

***OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD
Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Agenda - supplement***

Date Tuesday 10 September 2019

Time 6.00 pm

Venue Crompton Suite, Civic Centre, Oldham, West Street, Oldham, OL1 1NL

- Notes
1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST- If a Member requires advice on any item involving a possible declaration of interest which could affect his/her ability to speak and/or vote he/she is advised to contact Paul Entwistle or Mark Hardman at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.
 2. CONTACT OFFICER for this agenda is Mark Hardman Tel. 0161 770 5151 or email mark.hardman@rochdale.gov.uk
 3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS - Any Member of the public wishing to ask a question at the above meeting can do so only if a written copy of the question is submitted to the contact officer by 12 noon on Thursday, 5 September 2019.
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MEMBERSHIP OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD
Councillors McLaren (Chair), Taylor, Toor, Harkness, Jacques, Curley, Price and Surjan

Item No

10 Children's Services: Getting to Good - Update (Pages 1 - 40)



Oldham
Council



Report to Overview and Scrutiny Board

Getting to Good Children's Improvement Programme Update

Portfolio holder:

Cllr Amanda Chadderton, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Officer Contact:

Merlin Joseph, Interim Director of Children's Services

10th September 2019

Purpose of the report:

This report will provide a perspective on the current performance of Oldham's Children Social Care which includes:

- Update Post Ofsted ILACS 2019 and findings
- Improvement Plan and Transformation Programme to support improvement
- Workforce and the new Target Operating Model
- Service Demand Profiles
- Caseloads for Social Workers
- Financial Performance and Demand

1. Findings

1.1 In summary the findings are as follows:

- Following the Ofsted ‘Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services’ (ILACS) framework in January 2019, Oldham have received a verdict of “Requires Improvement to be Good”. To address this, Children’s Social Care created an Improvement Plan to improve the quality of Social Care for children and young people.
- There is clear corporate and political ownership over the children’s agenda which has resulted in significant investment to improve the quality of Children’s Social Work.
- There has been a significant amount of activity undertaken to improve services for children in Oldham through improved management oversight and transformation, which is beginning to show promising results.
- The levels of demand across key profile areas are decreasing unlike last years report which showed substantial increases in demand. Oldham is now below or around our statistical neighbour levels.
- Caseloads for frontline social workers have substantially reduced from last year and are currently below the organisational target.
- The roll out of The Structural Investment Plan is underway to strengthen the Leadership and Management arrangements in Children’s Social Care and to improve capacity across Social Work Teams.
- The financial performance of Oldham Children’s Social Care is stabilising as a result of the investment and closer monitoring of spend.
- The wider environment to improve the quality of Social Work is being delivered through newly identified accommodation and training facilities to improve and to enable Social Workers to practice high quality Social Work.

2.0 The improvement journey

2.1 Oldham Council has the highest ambitions for our children and young people. We want Oldham to be a place where children and young people thrive. We have made significant strides to understand ourselves better and know that more needs to be done to deliver on our ambitions.

2.2 Our self-assessment ahead of the ILACS Inspection provided an honest reflection of the outcomes achieved to date and additional work required - all of which demonstrates our commitment to improvement. There is momentum in Oldham and a strong ambition to deliver a sustainable and collective offer for our children and young people.

2.3 Work to deliver an improvement journey commenced in July 2018 under the Interim DCS to shape a programme of work to deliver the findings of the SIF as part of the 2015 inspection by Ofsted. A 23 Project Programme was shaped by the Transformation Team supporting the Interim DCS. Interim resourcing was approved to support the programme and work started in earnest to deliver 32 tactical and strategic objectives to improve the quality of Social Care.

