 - We should complete and implement the findings from the Inclusion Review to ensure that York delivers good outcomes for all children and young people with SEND and that they are well prepared for adult life
 - We should revise and implement the Fair Access Protocol and the work of the Behaviour and Attendance Partnership so as to deliver better outcomes for children who are at risk of exclusion and need to access alternative provision
 - We should work with partners, including regional LEPs, the Department for Education, local schools, settings and FE and HE providers, to develop the aptitudes and skills that all children need to be successful as adults
 - We should continue to promote apprenticeships, internships and supported employment
 - We should revise the SEND strategy for 2020
 - We should develop and launch the new Skills Plan in 2020
 - We should deliver the schools capital programme which includes projects to improve provision for children and young people with SEND
5. Affecting many of these priorities, school funding remains a key risk for the York schools system. Given the limited changes it outlines, the Chancellor's recent spending announcement is still being analysed as far as is possible, but it does not appear to offer improved financial support

across the board for all of York's schools. As a result of this and existing pressures on some school budgets, close monitoring of maintained schools' budgets will be taking place during 2019-20.

6. The announcement of an additional £700 million to support SEND, whilst welcome, does not address the existing pressures on high needs funding which have been created by the growth in the numbers of children and young people supported by education, health and care plans and the extension of the age range of the plans to 25.
7. The growth in the numbers of young people accessing alternative provision continues to place a pressure on transport budgets. In order to address this a detailed review of alternative provision pathways in York is taking place and will be co-constructed with schools.

Children's Social Care

8. A significant part of the Children's Social Care Service work is currently aimed at delivering, standardising and embedding the Improvement Plan which also responds to Ofsted's Focused Visit in July, some of the immediate objectives of the Improvement Board being:
 - To implement appropriate organisational changes to underpin a consistent approach to application of threshold and improved timeliness of decision making. This is being achieved through the re-organisation of the former Assessment and Referral teams based on a MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) approach. Working Together 2018 guidance brings together the three main partners (local authority, health and police) and this is now embodied in the critical initial stage of case appraisal and response
 - To incorporate a clearer focus on practice into staff supervision, achieving a more consistent approach with better management oversight and improved case direction
 - To strengthen the quality of plans to be SMART, to ensure that they focus on the needs of the child and give clear guidance on what parents and carers must do to reduce risk within an agreed timeframe that is right for the child.

- To ensure that visits by social workers have a clear purpose and are recorded in line with the plan (including the voice of the child)
- To embed the new quality assurance framework and improve the quality of practice through the effective use of appropriate and timely performance information
- To consolidate the changes to workforce recruitment and retention so as to eliminate the use of agency staff as far as possible and minimise the number of changes to a child's social worker arising from staff turnover
- To improve case monitoring and oversight to avoid the over-long retention of plans and to minimise drift and delay in both Child in Need and Child Protection cases
- To ensure that cases are allocated to appropriately qualified and experienced staff to avoid unnecessary risk and over-burdening
- To improve the availability and consistent recording of case chronologies
- To improve the knowledge and experience of child protection work in the health and disability team
- To consolidate continuing audit work to establish the overall quality of practice and to provide learning for staff so as to improve children's experiences in their journeys through the child in need/child protection system

9. More widely, other current priorities are:

- To consolidate the effective management of response to demand, so as to ensure a 'right child, right place, right time' result
- To strengthen our current approach to attracting, recruiting and retaining social workers so as to ensure we have a stable and

confident workforce with a clear focus on reflection, learning and development (a new Social Work Academy has been established and goes live on 14th October)

- To progress the delivery of the new 'Centre of Excellence' short breaks for disabled children provision, due to be operational in June 2020; also to ensure that our existing provision remains fit for purpose
- To ensure sufficiency of placements for Children and Young People in Care by recruiting additional foster carers or up-skilling existing foster carers and providing suitable residential accommodation in the city
- To ensure that the Terms of Reference of the YorOK Board are better aligned with the new arrangements for the City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership, which has replaced the former Children's Trust under Working Together 2018
- To complete and act on the current evaluation of the impact of Local Area Teams and review the Early Help offer to include a more targeted approach at that level.
- To improve multi-agency contribution to and involvement in the early help agenda
- To improve audit and case reviews, making them more consistent and incorporating the use of accurate performance information
- To improve performance in Troubled Families working
- To strengthen workforce development across the partnership to include the introduction of a new Threshold Document to strengthen safeguarding practice.

Author of report

Executive Member for Children, Young People & Education

Cllr Ian Cuthbertson

Abbreviations

FE- Further Education

LEP- Local Enterprise Partnerships

MASH- Multi Agency

Ofsted- Office for Standards in Education

SEND- Special Educational Needs and Disability

SMART Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time based

YSAB – York Schools and Academies Board

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Children, Education & Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee

24 September 2019

Report of the Corporate Director of Children, Education and Communities

Local Area Teams - Update**Summary**

1. In March 2019 the Children, Education & Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee received an update on Local Area Teams and wider early help arrangements.
2. The scrutiny committee asked to be updated on the outcome of a multi-agency audit into early help arrangements. This paper provides that update and covers:
 - a. Findings from the multi-agency audit into early help arrangements.
 - b. How this audit is informing the review of early help arrangements and the development of a new early help strategy.
 - c. The next steps in reviewing and revising the early help offer in York.

Background

3. We know that for many children, young people and families York is a great place to live and grow up. However we also know that this isn't the story for everyone. Still too often challenges and emerging difficulties in families lives mean children don't achieve their full potential. In some cases these challenges grow, meaning that families need more intrusive and higher level interventions. The purpose of early help is to identify need as it emerges and to address that need at the earliest opportunity. The role of early help is also to support families which have received a statutory intervention to continue their progress towards better outcomes and improved resilience.

4. Previous updates to this committee have focused on the role of Local Area Teams and their implementation. The current review of early help that is underway includes Local Area Teams but does so in the context of the wider landscape of York's early help offer.
5. Early help is a collaboration not a single service. Everyone is involved in the delivery of early help. This includes families, communities, voluntary groups, "universal" provision, schools, health etc. There is a complex and diverse landscape of services across York that work together in this arena.

Reviewing the early help offer

6. As outlined in the previous section early help is wider than just a single service. As such a number of work streams are underway to review York's early help offer.
 - a. **Early Help Task and Finish Group** - A time bound multi-agency task and finish group. This draws together all of the threads of work reviewing the early help offer. The early help task and finish group has drafted a revised early help strategy.
 - b. **Multi-agency Early Help Audit** - A multi-agency audit based on the requirements of Working Together 2018 has been undertaken. The results from this audit forms the basis of this paper.
 - c. **Reviewing the Local Area Team Offer** - Local Area Teams came into being in January 2017. Internal reviews into the effectiveness of the LAT role in early help are being undertaken.
 - d. **Early Help Partnership** - This is the key city-wide multi-agency forum driving the early help agenda in York. This groups reports into the YorOK Board and also the safeguarding partnership.
7. Early help arrangements were not directly reviewed within the recent Ofsted focused visit. However early help arrangements in the city have a key role to play in any improvement journey following the visit. As such the early help review must be seen in the context of its impact on demand management for statutory services.

Multi-agency Early Help Audit

8. The YorOK board and Early Help Partnership instigated a multi-agency audit of early help arrangements in spring 2019. Working Together 2018 sets the expectations for all partners in relation to early help it was agreed to use this as a framework for the multi-agency audit. A copy of the audit used with partners is attached as Annex 1.
9. An extract from Working Together 2018 is shown below.
 - a. “Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child’s life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Early help can also prevent further problems arising; for example, if it is provided as part of a support plan where a child has returned home to their family from care, or in families where there are emerging parental mental health issues or drug and alcohol misuse. Effective early help relies upon local organisations and agencies working together to:
 - i. identify children and families who would benefit from early help
 - ii. undertake an assessment of the need for early help
 - iii. provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to improve the outcomes for the child.
10. The early help audit asked different agencies to self-report about their role in relation to early help and the overall early help offer in the city. This is instead of seeking feedback on a single agency or service within that wider offer. As such the audit is broadly qualitative in nature rather than quantitative.
11. There were 92 responses to the audit. Responses came from a good range of agencies and the breakdown is shown below.

Sector	Responses
Health	9
Local Authority	16
Police	5
Private	15
Schools / Education	35

Voluntary and Community Sector	9
(blank)	3
Grand Total	92

12. Health responses included responses from GPs, CAMHS, CCG, sexual health services and York Teaching Hospital.

Identification of need

13. Agencies reported back a range of different techniques by which families in need of support were identified. This reflected the different nature of organisations and their relationship with children, young people and families. For example:
- a. Going into family homes
 - b. Observation within childcare or education settings
 - c. Patient consultations
 - d. Through forming relationships
 - e. By referral
14. The use of tools and systems to identify need was present in a number of responses:
- a. “We have a strong safeguarding team to identify any safeguarding concerns, well-being or any families in need of help. We work closely to identify and target these children in school. We have a school SENCO and an Early Years SENCO to identify SEN needs. We work closely with the LAT to share information and support families.” – A school
 - b. “My role as pastoral care officer means I build up a relationship with parents and carers so they trust me to work with them. If staff have concerns about a child I will contact the parent to support. Our school uses CPOMS (software used by schools to monitor child protection, safeguarding, pastoral and welfare issues) to highlight concerns.” – A school
 - c. “The nursery works with children and families in the local area, providing care and education for children. As part of this work we often identify children and families in need – either through monitoring and assessing children’s development or through our partnership with parents/carers” – A childcare provider.

15. Agencies were asked to reflect how well practitioners understood their role within early help. At a simplistic level most agencies responded to say that staff knew their roles well. However limited assurance can be drawn from a series of statements (18) saying that practitioners understood their role “well” or “very well” without any further context.
16. Agencies responded with confidence on links with Local Area Teams and Local Area Support Practitioners.
 - a. “We understand our role very well through ongoing support and advice from Local Area Support Practitioner”.
 - b. “Through close working partnerships with the LAT and early help support a joint approach is established to support the young people and their families involved.”
17. Understanding would appear to be limited in some cases to early help or pastoral staff and not as well understood by staff not in roles badged as “early help” or “pastoral”.
18. Some agencies were unsure of the wider early help landscape.
 - a. “Practitioners have a basic awareness but could do with more input about what exactly early help can offer if it isn’t meeting safeguarding threshold.”
19. The level of detail provided in responses makes drawing firm conclusions challenging. However key themes to reflect on as potential areas for development are:
 - a. Partners reported strength in identifying need within individual children or families. Wider understanding of early help need in the city would appear to be more limited.
 - b. Agencies use a broad range of different tools to identify need. A further piece of work could be considered to make more use of common tools.
 - c. Agencies say they understand their roles within early help. However responses highlight the importance of training, wider workforce engagement and understanding of what early help provision is available.
 - d. Improved information sharing across multi-agency partners. For example reintroducing a version of the ‘right early help’ lists.

Assessment of need

20. The role of 'lead practitioner' is a key feature of multi-agency early help practice. A lead practitioner coordinate the input and work of different agencies working in a team around that child and family. Any practitioner can take on the role of lead practitioner. It should be informed by who is working with that family and the views of the children and family as to who is best placed to perform this role.
21. Agencies were asked the question "Do practitioners in your agency take on the 'lead practitioner' role of coordinating early help assessments?" 59% of agencies they said they did take on the role of lead practitioner and 41% said not. However, 56 agencies did not answer this question on the audit. It is difficult to speculate why these agencies did not complete this question. It could be they did not see that as a role relevant to their agency or were unsure if people undertook this role.
22. Where agencies did not take on the role of lead practitioner this was for a variety of reasons.
 - a. Time / capacity
 - b. Training and skills of staff
 - i. "We would want to give our practitioners further training before asking them to take the lead in this."
 - ii. "Have never done this before but have contributed to assessments led by others so lacking experience and confidence. Would benefit from additional training."
23. Agencies generally self-reported a strong understanding of thresholds when assessing need and confidence in seeking advice where needed.
 - a. "We are always aware of the thresholds but the ability to ask for advice from Front Door or LASPs (Local Area Support Practitioner) is always helpful."
 - b. "I feel we have a good understanding of the thresholds. If any concerns we can easily contact the safeguarding team."
 - c. "We are supported by the LAT (Local Area Team) to do this."
24. It should be noted though that out of 43 agencies responding to this question that 7 (16%) gave answers that do not give confidence to their understanding of thresholds. These comments are generally along the

lines of “not sure” or “not applicable”. All agencies responded strongly that if consent for support at an early help level was not given that they would consider if a safeguarding referral would be required.

25. Agencies gave a range of views on how the assessment of early help need could be improved. A number of comments highlighted the value of support from Local Area Teams in undertaking good quality assessments.
 - a. “I feel the LAT (Local Area Teams) are very approachable and can be contacted. Generally happy with the support received from them.”
 - b. “I make direct contact with our Local Area Team to discuss concerns, they are helpful at offering support and advice. It would help if the FEHA documents weren’t so lengthy.”
26. Summary findings in relation to assessing early help are:
 - a. More agencies need training to be able to take on the role of lead practitioner.
 - b. The Family Early Help Assessment should be reviewed to make it easy to use and improve focus on outcomes.
 - c. Although feedback on the use and understanding of thresholds is encouraging there is need to further develop understanding across the children’s workforce.
 - d. There is a need to maximise resources and collectively find ways to bridge gaps in practitioners having capacity to support in the family home.

Early Help Interventions - Providing targeted early help services to address assessed needs

27. When agencies were asked to consider what interventions they offer there were some key themes that emerged.
28. A number of agencies reported that the interventions they provided was to simply signpost to other agencies, which in many cases included Local Area Teams.
29. Agencies were asked to identify where they perceived there to be gaps in the city around early help interventions. These feedback here can be summarised under the themes of:

- a. **Resources** – Perceived reductions in support for families with universal and emerging need were highlighted. This would equate to levels 1 and 2 of need in the table shown in paragraph six.
 - b. **Mental health** – The value of early help initiatives in tackling emerging mental health / emotional issues was recognised. However practitioners reported concern that access to timely support remained difficult.
 - c. **Information / Information sharing** – Responses reflected concern that information sharing needed to be more robust. This reflected earlier comments about some agencies being unaware of what other services were working with families.
30. There is a very diverse range of “interventions” that exists across the city in different agencies. The review of early help should consider:
- a. Agreeing and supporting the deployment of common interventions across agencies.
 - b. Improved information sharing and the re-introduction of the former ‘right early help lists’ would be beneficial.
 - c. Improve information on the services / interventions available in the city.
 - d. Common tools for measuring progress and evidencing impact.

Next Steps

31. The multi-agency early help audit has provided helpful insight into the perceptions of different agencies operating locally. The feedback has already been shared with the early help task and finish group, the early help partnership, the YOT Board and the YorOK board.
32. As set out at the beginning of this paper there is a range of work being undertaken to inform the review of York’s early help offer. Any changes to the early help offer in York must support the wider improvement journey for safeguarding children. The next steps from here are that the early help task and finish group:
 - a. Complete an impact review into current early help arrangements.

- b. Complete a draft early help strategy, early help score card and action plan. These will be shared with the YorOK board for multi-agency sign-off.
- c. Ensure changes to the early help offer align and support the children's services improvement plan.

Implications

- 33. There are no **Financial, Human Resources (HR), Equalities, Legal, Crime and Disorder, Information Technology (IT), Property** – or **Other** implications, relating to this report.

Recommendations

- 34. The Children, Education & Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee are asked to:
 - (i) Note and comment on the outcome of a multi-agency audit into early help arrangements and the progress to date.
 - (ii) Consider if it would want to receive any further reports in relation to early help and the development of a revised strategy and early help offer.

Reason: To comply with scrutiny procedures.

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**Report
Approved**



Date 12.09.2019

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex 1 – Multi-agency audit into early help arrangements

Abbreviations

FEHA – Family Early Help Assessment

LASPs - Local Area Support Practitioner

LAT- Local Area Team

Ofsted - Office for Standards in Education

SENCO – Special Educational Needs Coordinator

SEN - Special Educational Needs

YOT – Youth Offending Team

MULTI-AGENCY EARLY HELP IN YORK

This short audit aims to map multi-agency early help strengths and weaknesses against the requirements set out in Working Together 2018. This information will be used to inform the development of multi-agency arrangements around early help.

WORKING TOGETHER 2018

Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Early help can also prevent further problems arising; for example, if it is provided as part of a support plan where a child has returned home to their family from care, or in families where there are emerging parental mental health issues or drug and alcohol misuse. Effective early help relies upon local organisations and agencies working together to:

- Identify children and families who would benefit from early help
- Undertake an assessment of the need for early help
- Provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to improve the outcomes for the child

This audit is structured around these headings so that our early help work can be mapped back to Working Together requirements.

Name of person completing this audit

Contact details

What agency are you responding on behalf of?

Sector

Local Authority	
Schools / Education	
Health (please specify)	
Police	
Voluntary and Community Sector	
Private	

IDENTIFY CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WHO WOULD BENEFIT FROM EARLY HELP

Local organisations and agencies should have in place effective ways to identify emerging problems and potential unmet needs of individual children and families. Local authorities should work with organisations and agencies to develop joined-up early help services based on a clear understanding of local needs. This requires all practitioners, including those in universal services and those providing services to adults with children, to understand their role in identifying emerging problems and to share information with other practitioners to support early identification and assessment.

Multi-agency training will be important in supporting this collective understanding of local need. Practitioners working in both universal services and specialist services have a responsibility to identify the symptoms and triggers of abuse and neglect, to share that information and provide children with the help they need. To be effective, practitioners need to continue to develop their knowledge and skills in this area and be aware of the new and emerging threats, including online abuse, grooming, sexual exploitation and radicalisation. To enable this, the three safeguarding partners should consider what training is needed locally and how they will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of any training they commission.

Practitioners should, in particular, be alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs

- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti -social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
- has returned home to their family from care
- is a privately fostered child

AUDIT QUESTIONS

Please describe how your agency identifies children and young people who would benefit from early help?

What data do you use to understand need and establish priorities?

How well do practitioners in your agency understand their responsibilities to early help?

What early help training do staff in your agency access?

What early help training does your agency offer?

How could your agency or the city improve on the identification of children, young people and families in need of early help?

UNDERTAKE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEED FOR EARLY HELP

Children and families may need support from a wide range of local organisations and agencies. Where a child and family would benefit from co-ordinated support from more than one organisation or agency (e.g. education, health, housing, police) there should be an inter-agency assessment. These early help assessments should be evidence-based, be clear about the action to be taken and services to be provided and identify what help the child and family require to prevent needs escalating to a point where intervention would be needed through a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989.

A lead practitioner should undertake the assessment, provide help to the child and family, act as an advocate on their behalf and co-ordinate the delivery of support services. A GP, family support worker, school nurse, teacher, health visitor and/or special educational needs co-ordinator could undertake the lead practitioner role. Decisions about who should be the lead practitioner should be taken on a case-by-case basis and should be informed by the child and their family.

For an early help assessment to be effective:

- it should be undertaken with the agreement of the child and their parents or carers, involving the child and family as well as all the practitioners who are working with them. It should take account of the child's wishes and feelings wherever possible, their age, family circumstances and the wider community context in which they are living
- practitioners should be able to discuss concerns they may have about a child and family with a social worker in the local authority. Local authority children's social care should set out the process for how this will happen.

In cases where consent is not given for an early help assessment, practitioners should consider how the needs of the child might be met. If at any time it is considered that the child may be a child in need, as defined in the Children Act 1989, or that the child has suffered significant

harm or is likely to do so, a referral should be made immediately to local authority children's social care. This referral can be made by any practitioner.

AUDIT QUESTIONS

Do practitioners in your agency take on the 'lead practitioner' role of coordinating early help assessments?

YES/NO

If 'no' what barriers are there to being lead practitioner? What support would be required for lead practitioners in your agency to take on the role of lead practitioner?

How well do managers and practitioners in your agency understand and apply thresholds when assessing need? (a copy of the thresholds document can be downloaded from www.yor-ok.org.uk/thresholds).

Where early help consent is not given do you consider how the needs of the child may be met and make referrals where a child had suffered significant harm or is likely to do so?

How could your agency or the city improve on the assessment of need for early help?

PROVIDE TARGETED EARLY HELP SERVICES TO ADDRESS THE ASSESSED NEEDS OF A CHILD AND THEIR FAMILY WHICH FOCUSES ON ACTIVITY TO IMPROVE THE OUTCOMES FOR THE CHILD

The provision of early help services should form part of a continuum of support to respond to the different levels of need of individual children and families.

Local areas should have a comprehensive range of effective, evidence-based services in place to address assessed needs early. The early help on offer should draw upon any local assessment of need, including the JSNA and the latest evidence of the effectiveness of early help programmes.

In addition to high quality support in universal services, specific local early help services will typically include family and parenting programmes, assistance with health issues, including mental health, responses to emerging thematic concerns in extra- familial contexts, and help for emerging problems relating to domestic abuse, drug or alcohol misuse by an adult or a child. Services may also focus on improving family functioning and building the family's own capability to solve problems. This should be done within a structured, evidence- based framework involving regular review to ensure that real progress is being made. Some of these services may be delivered to parents but should always be evaluated to demonstrate the impact they are having on the outcomes for the child.

AUDIT QUESTIONS

What universal early help services/interventions does your agency provide? What does this address and what is the evidence based?

What targeted early help services/interventions does your agency provide? What does this address and what is the evidence based?

**What gaps in early help interventions are you aware of in York?
What evidence is available to support this and help understand the nature of any gaps?**

What evidence of outcomes or impact can you demonstrate from your early help work?

How could your agency or the city improve targeted early help services to address needs and improve outcomes?

FAMILY FOCUS – TROUBLED FAMILIES

Does your agency work on the basis of caseloads?

Do families have a named worker for their case?

How many families are you currently working with in York?

Does your agency work in a “whole family” way? As a minimum a whole family approach requires an understanding of the key ‘family’ structure and composition as well as being alert to wider family issues that may have a bearing on the overall well-being of the family as well as any specific individuals an agency is working with.

Please tick any presenting issues of families you are working with from the list below?

Parents and children involved in crime or anti-social behaviour.	
Children who have not been attending school regularly.	

Children who need help: children of all ages, who need help, are identified as in need or are subject to a Child Protection Plan.	
Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion or young people at risk of worklessness.	
Families affected by domestic violence and abuse.	
Parents and children with a range of health problems.	

Abbreviations

GP- General Practitioner

JSNA- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment



Children, Education & Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee 24 September 2019

City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership (CYSCP) Update

Summary

1. This report provides an update on the activity of City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership (CYSCP) (formerly Board (CYSCB)).

Key Updates

New safeguarding partnership arrangements

2. In York the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) held its last meeting on 23 January 2019 and, as an 'Early Adopter' of the new statutory arrangements, it became the City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership (CYSCP) on 1 April 2019.
3. Full details of the new arrangements were published online at the beginning of February, having been checked and endorsed by the Department for Education. The document can be found here: <http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/about-the-cyscb.htm>
4. All local authorities who were not 'Early Adopters' had to have published their arrangements by June 2019 and all LSCBs will be replaced with the new statutory safeguarding partnership arrangements from September 2019.
5. Prior to the new arrangements taking effect in York, lead officers from the key statutory partners had presented proposals for the new Partnership, to replace the Board, and these were agreed at the Board and signed off by the Chief Officers Reference and Accountability

Group (CORAG) in October 2018. (Chief Officers from North Yorkshire Police, Vale of York CCG and from the Local Authority.)

6. The opportunity has been taken to 'sharpen' the functioning of the Board/Partnership and its Sub-groups but no changes made simply for changes' sake. The Board had been judged as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted in December 2016 and confirmed as 'effective' and 'influential' and a '*partnership that demonstrates a commitment to shared learning and improvement that is characterised by robust but professional challenge*' by the Joint Targeted Area Inspection as recently as September 2018.

Early Adopters Funding and 'Legacy Project'

7. In July 2018, the CYSCB was one of the 17 successful local authorities in a bid to the Department of Education (DfE) to be an 'Early Adopter'. This resulted in funding for a project attached to the move to the new Safeguarding Partnership arrangements. The City of York project was in relation to enhancing the, already strong, relationship of early years, schools and colleges with the safeguarding agenda and with the new Partnership. The project culminated in a York presentation to a regional DfE conference in March 2019 and a '*City of York Safeguarding in Education Conference*' in April 2019.
8. Rather than simply bringing the project to an end with the move to the new arrangements in April, partners agreed to a 'legacy project' to involve children and young people in delivering safeguarding messages about social media. To date, CYSCP coordinators of the project have met and engaged the support of a Senior Professor in Psychology and Child and Adolescent Development at York St John University and the National Campaigns Manager, NSPCC. Working alongside other stakeholders including schools and the Schools Wellbeing Service and, of course, young people themselves, a peer led charter on the use of social media will be created and an event for young people planned for the Autumn 2019. Discussions are ongoing with the drama department of York St. John's with a view to their input in the project (in the same way that they supported with the CYSCB's nationally acclaimed 'It's Not Ok' child sexual abuse and exploitation campaign which is now established across the country.)

Joint Targeted Area Inspection Action Plan

9. CYSCP is monitoring the Action Plan which resulted from the JTAI in September 2019. The JTAI Action Planning group has recently met to update against the JTAI actions – single and multi-agency. CYSCP will expect a full report on progress with this at the next meeting of the CYSCP Business Group in September and to the Partnership in October.

Safeguarding Week 2019

10. Safeguarding Week 2019 took place in the week beginning 24 June 2019 across York and North Yorkshire with the strap line: *Safeguarding is everybody's business*. A very well attended Safeguarding Conference was held on Tuesday 25 June at the Pavilions, Harrogate with key note speeches on stalking/domestic homicide and on child trafficking and workshops focused on: County Lines; Suicide Prevention; HSB; a local Domestic Homicide Review; Modern Slavery; Adult Self Neglect.
11. Videos of the presentations and workshops are being developed to be streamed online securely at specific times. This will enable practitioners who did not attend the event to benefit from the conference content.
12. A number of events took place across York during the week including:
 - CYSCP and Children's Social Care promoting information, leaflets and posters about Private Fostering in the West Offices foyer
 - Safeguarding Awareness stand – children and adults – in York Hospital foyer
 - Information about early help services in the Children's Centres across York
 - Safeguarding awareness-raising events in York's colleges
13. An impact survey goes out to attendees at the conference in September and a full evaluation report will go to the York & North Yorkshire Safeguarding Systems Leadership Group in due course.

Focus on Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)

14. In 2018 CYSCP commissioned a Learning Lessons Review (LLR) which had a focus on Harmful Sexual Behaviour. The review was presented and discussed at the Partnership meeting in April and a practitioner's workshop, delivered by the reviewer, took place on the same day.
15. CYSCP is focusing on HSB as a priority during 2019. A strategic task and finish group has been set up by the safeguarding partners to look at a variety of work streams including:
 - Creating and driving forward a new multi-agency HSB Strategy for York and guidance for practitioners
 - Providing HSB training, workshops and seminars for practitioners across the workforce.
 - Working with partners to ascertain how practitioners trained to assess and work with children and young people who are victims/perpetrators of HSB can be expanded to include specific assessments for children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.
 - Making a direct link to the recommendations from the Learning Lessons Review. (CYSCP will be delivering practitioner workshops on the learning from the LLR in the Autumn)
16. The lead officers from the three statutory safeguarding partners – Local Authority, North Yorkshire Police and the Clinical Commissioning Group have agreed that between them to commission the HSB Framework and support from the NSPCC.

Audit and Review activity

17. Audit work by the CYSCP in 2019 has included **scrutiny of the Child Protection Case Conference process**. Although no particular concerns had been expressed by partners, previous audits had shown discrepancies in the agencies invited to attend or to submit information and reports, plus variations in planning and in recording outcomes.

Actions from the audit were identified for partners to carry out and these are being reviewed by the CYSCP Case Review and Audit Group.

18. The CYSCB/P worked with colleagues in North Yorkshire to carry out the biennial **S11 (of the Children Act 2004) audit** of safeguarding practice with partner organisations. The audit was carried out with those explicitly defined in the 2004 Children Act as having a duty to safeguard children
19. A full analysis report was circulated to partners and partners were asked to note the areas for development and of good practice and consider applying these practices to their own processes if not already in place. (None of the agencies were specifically identified to others in connection with each finding.)
20. CYSCP requires updates on individual partners' areas for development via the Agency Assurance Report process and reports to sub-groups

Child Death Overview Panel

21. The statutory guidance in Working Together 2018 means that in 2019 the processes for reviewing child deaths changed. These processes are now led by the Child Death Review Partners: the Local Authority and the Clinical Commissioning Group rather than by the LSCB. In York and North Yorkshire the Child Death Review process is still to be administered (on behalf of City of York) by the North Yorkshire Child Safeguarding Partnership and the Child Death Review Partners have agreed that the Overview Panel continues to report the Safeguarding Partnerships in both York and in North Yorkshire. York and North Yorkshire will work closely with regional colleagues to ensure that lessons can be learned from any themes emerging across the region.

CYSCB Annual Report 2018/19

22. Many more details of the activity and outcomes of CYSCB/P and partners during 2018/19 and the transition to the new arrangements can be found in the Annual Report 2018/19. This will be published very shortly and available at: <http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/annual-reports-and-business-plan.htm>

Council Plan

23. The information included in this report is linked to the Council Plan priorities of “A focus on frontline services to ensure all residents, particularly the least advantaged, can access reliable services and community facilities” and “A council that listens to residents to ensure it delivers the services they want and works in partnership with local communities.”

Implications

24. There are no other direct implications arising from this report.

Recommendations

25. The recommendation is that the Children, Education & Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee note the new safeguarding partnership arrangements and that the City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership (CYSCP) replaced the Local Safeguarding Children Board in April 2019.

Reason: To ensure that the Committee is aware of the transition to, the new arrangements and of the ongoing business of the Safeguarding Children Partnership.

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Report Approved Date 16.09.19

Wards Affected:

All

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Abbreviations

CCG – Clinical Commissioning Group

CORAG - Chief Officers Reference and Accountability Group

CYSCB- City of York Safeguarding Children Board

CYSCP- City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership

DFE - Department of Education

HSB- harmful Sexual behaviour

JTAI- Joint Targeted Area Inspection

LLR – learning lessons Review

LSCB - Local Safeguarding Children Board

NSPCC- National Society of the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

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Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee

24 September 2019

Report of the Assistant Director – Children’s Specialist Services

Overview of Children’s Services**Summary**

1. Considering and understanding the journey and experience of the child from identification of initial concern through to full care of the local authority is an essential starting position when setting out how improvements in practice will deliver better outcomes for children.
2. In light of the children’s services improvement plan developed post LGA Peer Review and Ofsted Focused visit, this paper sets out how services will improve outcomes for children and vicariously future Ofsted inspection judgements.
3. The report will explain how the required improvements in City York Council children’s services will be achieved and what conditions must be put in place to ensure longstanding sustained change.

Background

4. The work of children’s services is underpinned by legislation, in the main:
5. **Principles that underpin the Children Act 1989**
 - the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration
 - wherever possible, children should be brought up and cared for within their own families
6. Key aspects of the legislation:
 - Section 17: places a duty of every local authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need; and so far as it is consistent with that

duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families.

- Section 47: where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child (who lives or is found in their area) is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, it has a duty to make such enquiries as it considers necessary to decide whether to take any action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare
- Section 20: provides the local authority with the power to provide accommodation for children without a court order when they do not have somewhere suitable to live. It is widely known as voluntary accommodation because the parents must agree to the child being accommodated.
- Section 31: The court can create a care order under Section 31 of the Children Act, placing a child in the care of a designated local authority, with parental responsibility being shared between the parents and the local authority.

Children Act 2004

7. That the interests of children and young people are paramount in all considerations of welfare and safeguarding and that safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility.
8. Places a responsibility on organisations to share information and work together to safeguarding children
9. Was the foundation for reform of children's services by promoting early intervention and prevention leading to strengthened multi-agency working
10. Takes a child-centered approach and includes universal as well as targeted and specialist services. Part of the aim of integration of services, plans and information is to enable young people's needs to be identified early to allow timely and appropriate intervention before needs become more acute.

Working Together 2018

11. Issued by the Department for Education to all practitioners and managers who have particular responsibilities for safeguarding and

promoting the welfare of children, and to senior and operational managers in organizations that are responsible for commissioning or providing services to children, young people and families.

12. The guidance places a requirement on those organisations and agencies, who have functions relating to children, to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people under the age of 18 in England.
13. It also places a responsibility on the three safeguarding partners (Local Authority, Health and Police) to agree ways to co-ordinate their safeguarding services, to act as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging others and implement local and national learning including from serious child safeguarding incidents.
14. No organisations are exempt from the mandated requirements of WT 2018. City York Council is an early adopter of these new arrangements and has arranged for the delivery of this through the Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Child's Journey through Children's Social Care

The following table sets out the stages of child's journey through children's services and the possible outcome for children at each stage. The key success indicators are also set out. Current performance is monitored through the Improvement Board Dashboard (Annex A)

Intervention Stage	Outcome	Main key indicators i.e. how we measure success
Early Help and Prevention services	Threshold for children's services <i>not</i> met	<u>Number of Early Help Assessments initiated</u> Number of open Early Help Assessments Number of statutory interventions required per 10k
Needs escalate/unmet need	Threshold for children's services met	
Front Door	Section 17 Assessment Section 47 Enquiry Threshold Children's Social Care not met: step down to Early Help	Referral decision within 24 hours Number referrals per 10k % of re-referrals to CSC within 12 month period % Contact to Referral conversion rate
Needs escalate/unmet need	Threshold met for statutory intervention Permanence options considered	

<p>Assessment Teams</p>	<p>Assessment outcome: Close to CSC</p> <p>Multi-Agency Strategy discussions/meetings</p> <p>Child in Need episode</p> <p>Immediate Safeguarding/Police Protection</p> <p>Initial child protection case conference</p> <p>Child could become looked after</p>	<p><u>% of single assessments completed within 45 working days</u></p> <p><u>No of S47s Enquiries Initiated per 10K</u></p> <p>% of ICPCs held within 15 days of Section 47 Enquiry</p> <p>Child seen within 24 hours</p> <p>Child seen within 5 working days</p>
<p>Needs escalate/unmet need</p>	<p>Threshold met for ongoing statutory intervention</p>	
<p>Safeguarding Intervention Service</p>	<p>Multi-Agency Strategy discussions/meetings</p> <p>Child in Need plan</p> <p>Child Protection Plan</p> <p>Child could become Looked After</p>	<p>Children in Need per 10k</p> <p>Children with a child protection plan per 10K</p> <p>% of children becoming the subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time</p> <p>% of children becoming the subject of a child protection</p>

		<p>plan for a second or subsequent time within a 12 month period of a previous plan</p> <p>Statutory visiting every 20 days</p> <p>Core group held in timescale every four weeks</p> <p>Duration on Plan</p>
Needs escalate/unmet need	Threshold met for ongoing statutory intervention	
Safeguarding Intervention service (Court Team)	<p>Multi-Agency Strategy discussions/meetings</p> <p>Letter before proceedings</p> <p>Legal Gateway meeting</p> <p>Threshold for proceedings is met</p> <p>Child could become Looked After</p>	Permanence Planning meetings (fortnightly tracker)
Needs escalate/unmet need	Threshold met for ongoing statutory intervention	
Achieved Permanence	Multi-Agency Strategy discussions/meetings	<p>Care order granted</p> <p>Children Looked After per 10K</p>

	<p>Shared parental responsibility</p> <p>Child becomes looked after</p>	<p>% of Personal Education Plans completed</p> <p>% of health needs assessments undertaken for children looked after for more than 1 year</p> <p>% of children having 3 or more moves of placement in the last 12 months</p> <p>Statutory visiting timescales</p> <p>Educational Attainment</p>
<p>Leaving Care Pathway Service</p>	<p>Multi-Agency Strategy discussions/meetings</p>	<p>% of care leavers in in employment, education or training</p> <p>% of care leavers aged 17 – 21 in suitable accommodation</p> <p>% of care leavers with a Pathway Plan</p>

Consultation

Ofsted Focused Visit July 2019

15. City York Children's Services were subject to an Ofsted Focused Visit on 17th July 2019. Inspectors considered the local authority arrangements for children in need of help and protection.
16. Inspectors looked at a range of evidence, including case discussions with social workers and managers. They triangulated this with local authority performance management and quality assurance information and read children's case records.

Focused Visit findings

17. Inspectors found an inconsistent approach to supervision of staff with poor management oversight and a lack of case direction on cases.
18. They identified that the quality of plans needs to be strengthened to ensure they are sufficiently SMART, to ensure a focus on children's needs and to be clear with parents and carers what they need to do to reduce risk. Plans are to be written in a way that is accessible for parents and should also set out contingency arrangements should the plan cease to be effective.
19. Social worker visits should always be purposeful and recorded in a way that is relevant to the plan and that includes the child's voice.
20. An effective quality assurance framework to be implemented that focuses on the experiences of children and which leads to an improvement in the quality of practice.
21. Inspectors identified that children have had too many social workers, these were especially agency workers where turnover has been high.
22. Inspectors also highlighted too much drift and delay for some children in need and some on child protection and that some children have been on plans for too long, some for several years, demonstrating a lack of progress and effective management oversight.
23. Inspectors found that too many cases were allocated to non-social work qualified staff (children in need practitioners) meaning these have been asked to work with, and take responsibility for, complex cases and,

sometimes, inappropriate levels of risk. Newly qualified social work staff have also been expected to carry too much responsibility too early on in their development, including being given sole responsibility for child protection cases.

24. Inspectors noted that the use of public law outline process had recently been strengthened through the introduction of a new fortnightly legal gateway process to help ensure cases are tracked more effectively, however letters before proceedings did not sufficiently set out what parents needed to do to improve to prevent cases moving into legal proceedings.
25. Inspectors noted that case chronologies were not always available and when they were, were not always of a high standard.
26. Inspectors found that visits to children and families were, in most cases, regular and often more frequent than the statutory requirement, however, visits are not always focused on progressing the child's plan.
27. More long-standing social workers know children well but recording of work is not consistently capturing the voice of the child. Where there have been several changes of social worker, this has impacted on the relationship with some children, who are understandably more reluctant to engage with staff.
28. They found that social workers in the health and disability team demonstrate a good knowledge of and focus on needs arising out of disability, however they have less experience of child protection work, as previously this work has been undertaken by social workers in the safeguarding teams.
29. Finally, whilst a new quality assurance framework has been put in place audit activity to establish the quality of practice in individual cases and provide learning for staff has not been robust enough and there has been little difference made to children's experiences following audit.

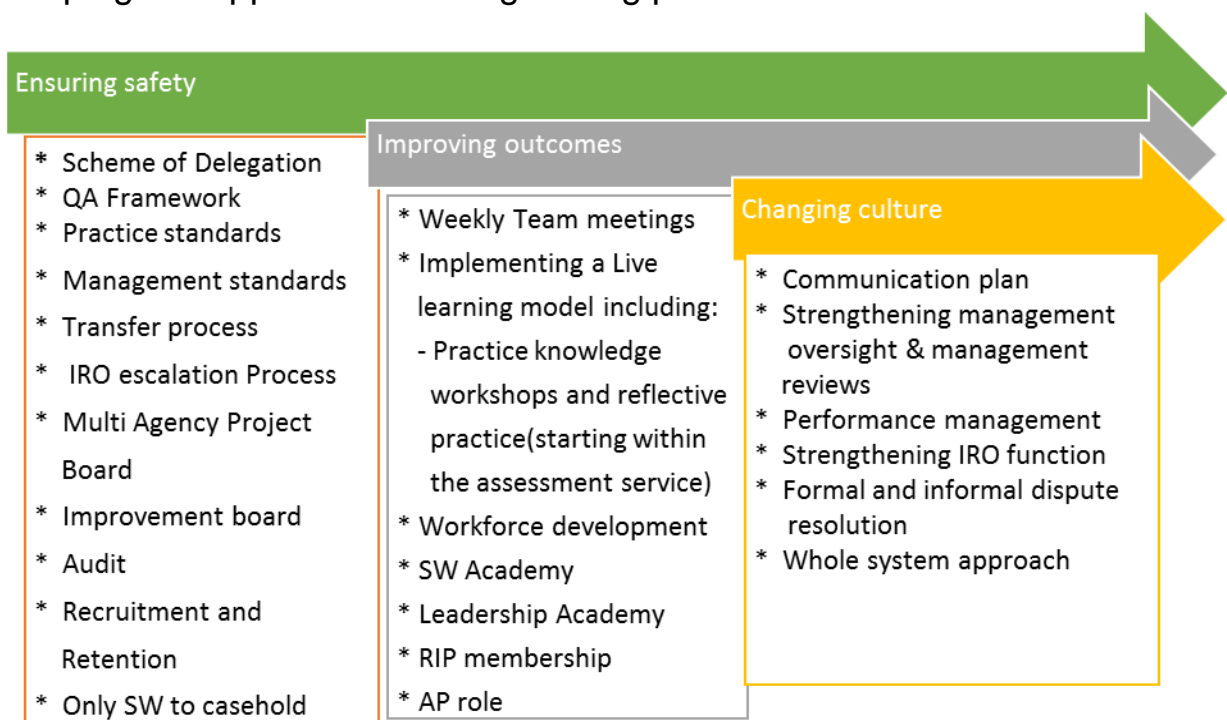
The report can be found here: [Focused Visit Ofsted Report July 2019](#) and at Annex C.

Improvement planning

30. "Action Research into Improvement in Local Children's Services" (Annex B) is a paper commissioned by the LGA in association with

ISOS. This paper has explored key enablers and barriers to improvement and how the system as a whole can facilitate and support improvement in children’s services. This paper has informed our improvement approach.

31. The evidence is clear; having an explicit Vision, set Values and approach to Culture are essential for any improvement journey.
32. Underpinning our Improvement Journey is a change in culture and practice. Building the ethos and culture and engaging the workforce is critical in developing and sustaining improvement work.
33. Our vision for children’s services is “a place where people feel safe, risk is understood and managed well, where we know practice is consistently good and that we make a difference by improving outcomes for children”
34. Six key documents have been launched to staff with a series of workshops, direct support, modelling and coaching in a drive to ensure safety, improve outcomes and change culture.
35. Staff engagement events take place quarterly. At the last events in August over 90 staff were involved in developing our vision, values and shaping our approach to strengthening practice.



36. An Improvement Board, chaired by the Director Children's Services has been established to ensure scrutiny and to bring challenge regarding progress required in children's services.
37. The Improvement plan has six key priorities:
 1. Strengthen the Front Door to ensure the rigorous application of thresholds and timely assessment of the highest standard.
 2. Ensure all children in need, children subject to a child protection plan and children in care have an up to date, outcome focussed plan and that children are visited in accordance with their plan, ensuring, as a minimum, adherence to statutory visit timescales.
 3. Ensure managers at every level understand their roles and responsibilities ensuring scrutiny and oversight of the quality of practice in their teams.
 4. Ensure social work time is used to maximise outcomes for children.
 5. Strengthen our approach to attract, recruit and retain social workers to ensure a stable and confident workforce with a clear focus on reflection, learning and development.
 6. Ensure effective governance, scrutiny and oversight through the Children and Young People's Safeguarding Partnership, the Improvement Board and Senior Managers.

Headline Progress To-date

38. The Improvement board has strong oversight of the improvement journey.
39. The six key documents have been launched, including a Quality assurance Framework.
40. Over 140 audits have taken place of cases held by Child In Need (CIN) practitioners, children subject to child protection plans and children in need. Monthly audit of cases continues.
41. Children in Need Practitioners caseloads have all been reallocated to social work qualified staff.

42. The Improvement Dashboard is live.
43. Project Accuracy is now in place and is chaired by the interim Chief Executive. Annex A data is now run fortnightly and work is being initiated to make better use of management information to improve performance and practice.
44. Monthly performance meetings for Managers have been introduced
45. The initial stages of developing a multi-agency safeguarding hub (new front Door) have been completed.
46. North Yorkshire Police and Health partners are committed to the development of a multi-agency safeguarding hub.
47. 24 hour decision making has improved from 38% to 96%.
48. There are now no cases that come to the attention of children's social care that receive a response of No Further Action. All cases are triaged through to early help arrangements through Local Area Teams.
49. A new "levels of need" document is in development and will replace the existing threshold guidance. This ensures all partners work to a common understanding of need and how best to meet that need.
50. Social work academy established - goes live 14th October.
51. 8 new social workers/senior social workers appointed.
52. 2 advanced practitioners appointed.
53. Frontline Social Work recruitment Programme has commenced to support the recruitment and retention of social workers in the referral and assessment teams and safeguarding teams.
54. Weekly reporting to DCS and AD by Senior Managers and managers including key performance indicators, caseloads, vacancies and audit of supervision records.
55. IRO weekly reporting / detailed analysis is sent to AD and Senior Managers for scrutiny

56. Work has commenced to improve the quality of child in need and child protection plans so they are more outcome focused. This involves front line practitioners, IRO's and Managers

Implications

- **Financial:** None
- **Human Resources (HR)** None
- **Equalities** None
- **Legal** None
- **Crime and Disorder** None
- **Information Technology (IT)** None
- **Property** None
- **Other** None

Recommendations

57. Members are asked to accept this report and note and comment on the findings.

Reason: To ensure the committee are kept up to date with progress in Children's Specialist Services.

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Report Approved



Date 10/09/2019

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex A: Improvement Board Dashboard

Annex B: Action Research into Improvement in Local Children's Services

Annex C: Ofsted Letter to Amanda Hatton

Abbreviations

AD- Assistant Director

CIN- Child In Need

CSC – Child Social Care

DCS- Director of Children Services

ICPSCs - Independent Community and Primary Care Services

IRO- Independent Review Officer

LGA - Local Government Association

Ofsted- Office for Standards in Education

SMART- Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timely

WT2018- Working Together to keep Children Safe 2018



CEC - Children's Social Care Improvement Board 2019/2020

No of Indicators = 31 | Direction of Travel (DoT) shows the trend of how an indicator is performing against its Polarity over time.
Produced by the Business Intelligence Hub August 2019

Annex A

			Previous Years			2019/2020							
			2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	Q1	Target	Provider	Owner	Polarity	DOT	Target rationale	
		Collection Frequency											
Referrals	MI Pack 1	Number of Referrals per 10k - (YTD)	Monthly	329	295	297.57	143.51	295-350	BI Hub	Jo Gomerson	Neutral	◄► Neutral	York below comparator averages. Range represents York's average of previous years and is equivalent to 1075 - 1300 referrals. We need to review ourselves against those LAs that have well developed early help offer - ie N Yorks and Stockport. We need to also ensure that partners are referring as appropriate to ensure that we have not got low referrals because of a lack confidence in the front door.
		Benchmark - National Data	Annual	548.2	552.5	-	-		BI Hub				
		Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	582.8	621.6	-	-		BI Hub				
		Benchmark - Comparator Data	Annual	506.75	474.7	-	-		BI Hub				
Referrals	CSB05	% of Referrals re-referred to CSC within 12 month period - (Rolling 12 Month)	Monthly	13.30%	20.70%	16.44%	15.33%	10%	BI Hub	Sophie Wales	Up is Bad	▼ Green	Target set by Sophie Wales in critical plan. This is a stretching target 10% is far below York trend and comparator averages.
		Benchmark - National Data	Annual	21.90%	21.90%	-	-	BI Hub					
		Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	21.40%	22.90%	-	-	BI Hub					
		Benchmark - Comparator Data	Annual	22.30%	22.40%	-	-	BI Hub					
Referrals	CSC02	% Contact to Referral conversion rate - (YTD)	Monthly	27.35%	20.74%	19.93%	30.36%	40%	BI Hub	Sophie Wales	Neutral	◄► Neutral	No robust comparator data available. Target set by Sophie Wales critical plan.
Assessments/S47s	CSC020	% of Single Assessments completed between 0 and 10 working days	Monthly	-	-	-	25.13%	85%	BI Hub	Jo Gomerson	Up is Good	◄► Neutral	Overall timeliness target of 85% improves on 2018/19 and is above comparator averages. There are no national comparisons for the sub-sections of this indicator but are for the main target stated.
		% of Single Assessments completed between 11 and 30 working days	Monthly	-	-	-	21.79%		BI Hub	Jo Gomerson	Up is Good	◄► Neutral	
		% of Single Assessments completed between 31 and 45 days	Monthly	-	-	-	36.15%		BI Hub	Jo Gomerson	Up is Good	◄► Neutral	
		% of Single Assessments completed within 45 working days	Monthly	73.77%	88.38%	84.42%	83.08%		BI Hub	Jo Gomerson	Up is Good	◄► Neutral	
		% of Single Assessments completed over 45 working days	Monthly	26.23%	11.62%	15.58%	16.92%		15%	BI Hub	Jo Gomerson	Up is Bad	
	EFL3	% of assessments of children's social care carried out within 45 working days	Monthly	73.77%	88.38%	84.42%	83.08%	85%	BI Hub	Jo Gomerson			
		Benchmark - National Data	Monthly	82.90%	82.70%	-	-	BI Hub					
		Benchmark - Regional Data	Monthly	80.10%	80.90%	-	-	BI Hub					
		Benchmark - Comparator Data	Monthly	83.50%	83.60%	-	-	BI Hub					
	Assessments/S47s	CSC050	No of S47s Enquiries Initiated per 10k	Monthly	99.46	101.35	129.19	47.57	109	BI Hub	Helen Healey	Neutral	

CIN	EFL4	Children in Need per 10k - (Snapshot)	Annual	340.6	382.5	353.5	-	290-340	BI Hub	Sophie Wales	Neutral	Neutral	Equivalent range of 1000-1250 (Statistical Neighbour - National averages). This represents a reduction of at least 100 referrals compared to 2018/19.
		Benchmark - National Data	Annual	330.1	341	-	-		BI Hub				
		Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	348.9	363.5	-	-		BI Hub				
		Benchmark - Comparator Data	Annual	297.1	291.2	-	-		BI Hub				
EFL2		Children with a Child Protection Plan per 10k - (Snapshot)	Monthly	46	45	43.51	47.84	38-45	BI Hub	Simon Fisher	Neutral	Neutral	Equivalent range of 140-165 CPP (Statistical Neighbour - National comparator averages). Represents reduction of at least 10 CPP on
		Benchmark - National Data	Annual	43.3	45.3	-	-		BI Hub				



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Produced by the Business Intelligence Hub August 2019

	Collection Frequency	Previous Years			2019/2020		Target	Provider	Owner	Polarity	DOT	Target rationale
		2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	Q1							
Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	43	46.1	-	-		BI Hub	Fisher				comparator averages). Represents reduction of at least 10 CPP on current performance.
Benchmark - Comparator Data	Annual	40.1	38.4	-	-		BI Hub					



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Produced by the Business Intelligence Hub August 2019

			Previous Years			2019/2020							
		Collection Frequency	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	Q1	Target	Provider	Owner	Polarity	DOT	Target rationale	
CPP	65	% of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time - (YTD)	Monthly	28.38%	22.06%	33.03%	28.38%	20%	BI Hub	Simon Fisher	Up is Bad	◄ Neutral	Represents comparator average - this is an ambitious based on York's current and historical performance. Target in critical plan, discussed with Sophie Wales.
		Benchmark - National Data	Annual	18.70%	20.20%	-	-	BI Hub					
		Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	16.80%	17.70%	-	-	BI Hub					
		Benchmark - Comparator Data	Annual	20.50%	20.30%	-	-	BI Hub					
	65a	% of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time within 12 months of a previous registration - (YTD)	Monthly	-	-	-	4.05%	tbc	BI Hub		Up is Bad	◄ Neutral	No national comparison or historical trend. Regional dataset shows 7.8% returns within two years. For discussion at board.
CLA	EFL1	Children Looked After per 10k, excluding Short Term Breaks - (Snapshot)	Monthly	55	53	56.22	60.81	60-64	BI Hub	Sophie Keeble	Neutral	◄ Neutral	Equivalent of 220 - 235 CYPIC. This is higher than historical trends which were around mid-50s (200 CYPIC). For discussion at board do CSC expect CYPIC numbers to remain higher than historical trend. If so, that will be the rationale for a higher range. Suggested range matches Statistical Neighbour - National averages.
		Benchmark - National Data	Annual	62	64	-	-	BI Hub					
		Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	67	71	-	-	BI Hub					
		Benchmark - Comparator Data	Annual	57.2	60.5	-	-	BI Hub					
	EH4	% of PEP completed - (Snapshot)	Quarterly	NC	NC	80.17%	77.86%	100%	BI Hub	Karron Young	Up is Good	◄ Neutral	No national comparator available. Rationale is that every school-age and early years CYIPC has a pep
	CF4	% of health needs assessments undertaken for children looked after for more than 1 year - (Snapshot)	Monthly	60.99%	72.41%	71.14%	67.47%	85%	BI Hub	Sophie Keeble	Up is Good	▼ Red	Statistical neighbour average is ambitious based on York's trend.
		Benchmark - National Data	Annual	89.40%	88.00%	-	-	BI Hub					
		Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	91.80%	93.00%	-	-	BI Hub					
		Benchmark - Comparator Data	Annual	84.20%	85.20%	-	-	BI Hub					
	CIC1	% of children in care whose Initial Health Assessment was within 20 working days of entering care	Quarterly	-	-	16.00%	14.00%	85%	HDFT LAC Team	HDFT LAC Team	Up is Good	▲ Green	No national comparator data so matched Review Health Assessment target as the nearest comparison.
CSC057	Children in care at period end, excluding Short Term Breaks - % placed in Foster care - (Snapshot)	Monthly	80.98%	72.82%	78.37%	72.89%	75%	BI Hub	Sophie Keeble	Neutral	◄ Neutral	Represents improved performance and above most recent comparator averages.	
	Children in care at period end, excluding Short Term Breaks - % placed in Residential care (Secure Unit/Home/Hostel) - (Snapshot)	Monthly	8.78%	7.18%	6.25%	8.00%	6%	BI Hub	Sophie Keeble	Neutral	◄ Neutral	Holds performance on 2018/19.	

62	% of children looked after having 3 or more moves of placement in the last 12 months - (Snapshot, YTD prior to 2016/17)	Monthly	7.40%	11.76%	12.20%	13.04%	12%	BI Hub	Sophie Keeble	Up is Bad	Neutral	This remains a stubborn indicator and placement sufficiency problems (nationally) will make it harder to achieve. Target set at most recent statistical neighbour average.
	Benchmark - National Data	Annual	10.00%	10.00%	-	-	BI Hub					
	Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	11.00%	11.00%	-	-	BI Hub					
	Benchmark - Comparator Data	Annual	12.20%	12.20%	-	-	BI Hub					
CSS9a	Children in care at period end, excluding Short Term Breaks, placed out of York - (Snapshot)	Monthly	79	80	83	100	40% of total	BI Hub	Sophie Wales	Up is Bad	Red	In line with comparators. Suggest this KPI is changed to % so that comparator data can be shown
CSS9b	Children in care at period end, excluding Short Term Breaks, placed in York - (Snapshot)	Monthly	126	115	124	125	60% of total	BI Hub	Sophie Wales	Up is Good	Neutral	In line with comparators. Suggest this KPI is changed to % so that comparator data can be shown



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			Previous Years			2019/2020							
			2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	Q1	Target	Provider	Owner	Polarity	DOT	Target rationale	
		Collection Frequency											
Adoptions	RAASC001	Adoption Scorecard (A1) - Average days between a child entering care and moving in with adoptive family for children adopted during period - (YTD)	Monthly	-	396	380	385	-	RAA / BI Hub	Suzie Grove	Up is Bad	Red	
		RAA Member - York	Monthly	-	506	438	424	380	RAA / BI Hub		Up is Bad	Red	RAA average from 2018/19
	RAASC002	Adoption Scorecard (A2) - Average days between placement order for a child an deciding on a match to an adoptive family for children adopted during period - (YTD)	Monthly	-	107	124	131	-	RAA / BI Hub	Suzie Grove	Up is Bad	Red	
		RAA Member - York	Monthly	-	102	110	108	110	RAA / BI Hub		Up is Bad	Red	Target represents hold in performance for York in 2018/19. York outperformed RAA average last year.
	RAASC003	Adoption Scorecard (A3) - % of children who waited less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with adoptive family for children who were adopted or still going through the adoption process (i.e. With an agency decision) during period - (YTD)	Monthly	-	65.11%	66.86%	66.49%	-	RAA / BI Hub	Suzie Grove	Up is Good	Neutral	
		RAA Member - York	Monthly	-	83.33%	84.62%	75.61%	85%	RAA / BI Hub		Up is Good	Neutral	Target represents hold in performance for York in 2018/19. York outperformed RAA average last year.
CSC039	CLA Ceased, excluding Short Term Breaks - Adopted (All) - (YTD)	Monthly	9	10	8	1	tbc	BI Hub	Suzie Grove	Neutral	Neutral	Suggest this KPI is changed to % so that comparator data can be shown	
147	% of care leavers aged 17-21 (19-21 until 2016/2017) in suitable accommodation - (Snapshot)	Monthly	97.44%	91.00%	94.25%	94.19%	95%	BI Hub	David Purcell	Up is Good	Neutral	Consistently above comparator averages. Based on cohort, this would represent ~5 yp not in suitable accommodation.	

Care Leavers	Benchmark - National Data	Annual	84.00%	-	-	-		BI Hub					
	Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	86.00%	-	-	-		BI Hub					
	Benchmark - Comparator Data	Annual	84.75%	-	-	-		BI Hub					
	148	% of care leavers aged 17-21 (19-21 until 2016/2017) in employment, education or training - (Snapshot)	Monthly	75.64%	71.00%	73.56%	66.28%	75%	BI Hub	David Purcell	Up is Good	◀▶ Neutral	Consistently above comparator averages. Target based on historical trend.
		Benchmark - National Data	Annual	50.00%	-	-	-		BI Hub				
		Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	50.00%	-	-	-		BI Hub				
		Benchmark - Comparator Data	Annual	52.00%	-	-	-		BI Hub				
	CSC058	% of care leavers aged 17-21 with a Care or Pathway Plan - (Snapshot)	Monthly	-	-	-	96.51%	100%	BI Hub	David Purcell	Up is Good	◀▶ Neutral	
	CSC059	% of care leavers aged 17-21 with a Personal Advisor - (Snapshot)	Monthly	-	-	-	-	100%	BI Hub	David Purcell	Up is Good	◀▶ Neutral	
	CSC060	% of care leavers aged 17-21 in contact within the last three months - (Snapshot)	Monthly	-	-	-	-	-	BI Hub	David Purcell	Neutral	◀▶ Neutral	need comparator data



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Produced by the Business Intelligence Hub August 2019

		Collection Frequency	Previous Years			2019/2020	Target	Provider	Owner	Polarity	DOT	Target rationale	
			2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	Q1							
Workforce	STF100	Average Sickness Days per FTE - CYC (Excluding Schools) - (Rolling 12 Month)	Monthly	10.2	11.5	11.3	11.03	8.5	BI Hub	Trudy Forster	Up is Bad	◀▶ Neutral	Targets reflects CIPD Public Sector Average
		Children's Specialist Services	Monthly	13.5	11.5	9.3	8.84	8.5	BI Hub		Up is Bad	▼ Green	
	CSWF02	Vacancy rate (%) of social workers - (Snapshot from CS Workforce Return)	Annual	13.30%	10.50%	-	-	10%	Workforce return	Sophie Wales	Up is Bad	◀▶ Neutral	Holds performance on previous year, remains lower than Statistical Neighbour and National averages. We need to capture this from weekly reporting
		Benchmark - National Data	Annual	17.00%	16.50%	-	-		Workforce return				
		Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	7.80%	6.40%	-	-		Workforce return				
		Benchmark - Comparator Data	Annual	11.60%	11.60%	-	-		Workforce return				
	CSWF01	Agency social workers (%) - (Snapshot from CS Workforce Return)	Annual	8.00%	9.20%	-	-	8%	Workforce return	Sophie Wales	Up is Bad	▲ Red	Slightly improves performance on previous year, remains lower than Statistical Neighbour and National averages. We need to capture this from weekly reporting
		Benchmark - National Data	Annual	15.80%	15.40%	-	-		Workforce return				

	Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	7.80%	8.00%	-	-		Workforce return				
	Benchmark - Comparator Data	Annual	10.83%	9.90%	-	-		Workforce return				
STF202	Staff Total Turnover (%) - CYC excluding Schools - (Rolling 12 Month)	Monthly	12.10%	14.36%	12.44%	12.58%		BI Hub	Trudy Forster	Neutral	◀▶ Neutral	No targets have been sent for this indicator
	Children's Specialist Services	Monthly	15.10%	7.66%	9.96%	15.52%	-	BI Hub		Neutral	▲ Red	

ACTION RESEARCH INTO IMPROVEMENT IN LOCAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Practical implications for lead members and senior
leaders

Ben Bryant, Natalie Parish and Simon Rea
Isos Partnership



Foreword by Councillor David Simmonds CBE, Chairman of the Local Government Association Improvement and Innovation Board



Keeping children safe is one of the most important things councils do and it is right that our children’s services come under significant scrutiny from Ofsted, the Department for Education (DfE) and the media. Ofsted have sought to “raise the bar” with the introduction of the more challenging single inspection framework in 2013, but the sector has responded to the challenge, with 75% of councils that have been inspected under the single inspection framework being judged requires improvement or better.

There has already been significant debate around the value of the current inspection arrangements and their role in driving improvement; this report does not seek to repeat these arguments. Instead, it looks at the practical question of what drives continued, sustainable improvement in children’s services, with examples of practical steps that all councils – irrespective of Ofsted rating – can take.

It is clear that, collectively, we have the knowledge and experience of what “good” looks like, so the importance of sector-led support to improve children’s services should not be underestimated. We do not work in isolation, however, so the contribution of both Ofsted and the DfE to this report is valuable. The Local Government Association (LGA), alongside the Association of Directors of Children’s Services (ADCS) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), has been working with both organisations to look at how we can work together to drive improvement in children’s services. We all have a role to play, both in supporting councils to prevent build and maintain standards in their children’s services, and in providing support to those that need it.

The evidence in this report makes clear that children’s services should not be seen in isolation. It will be down to you, whether you are a councillor or officer, and whatever your level in the organisation, to play your part to make sure your council’s children’s services continually improve to meet the needs of children who need our help most.

Introduction: Aims of the research

In 2012, Ofsted introduced a new single inspection framework for children's services. At the time this action research began (January 2016), 78 local children's services had been inspected, of which 20 had been found inadequate, 41 were deemed to require improvement, and 17 were judged good. During the time this research was carried out, further inspections have taken place, with two members of the tri-borough authority – Kensington and Chelsea, and Westminster – becoming the first local children's services departments to receive outstanding judgements under the current framework. The new single inspection framework has not been without controversy. Nevertheless, the profile of inspection outcomes suggests that there is a need for system-wide improvement in children's services. Understanding how best to enable and support that improvement has been the focus of this research.

This project was commissioned by the LGA, and has sought to answer two central questions.

- a. What are the key enablers of (and barriers to) improvement in local children's services?
- b. How can the system as a whole facilitate and support improvement in local children's services?

This has been done by working in depth with a small sample of nine local areas, at different points on their improvement journeys, as well as a range of national stakeholders and senior leaders from other local children's services departments.

Purpose of this document

The findings from this research project, as well as detailed case studies based on the improvement activities of some of the participating local areas, are set out in our final report, published by the LGA. The report is necessarily comprehensive, and sets out the evidence we gathered about how local areas have brought about and sustained improvement, as well as our recommendations about how the national system can support local children's services to improve. Alongside our report, therefore, we have developed a short summary that draws out the important practical implications for lead members and senior leaders involved in leading improvement in local children's services departments.

Structure of the document

The document is made of five sections. **Part 1** describes the phases of the improvement journey of local children's services, and the specific emphases and risks at each phase. **Part 2** continues this theme, and highlights the timescales involved in achieving and sustaining improvement. **Part 3** outlines the seven crucial enablers of improvement that we identified through the research. **Part 4** focuses on the vital initial steps leaders might take when starting out on an improvement journey. In the final section, **Part 5**, we explain briefly how the different components of the children's services system as a whole might work in tandem to support local children's services to improve, and the system leadership role that individual local areas can play within that.

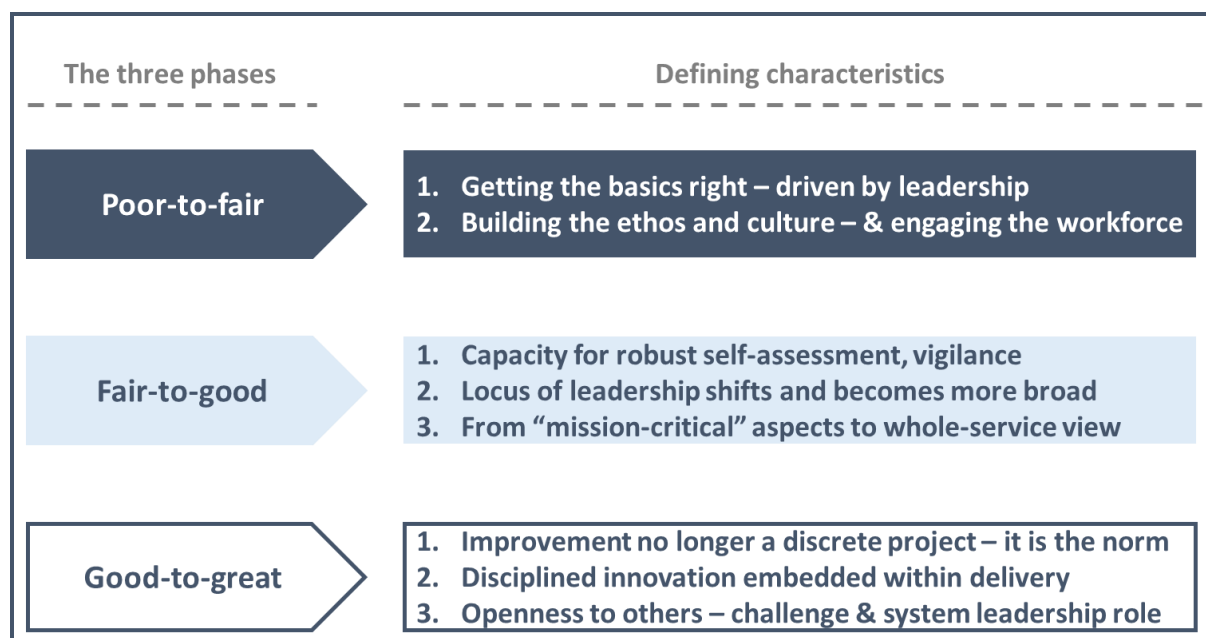
Part 1: The improvement journey

All of the local areas with which we worked saw themselves as being on a journey of improvement, with key milestones they were seeking to reach and pitfalls they needed to avoid. To capture this concept of an improvement journey, we have deliberately not used language linked to the Ofsted framework: our intention is not to second-guess what it might take to achieve a particular inspection judgement. Instead, we have borrowed the terminology of *poor, fair, good* and *great*.¹

A key finding of our research has been that the improvement activities in which local areas are engaged are both consistent at each stage of the journey and are continuous. In other words, local areas at the good-to-great stage of the journey have not stopped doing what got them from poor to fair. Instead, they have continued, embedded and built upon these activities. For example, building the vision, values and culture of the organisation and robust self-assessment are both vital activities in the initial stage of the improvement journey, which must be continued and sustained if improvement is to be embedded.

What we did find, however, was that there are distinct emphases associated with each stage of the improvement journey. These are summarised in the figure below. As described to us by the participating local areas, the improvement journey is not automatic, and progression from phase to phase is not guaranteed to be smooth. At each stage, as well as defining characteristics of improvement activity, there are also specific risks of “slipping back” that need to be avoided.

Defining characteristics at each stage of the improvement journey



Poor-to-fair

This stage of the improvement journey has two key characteristics. The first is the emphasis on putting core systems and processes in place, reasserting control over the system, accurately assessing risk,

¹ Mona Mourshed, Chinezi Chijioko and Michael Barber, 2010, *How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better*.

making sure cases were allocated, clearing backlogs and bringing caseloads down to manageable levels through recruitment and redistribution. The second, however, is rebuilding the culture and ethos of the organisation. This involves engaging frontline staff and drawing on their ideas to develop a long-term vision and a strategic plan for delivering high-quality front-line practice. The first of these activities focuses on reasserting management grip, the second on constructing something that staff can buy into.

The pitfalls to be avoiding during this phase are failing to get to a genuine understanding of why the service has been failing and its current weaknesses and strengths – “getting to a baseline” – and rushing into an ill-thought-out restructure. The premium, during this initial stage of the improvement journey, is on accurate diagnosis and in-depth engagement with the workforce.

Fair-to-good

For local areas that have improved from poor to fair to sustain their improvement and avoid the risk of “slipping back”, it is vital that they see improvement as a long-term process that requires the consistent application of a long-term strategic plan. Complacency and short-termism are the risks to be avoided. This is achieved in three ways. First, local areas should seek to develop their capacity for robust *self*-assessment. This is vital once any external oversight – for example through an externally-chaired improvement board – has been removed. Second, middle managers within children’s services and partner agencies begin to play a more important role in owning the improvement agenda, embedding improvement, and ensuring greater consistency of frontline practice. Third, local areas can begin to shift the focus from certain “mission-critical” aspects of their service (such as the front door and thresholds for referrals) to see children’s services as a more interdependent system. This means focusing on ensuring that high-quality practice is embedded consistently across all teams, and a greater emphasis is placed specifically on preventative and early help services.

The Continuous Service Improvement Framework: Barnsley

Having been issued with an improvement notice in 2012, Barnsley had a positive experience of working with an improvement board and an independent chairperson. The challenge, for Barnsley, was how to maintain pace and embed improvements after the improvement notice was lifted. To this end, Barnsley developed the Continuous Service Improvement Framework. This aims to align key elements of improvement so that they are working in tandem to improve services and outcomes. These include:

- a plan for continuous service improvement delivered by partners working together;
- robust and clear system governance – through the children’s trust board, scrutiny from elected members, and the Barnsley Safeguarding Children Board; and
- developing a culture of respectful challenge and making the voice of the child part of business-as-usual for all services and agencies.

Working within the framework, partners have been able to drill down into priority areas in order to embed and spread improvements in frontline practice. The front door has been a key area of focus, and improvement work has resulted in a decrease in the volume of referrals to the service. There have also been reductions in the numbers of child protection plans in the last two years, and improved permanency planning for children in care.

Good-to-great

For local areas seeking to improve from good to great, or sustain excellent performance, the emphasis was on maintaining consistently high-quality frontline practice and managing risk effectively. In this stage of the journey, improvement activities are no longer something discrete and separate from the day-to-day operations of children’s services. Instead, they have become the norm, or “what we do”. There are robust routines in place to ensure oversight of key service areas, but these are so embedded as to be able to embrace disciplined innovation – clear planning, precise implementation, and rigorous evaluation of its effectiveness – to drive ongoing improvement.

Improving outcomes for children on the edge of care: North Yorkshire

North Yorkshire has achieved significant improvements in children’s services since 2009, recently being named as one of the DfE *partners in practice*. Key to this success has been a long-term whole-service strategic plan for embedding effective and consistent frontline practice, and on shifting the focus of support over time from statutory services to prevention and early help. This has three elements. First, North Yorkshire has focused on strengthening routes into children’s services and ensuring consistent decision-making by means of a multi-agency customer contact centre. Second, it adopted a strategic approach to placements and permanency, with weekly routines to ensure oversight of those entering and in care, and the innovative *no wrong door* approach to provide tailored early support for young people on the edge of care or entering care late in their lives. Third, performance improvement groups enable leaders and managers to exercise ongoing forensic scrutiny of practice. As a result, between 2012 and 2016, there has been a significant reduction in referrals, and conversion of referrals to assessments has risen (from 64.9% to 97%). Child protection plans have reduced (by 36%), as has the number of looked-after children (by 15%). Financially, £3million is no longer being spent on the looked-after children budget, enabling further investment in prevention and early help.

At this stage in the journey, there may be opportunities for senior leaders to act as “system leaders”, supporting other local areas that are experiencing difficulties. This can bring benefits to the supporting organisation, as well as the supported, in the form of exposure to new ideas and development opportunities for staff. Nevertheless, local areas need to be mindful of the risk of becoming overstretched and “taking their eye off the ball”. The speed at which cases come into children’s services and the number of decisions needed on a daily basis can mean that even ostensibly high-performing local children’s services can be vulnerable to rapid decline if staff in key roles leave or too much of their time is diverted onto other projects.

Part 2: Timescales of improvement

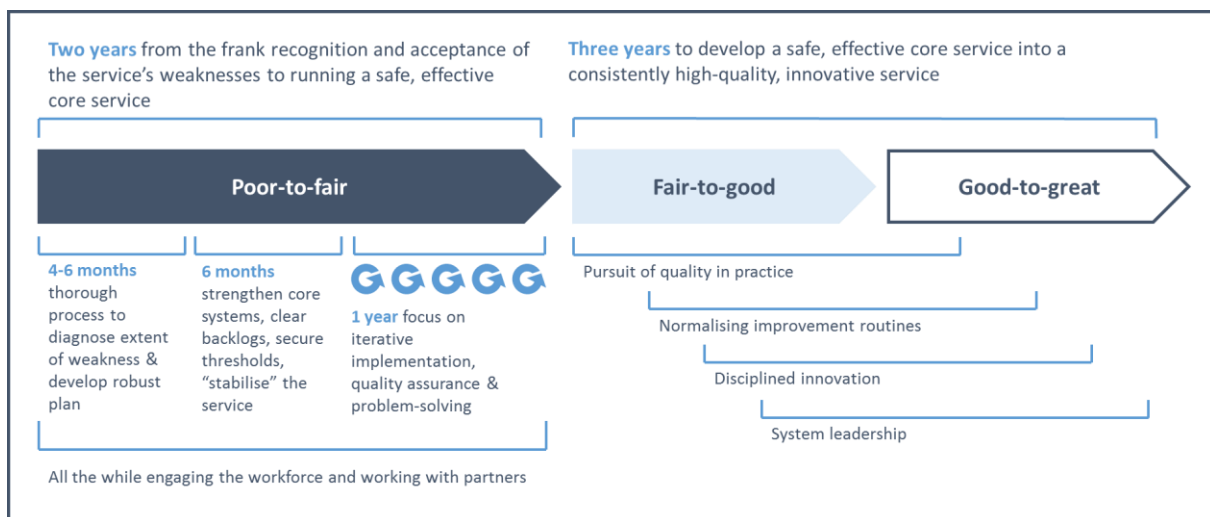
All of the local areas that took part in the research were agreed that genuinely sustained improvement was a long-term endeavour. There are a number of factors that can determine how quickly a local area can progress along the improvement journey. These include:

- **the depth and duration of service failure** – long-term underperformance by children’s services can have a compounding effect on the needs of children and families who need support;
- **the level of frank recognition and acceptance by leaders of the nature of failure** – rather than investing time in disputing whether this is the case; and
- **the effectiveness of the initial response** – specifically avoiding false starts on ill-thought-out restructures or innovations, leading to staff turbulence.

Once these barriers, which can thwart improvement before it has even got going, have been cleared out of the way, local areas estimated that it took around two years to move from poor to fair, to move from full and frank recognition of weakness to having a safe and effective core service. Doing so required:

- around six months of rigorous diagnostic to get to a baseline position on the organisation’s capacity and competency;
- a further six months to stabilise the service by strengthening core systems, ensuring the right thresholds for entry into children’s services are in place, and clearing backlogs;
- a further year of iterative implementation, checking quality, and problem-solving; and
- all the while, engaging and communicating with the workforce and key partners.

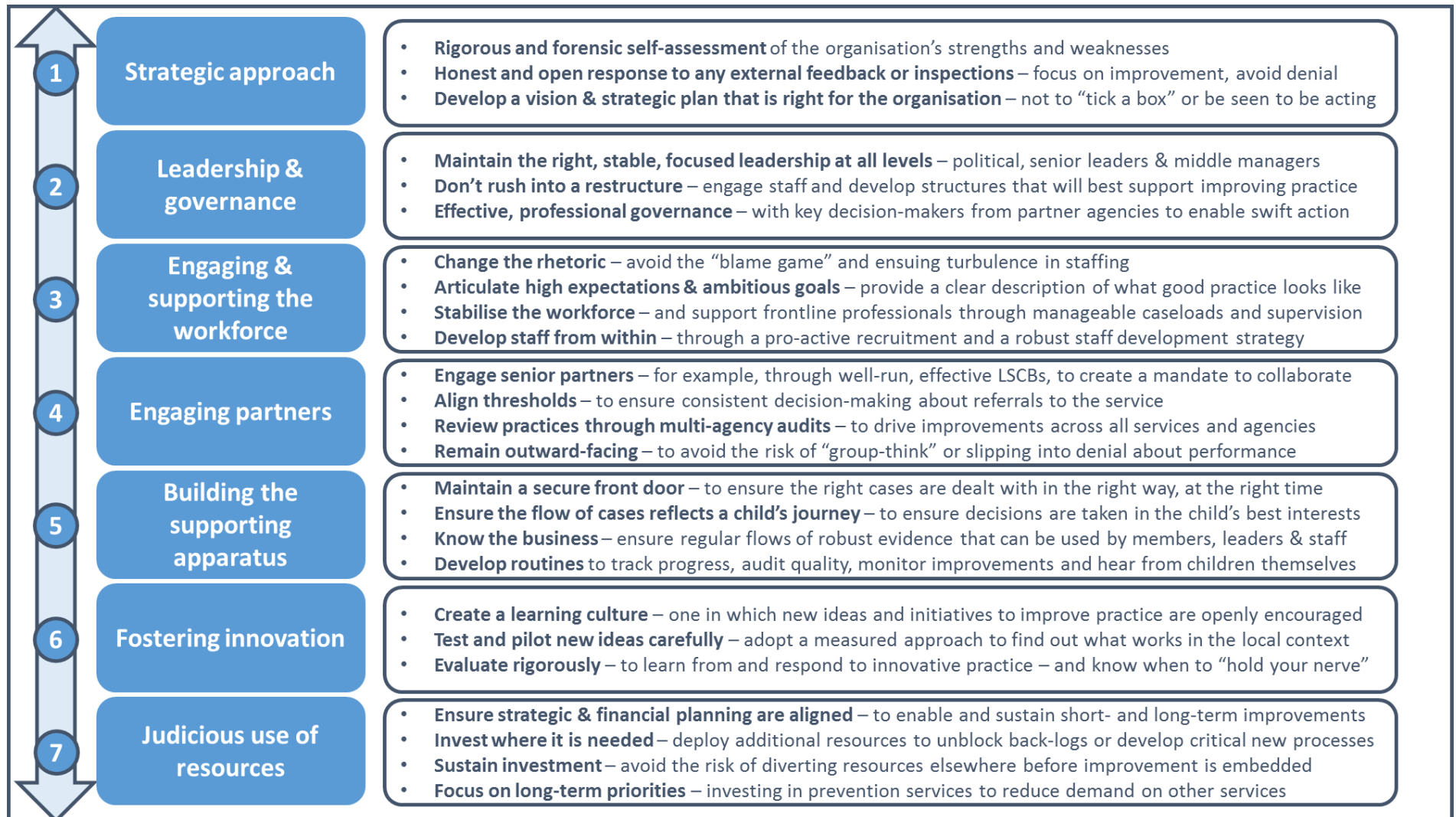
Estimated timescales for each phase of the improvement journey



Those local areas that had made the transition right the way through all of the phases of the improvement journey reflected that to move from fair to good and great required around a further three years. This period was characterised by the relentless pursuit of quality and consistency of practice, embedding and normalising of improvement routines, disciplined innovation, and eventually looking to reach out beyond the service to provide more system-wide leadership.

We have included these timescales in our research not because we think this is a one-size-fits-all model: the context for each local area will be different, and there is a risk for all of slipping back at each stage of the journey. Instead, we hope that setting out the stages and timescales of improvement, based on our research, may provide a useful means of orientating how local areas plan to improve and sustain effective children’s services.

Seven enablers of improvement in children's services



Part 3: Seven enablers of improvement in children’s services

Through our research, we identified seven important enablers of improvement. These are summarised in the diagram on the previous page.

Put briefly, the first four describe the importance of getting key people in a range of roles and organisations lined up behind a single, coherent strategy for improvement, and the importance of building the organisation culture, ethos and values to sustain improvement. In preceding sections, we have described the risk of rushing into a poorly-thought-out restructure or new initiative. Instead, our research suggests that the key to rapid and sustained improvement is frank acceptance of past failure, stable and consistent leadership, and open engagement with the workforce and key partners, in order to develop a shared vision and strategic plan that is right for the service. Political, corporate and service leaders can play a crucial role in catalysing a speedy and effective response to serious weaknesses in children’s services, sustaining improvement through effective long-term planning and scrutiny, and embedding effective frontline practice through, for example, effective corporate parenting arrangements. Political, corporate and service leaders, and an engaged workforce and committed partners, who know what good children’s services look like and are signed up to effective long-term plans for improvement, are vital in driving and sustaining improvement.

Once this is in place, building high-quality social care practice through effective support and development for the workforce, maintaining momentum through effective governance arrangements, and using rapid feedback on frontline practice to address key service areas are vital.

Stabilising the workforce: Achieving for Children, Kingston-upon-Thames

Kingston found that, counter to their expectations, the turnover in social work staff increased after they were judged to be good. To address this issue, and to recreate the essential stability in their workforce and team management structure, they instituted a programme of assessing, through staff surveys and exit interviews, what was causing social workers to leave. Based on the findings of this analysis they established a social care workforce board to re-professionalise their approach to recruitment and retention. Crucially, this focused not just on social workers, but also on recruiting permanent team managers – one of the key findings of the initial diagnostic phase was that social workers left when they no longer felt they had consistent team management. The service has now strengthened their ‘retention offer’ through better training pathways, progression, talent management and oversight by heads of service. This is paying dividends – all team leader posts have now been recruited to and the vacancy rate for social workers is heading back towards 10%.

The fifth enabler – what we have termed “building the supporting apparatus” – describes the need to put in place the foundations or essential “wiring” of effective children’s services. The focus here is on ensuring strong core systems and processes are in place, starting with the front door and ensuring that there are consistent thresholds for entry into children’s services used by all partners.

Reducing the rate of child protection cases: The Isle of Wight

The Isle of Wight, in partnership with Hampshire, identified that their rate of child protection was much higher than statistical neighbours and rising. Following a forensic audit of cases, they found that the current high rates of child protection were to some extent a justifiable and appropriate reaction to thresholds for intervention being set too high when the service had been inadequate. Specifically, both partners and social workers had become very risk averse in their practice – they were lacking the confidence to manage risk safely and lacked the mutual trust to make decisions that would enable children to be safely taken off child protection plans. The local authority recognised that managing the child protection risk safely, and reducing numbers appropriately over time, would require the meaningful engagement of their partners. They therefore used network meetings as a forum for shared learning on child protection, carried out thematic multi-agency audits around thresholds and held multi-agency lunches as a forum for the exploration of particular casework issues. As a result, a shared culture of trust and confident decision-making with partners is beginning to emerge. Child protection numbers have reduced from 276 to 210 in six months and rates of re-registration have remained stable.

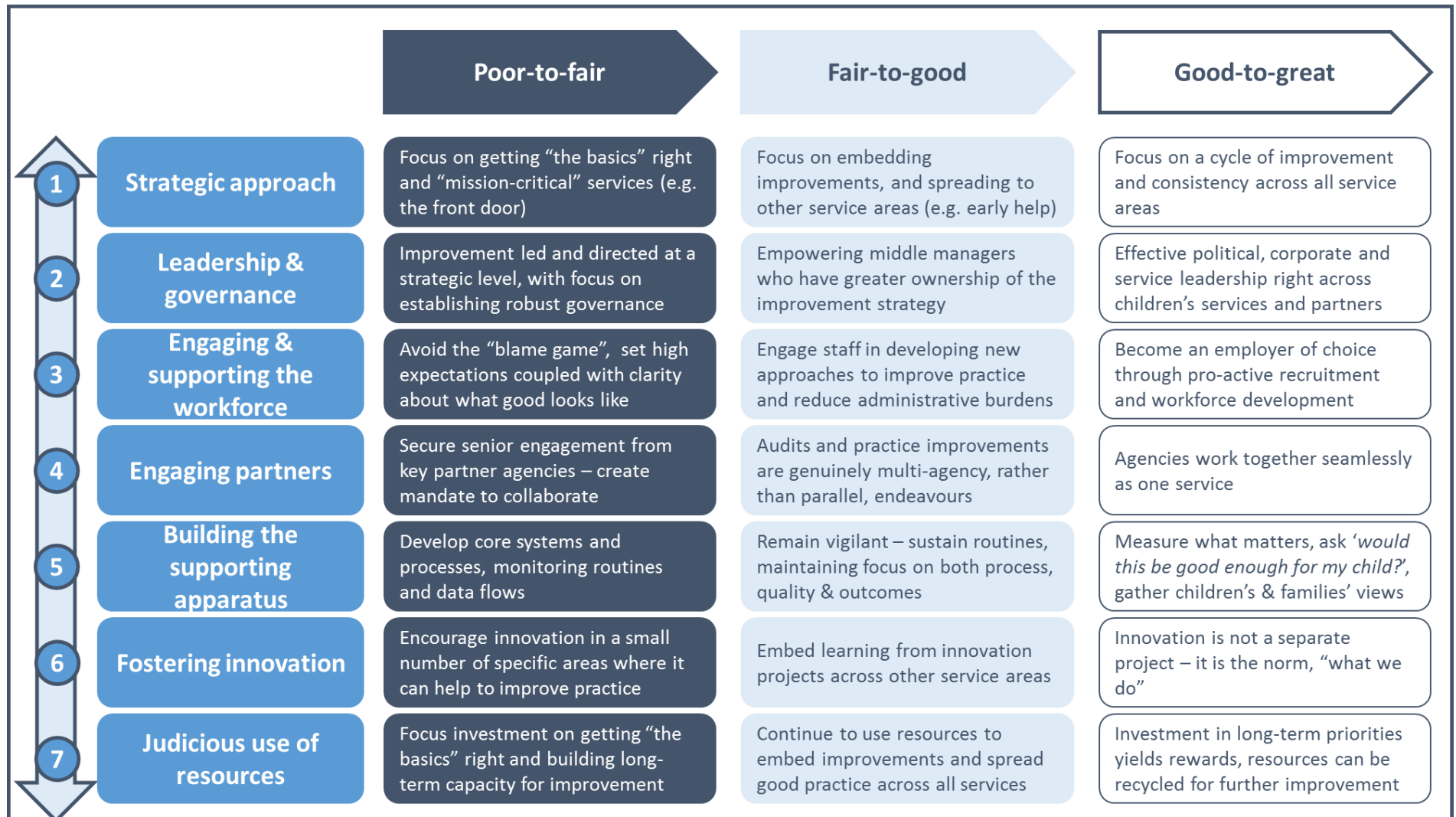
Furthermore, it is essential that leaders and managers “know the business”. This requires there to be robust routines for collating and triangulating real-time performance data, the results of audits of frontline practice, and feedback from children and families. These routines enable leaders and managers to identify areas of the service that require attention, to track improvements, and refine or adjust the approach swiftly. The speed of cases coming into the service and the number of decisions required about how they are handled make these real-time feedback loops imperative.

The sixth and seventh of our key enablers – “fostering innovation” and “judicious use of resources” – describe how local areas should think about how they continue to enhance their practice and sustain improvement. Innovation has a vital role to play in improving children’s services, but must be disciplined and focused if it is to lead to sustained improvements and avoid diverting energy and resources from core business.

There is a key role that leaders can play in ensuring that the purpose of innovations is planned out in advance, that innovations are tested and piloted on an appropriate scale, and that there is rigorous evaluation of their effectiveness before they are rolled out further. Likewise, leaders can play a crucial role in ensuring that there is clarity about the long-term plans for improvement and the way in which strategy and resources are aligned in order to achieve this. This risk, described to us by many local areas during our research, was that leaders, particularly elected members and corporate leaders, wind down their engagement in children’s services improvement after the initial poor-to-fair phase of the journey and seek to withdraw resources prematurely.

As noted above, a key finding of this research was that the activities required to drive and sustain improvement are consistent, continuous and cumulative throughout the improvement journey. As such, we consider that these seven enablers apply right across the phases of the improvement journey. The emphasis of each will, however, be slightly different at each stage, as we have set out in the diagram on the next page. This diagram may serve as a useful tool for political, corporate and service leaders to assess where they are on their improvement journey, which enablers they have in place, and which areas may need strengthening.

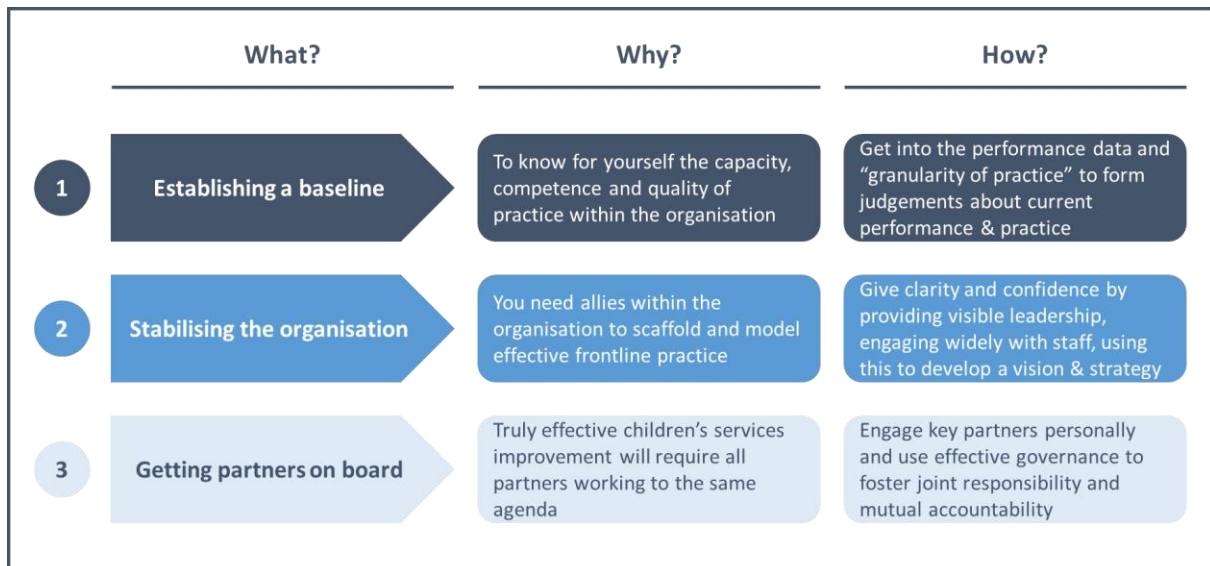
The seven enablers at each stage of the improvement journey



Part 4: Starting out on an improvement journey

During the research, one experienced Director of Children’s Services reflected that they would have found it invaluable to have a summary of some very simple practical steps to take when setting out on their improvement journey. The diagram below captures three important steps identified by some of the children’s services leaders who took part in the research. This is, in essence, another way of describing the activities that characterise the first six to 12 months of the improvement journey for a local children’s social care service.

Three key steps when embarking on an improvement journey



The importance of **establishing a baseline** – getting to an accurate judgement of the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation – was a central theme in our research. There are three key steps leaders should take during this stage:

- **interrogate the data for yourself**, looking particularly at benchmarks (neighbouring and similar local authorities, national averages, and past performance) and “having a fine eye for detail”;
- **getting into the granularity of frontline practice** and decision-making – going out to see frontline practice, and shadowing team managers and social workers; and
- **assessing the competence of the workforce** – to judge where there are pockets of good practice that can be built upon, what the overall development needs are, and looking at vacancy rates across teams to understand workforce needs.

Done sensitively and with clear communications about why establishing a baseline is important, staff need not feel threatened or patronised; indeed, some local areas described how staff had welcomed the opportunity to be open about areas where they would welcome further support.

There are good reasons for local areas to seek to avoid high rates of staff turnover, since turbulence in the workforce can make it difficult to embed and sustain improvement. This is why experienced children’s services leaders also described the importance of **stabilising the organisation**. This meant providing visible leadership and engaging staff openly, and avoiding staff feeling vilified and “done to”. Furthermore, it meant using engagement with staff to listen to their concerns, draw on their ideas for

improvement, develop a shared vision and strategy, and utilise potential allies to support staff and embed effective practice. Leaders also talked about “setting out your stall” to staff about standards and expectations. Managers might need to be supported actively in addressing areas of poor performance.

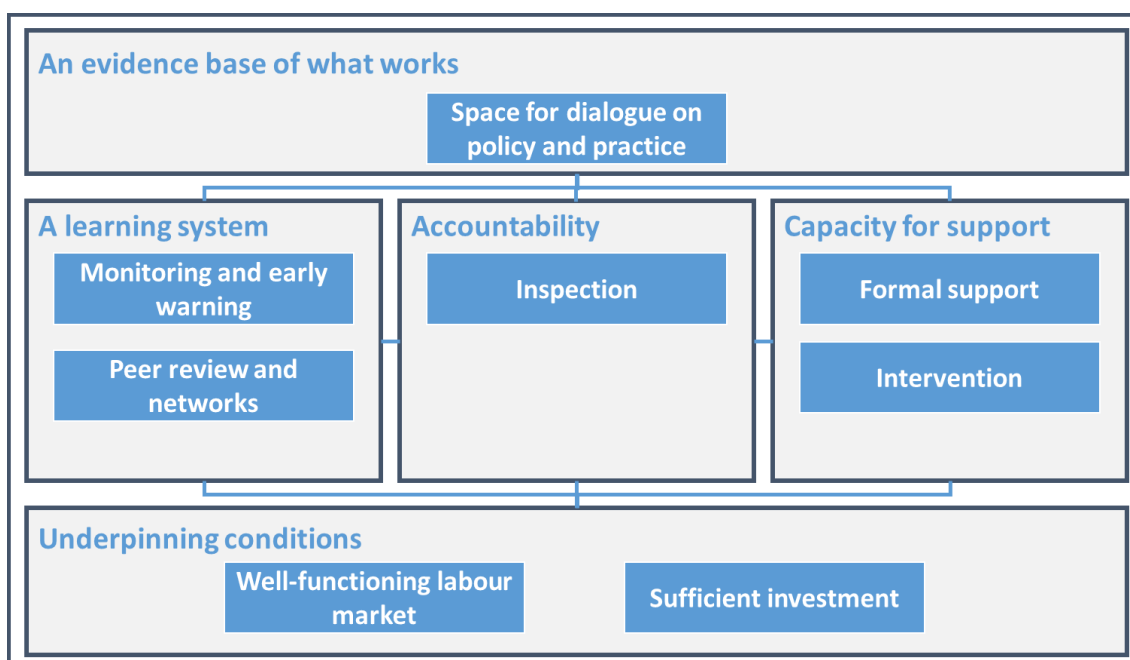
As well as establishing a baseline and stabilising the organisation, the leaders we engaged stressed that a third set of initial activities at the outset of an improvement journey was **getting partners on board**. The children’s services leaders we engaged argued that this should include:

- **building personal relationships with counterparts in partner agencies** – through open and honest discussion about their priorities, current challenges within children’s services, and how they can support improvement;
- **building rapport and commitment to an improvement agenda** – engaging them and their staff in developing a long-term vision and strategy for improvement;
- **testing this through some early forms of collaboration** – developing agreement around consistent thresholds for referrals, and testing their implementation, was seen as an important initial area of focus for partners from which further collaboration could be built; and
- **developing effective multi-agency governance** – with senior leaders engaged to enable swift decision-making, and foster joint responsibility and mutual accountability for implementing the improvement strategy.

Part 5: Acting as a system leader

In the final two chapters of our report, we turn to the ways in which the system as a whole *currently* supports local children’s services to improve and how these might be made more effective.

The core components of a self-improving children’s services system



We have done this by developing a schematic that captures the core components of a self-improving system. This requires (a) a robust and frequently added-to evidence base, (b) coherent mechanisms for identifying weaknesses and providing support, informally and formally as appropriate, and (c) the right resources, both human and financial, for services to be stable and to be able to improve.

These are issues for national policy-makers, representative bodies and opinion-formers to consider. Nevertheless, leaders of local children's services have a crucial role to play in developing and sustaining a self-improving children's services system. We suggest that there are three key ways in which leaders can do this.

- a. **Being outward-facing and engaging in regional and national networks** – engaging in national policy discussions, taking part in peer reviews, and working on joint projects with other local areas can help to disseminate effective practice, build capacity and identify weaknesses early across the system. It can also help leaders to keep pace with new developments, respond to strategic challenges, and benchmark their services against others.
- b. **Collaborating with neighbouring local areas** – there are certain challenges that all of the local areas we engaged for this research were facing. Chief among these was the difficulty of maintaining a stable, highly-trained and motivated workforce, particularly in light of some of the ways in which the agency market can encourage social workers and managers to move between local areas. Working with neighbouring local areas to agree and uphold shared approaches, such as consistent regional rates of pay for agency workers, or on cross-cutting priorities such as child sexual exploitation, can be beneficial.
- c. **Taking responsibility for the health of the system** – identifying children's services that are at risk of slipping into serious decline before service failure reaches crisis point relies heavily on leaders in neighbouring local areas pooling their intelligence and being prepared to have tough conversations with the peers. As we describe in the report, this requires that there are the right mechanisms for such issues to be flagged up and clarity about how such concerns will be acted upon. It also requires, however, leaders of children's services to be prepared to raise those concerns clearly and firmly in the first place, and to be prepared to provide support where it is needed.

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9 August 2019

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Dear Amanda

Focused visit to York local authority children's services

This letter summarises the findings of a focused visit to York local authority children's services on 17 July 2019. The inspectors were Peter McEntee, Her Majesty's Inspector, and Neil Penswick, Her Majesty's Inspector.

Inspectors looked at the local authority's arrangements for children in need of help and protection.

Inspectors looked at a range of evidence, including case discussions with social workers and team managers. They also looked at local authority performance management and quality assurance information and children's case records.

Overview

There has been a deterioration in the quality of services for children in need of help and protection since the last inspection of children's services in 2016.

Recently appointed senior managers understand the extent of the deterioration and have begun to put in place policies and processes to both measure the extent of the impact of poorer practice and turn this around. A trajectory for change has been established. However, some children continue to be exposed to risk, as this change is too recent to have had an impact.

There has been drift and delay in the progression of plans for some children. This has been exacerbated by staff turnover, which has resulted in children having too many changes of social worker and a consequent loss of focus on what needs to be done. Work in some cases has lost its way, with children remaining on a plan longer

than necessary and risks not being addressed effectively. Oversight and challenge by frontline managers and independent reviewing officers (IRO) are not effective in tackling drift or improving the quality of social work practice.

Children in need meetings and initial and review child protection conferences are being held on a timely basis, with broad multi-agency involvement. A wide range of support services are being offered to families to meet their needs. Where there is greater social worker stability and clearly articulated plans, more effective work is being achieved to reduce risk to children and meet their needs.

What needs to improve in this area of social work practice

- The quality of supervision offered to staff and the effectiveness of management oversight, including that of IROs, to identify delay and ensure timely progression of plans through supportive challenge.
- The quality of children in need and child protection plans to ensure that they focus on children's needs, make clear expectations on parents and carers that reduces risk, are written in a way that can be easily understood, and include a contingency plan should progress not be made.
- Ensure that visits to children and families are purposeful and are recorded in a way that is relevant to the plan and includes the child's voice.
- Implement an effective quality assurance framework that focuses on the experiences of children and leads to an increased understanding of, and improvement in, the quality of frontline practice.
- A reduction in the number of changes of social worker that some children are experiencing.

Findings

- Recently appointed senior managers have taken steps to ensure that they have an accurate understanding of the quality of social work practice and the action needed to begin to improve services for children and families in York. A recently updated self-assessment provides an honest appraisal and accurately reflects the shortfalls identified at this visit. The outcome of a recently commissioned peer review has provided a helpful focus on the areas for improvement. An improvement board has been established to monitor implementation of the appropriately focused improvement plan. It is too soon to see the impact of this in children's cases.
- Senior leaders have commissioned an independent review of all children in need and child protection cases. They have recognised that a strong culture of quality assurance and performance management has been absent in the authority for some time and are now taking steps to establish a more robust quality assurance

framework. They understand that more work needs to be done to enhance social workers' and team managers' understanding of what good practice looks like and to embed a challenge and learning culture. Political support is demonstrated by recent further investment in the service, including agreement for the recruitment of additional qualified staff over establishment.

- There is drift and delay in the progression of both children in need and child protection plans for some children. Too many children have had too many changes of social worker, and this has resulted in a loss of focus on what needs to happen to make children's lives better. Some children have been on plans for too long, some for several years, demonstrating a lack of progress and effective management oversight.
- A practice of allocating children in need cases to unqualified staff (children in need practitioners) has meant that these staff have been asked to work with, and take responsibility for, complex cases and, sometimes, inappropriate levels of risk. This has contributed to drift and delay in some cases. New senior managers have recognised that this practice is unacceptable and have already taken steps to begin to re-allocate this work to social workers. Newly qualified social work staff have also been expected to carry too much responsibility too early on in their development, including being given sole responsibility for child protection cases. The authority is seeking to stabilise the current high rate of turnover of staff through active recruitment and revised support for newly qualified staff, including the types of cases they hold.
- Case management oversight and supervision of staff are insufficiently robust. Managers are not identifying and tackling drift and delay and their direction on cases is not leading to improved quality of practice and outcomes for children. Supervision is often a descriptive update and does not offer reflection about progress or focus on areas of learning. IROs in most cases are not ensuring that work is progressed in conferences and reviews, nor are they escalating concerns where case resolution is needed. The authority has recognised that more needs to be done to ensure that there is a meaningful escalation of concerns. It has initiated training for IROs and managers, but it is too soon to see an impact.
- Child in need plans and child protection plans are not sufficiently focused on the child, their needs and outcomes to be achieved. There is too much focus on the parent and what they must do, and this is not linked to children's needs and what must improve. For many parents, this means it is harder to make the link between their own actions and risk to the child, and this confusion is a contributor to delays in resolving risk. Plans are not written clearly enough and are not clear about what needs to change and how. Language used is inappropriately complex and often vague. Contingency plans are often missing or, where they are present, are not clear enough about what will happen if things do not improve.
- Children in need meetings and child protection conferences and reviews are timely. They are well attended by other agencies and there is a good level of

engagement by partners. A wide range of support services are being offered to families. Where there is greater social worker stability and outcome-focused plans, more effective work is being done to reduce risk to children and meet their needs. Effective edge-of-care work is undertaken in some cases, which has kept children with their families through intensive direct work with young people.

- Use of the public law outline process has recently been strengthened through the introduction of a new fortnightly legal gateway process that helps to ensure that cases are tracked more effectively. However, letters before proceedings do not sufficiently detail the impact of parents' actions on children, which limits parents' understanding of their responsibilities.
- Case chronologies are not always available and, when they are available, they do not always contain appropriate information. The authority has acted to ensure that these are now completed and updated during the assessment process and has initiated training for social workers on their purpose and value.
- Visits to children and families are, in most cases, regular and often more frequent than the statutory requirement. However, visits are not always focused on progressing the child's plan. More long-standing social workers know children well but recording of work is not consistently capturing the voice of the child. Where there have been several changes of social worker, this has impacted on the relationship with some children, who are understandably more reluctant to engage with staff.
- Social workers in the children with a disability team demonstrate a good knowledge of and focus on needs arising out of disability. However, they have less experience of child protection work, as previously this work has been undertaken by social workers in the safeguarding teams. The authority plans to move the oversight of this work to the children with a disability team but has not yet ensured that these staff have all the skills to manage risk.
- The authority recognises that quality assurance processes have not been sufficiently robust. As a result, a new performance framework has recently been put in place. However, audit activity to establish the quality of practice in individual cases and provide learning for staff is not robust enough to give the authority a full picture of the strengths and weaknesses of practice. Audit judgements and template completion is not consistent or compliant with the authority's own grading policy and does not always identify key issues in cases, lessening the value of the audit. Assurance activity is overly focused on compliance processes and is less effective at looking at the quality of practice. Auditors are too optimistic and, in some cases, there has been little difference made to children's experiences following audit.

Ofsted will take the findings from this focused visit into account when planning your next inspection or visit.

This letter will be shared with the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Peter McEntee
Her Majesty's Inspector

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**Children, Education and Communities Policy
and Scrutiny Committee**

24 September 2019

Report of the Assistant Director (Communities and Culture)

Cultural Entitlement for Young People**Summary**

1. This report provides an update on work to develop a cultural entitlement for young people.

Background

2. This committee asked for an update on the commitment contained in the city's new cultural strategy to develop a cultural entitlement for all young people.
3. This work is very much at the developmental stage but what follows represents an outline of the early thinking.

Ambition

4. The ambition underlying this work is that:
York becomes the first city to achieve cultural entitlement
for all children and young people.
5. The Cultural Strategy embraces Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child¹ by placing young people at the centre of designing their cultural experience. The aim is that, from September 2019, working within the new OFSTED Framework, all York's learners, particularly the most disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) will be provided with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.
6. REACH, the Local Cultural Education Partnership, will lead the development of a joined-up local arts and heritage education offer, securing new investment into shared resources that bring about a more

¹ <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>

coherent and visible delivery of cultural education involving formal and informal sectors.

7. Aligned with York Strategic Partnership for Emotional and Mental Health, young people's emotional and mental wellbeing are a key focus within the strategy. Access to creativity and culture will support a 'whole child' approach, developing resilience and supporting wellbeing at key life stages for children and young people.

Actions

8. Actions are likely to include:
 - Seeding the opportunity for every child in the city to be an artist, making culture accessible to all children and young people.
 - Embedding York's cultural offer within universities and colleges, enabling young people to go on to fulfil their creative potential throughout every stage of their life.
 - Developing events to bring students into contact with employers and encouraging students to attend culture and creative industry events.
 - Developing young people's creative intelligence and investing in family cultural capital².

Overall Outcomes

9. Outcomes will be:
 - Creative partnership working has realised a greater opportunity for young people in York to achieve their aspirations.
 - Schools are encouraged and inspired to recognise the holistic benefits of arts and heritage engagement for children and young people inside and outside the classroom.
 - Arts engagement is part of the core educational offer within schools and informal learning environments.
 - More children and young people participate in, and experience arts and heritage activity and sign up for appropriate arts and heritage learning and accreditation schemes.
 - York children and young people have better health and wellbeing, and develop a wider range of creative skills, greater confidence, and heightened awareness of future opportunities.

² <https://culturallearningalliance.org.uk/what-is-cultural-capital/>

- York is a national exemplar with respect to cultural entitlement for children and young people with every child and young person having the chance to create, play and participate.

Recommendations

10. Members are asked to note and comment on the contents of this report.

Reason: To ensure Members are informed and consulted on the development of cultural entitlement for young people.

Contact Details

Authors:

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and Culture)

Chief Officers responsible for the report:

Amanda Hatton
Corporate Director of Children,
Education and Communities

Report Approved ✓ **Date:** 3 September, 2019

Specialist Implications Officers:

Wards Affected: **All** ✓

For further information please contact the author of the report

Abbreviations

OFSTED- Office for Standards in Education

SEND- Special Educational Needs

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**Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Draft Work Plan 2019-20**

<p>Tuesday 25 June 2019 @ 5.30pm</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arrangements for Scrutiny in York 2. York CVS Bi-annual Service Level Agreement Update 3. York Theatre Royal Bi-annual update 4. Children, Education and Communities Service overview-Power point presentation 5. Draft Work Plan
<p>Tuesday 23 July 2019 @ 5.30pm</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attendance of the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Communities 2. York Museums Trust – Partnership Delivery Plan Bi annual update 3. Year End Finance and Performance Monitoring Report 4. Update on Review of Ward Committees 5. CSMC Food Poverty Scrutiny Review 6. York Learning Governance arrangements 7. Work Plan
<p>Tuesday 24 September 2019 @ 5.30pm</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attendance of Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education 2. Local Area Teams Audit Update 3. City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership Update 4. Children’s Specialist Services Overview Report 5. Young People’s Cultural Entitlement Update Report 6. Work Plan

<p>Tuesday 29 October 2019 @ 5.30pm</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work Plan 2. Cultural Leaders Update
<p>Wednesday 27 November 2019 @ 5.30pm</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work Plan
<p>Wednesday 18 December 2019 @ 5.30pm</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work Plan 2. 6 monthly Finance and Performance Monitoring Report
<p>Tuesday 28 January 2020 @ 5.30pm</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work Plan 2. Finance and Performance Monitoring Bi annual Update report 3. CEC Directorate Peer Review 4. York Theatre Royal Bi-annual Report 5. York CVS Bi annual report
<p>Wednesday 26 February 2020 @ 5.30pm</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work Plan 2. CYC Bi-annual report on Safeguarding and looked after children
<p>Tuesday 24 March 2020 @ 5.30pm</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) Annual Report and review of York Schools' Agreed Syllabus 2. Work Plan

Wednesday 22 April 2020 @ 5.30pm	1. Work Plan
Wednesday 20 May 2020 @ 5.30pm	1. Work Plan

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