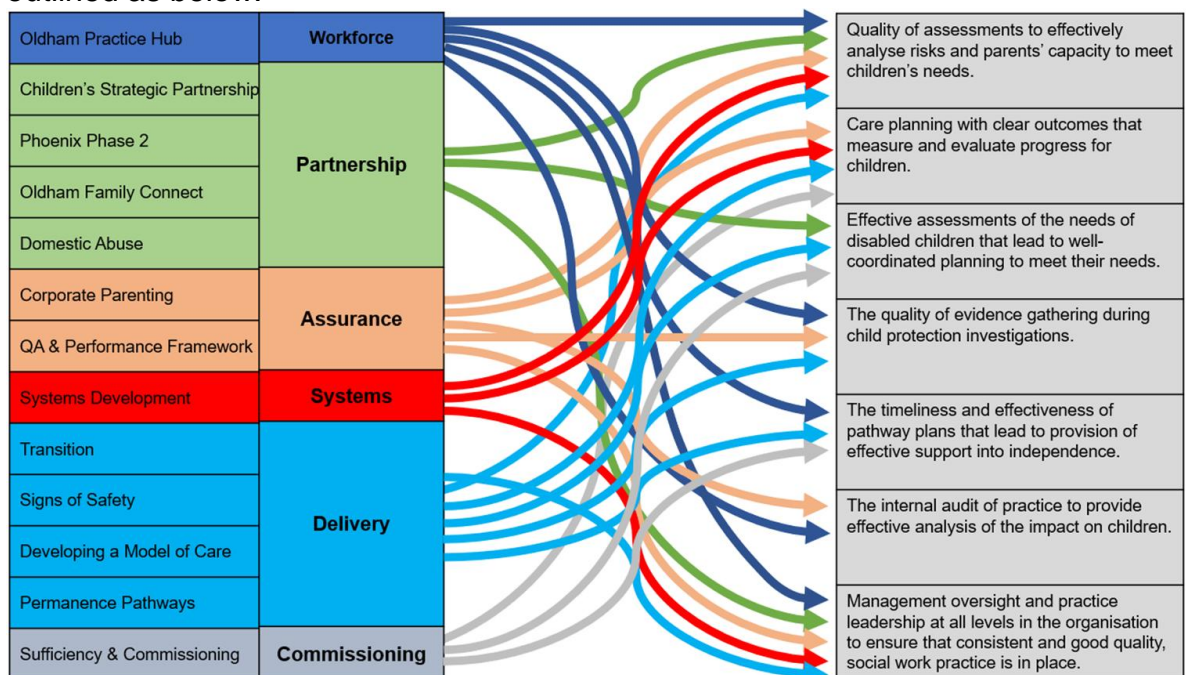
2.4 In January 2019 Ofsted carried out an ILACS inspection of Children Services and returned a judgement that Oldham “Requires Improvement to be Good”. In light of this report, the transformation programme of activity has been revised and 16 projects have been put forward to incorporate the recommendations made in the report. The Transformation Team have therefore devolved a number of the previous projects to Business as Usual allowing the focus to be on delivering key strategic pieces of work, that will have the most impact on improving the quality of social work practice and to improve outcomes for children both in care and in universal/universal plus services.

3.0 Transformation Activity to Improve Service Quality

3.1 The Transformation Programme is tasked to support the Improvement Plan and management action to improve Social Work Practices in Oldham. The Programme provides the structures, processes and social work models to enhance practice.

3.2 The wiring of the projects has been mapped to the areas of improvement that Ofsted have identified for improvement. Individual project scoping has determined where each activity will deliver an improvement in practice to help improve outcomes for Children.

3.3 The projects linked to Ofsted Improvements that are required in Oldham are outlined as below:



* Three wider transformation projects not shown in the above are Structural Investment Plan, Workforce Strategy and Metropolitan Place and Accommodation.

3.4 The key focus of the programme is:

- Creating the governance in overseeing the Getting to Good Portfolio Board, chaired by the Lead Member for Children’s Services and the Children’s Change Board chaired by The Deputy Chief Executive.

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- To mobilise the Investment of £12m over 3 years to support the strengthening of Social Work and Children’s Services in Oldham.
 - To support the embedding of the new Senior Leadership Structure with recruitment to the new structure taking place across the Autumn.
 - To ensure full recruitment to the new structure of Social Workers by the end of 2019, including the development of the Oldham Practice Hub.
 - To manage the Capital Programme to support the move to new accommodations in the Autumn.
 - To support the development and roll out of new models of practice such as Signs of Safety and Stockport Family.
- 3.5 In November 2018, the Council approved the Investment of £12m across three years to strengthen the management across Children’s Services and provide the required numbers of Social Work Practitioners needed to provide a good service as part of a new Target Operating Model.
- 3.6 Following the redesign of our Services, recruitment to the new structure is underway. This will take place through managed waves of recruitment activity over a 6-month period. This will allow the Directorate to embed new managers and practitioners in a stable and measured manner.
- 3.7 Consultation on the new Senior Management structure has been completed in May 2019 and recruitment is ongoing to populate the new leadership team. The new Senior Leadership Team is planned to be in place by the end of the year.
- 3.8 Additional Senior Practitioners and Team Managers are in the process of being recruited, which will decrease the overall management span of control to improve supervision and support to front line Social Work Practitioners. This improvement mitigates a major risk in last year’s report to Overview and Scrutiny on our performance.
- 3.9 The recruitment to the additional Social Work roles is continuing. Under current timelines our enhanced Social Work structure will be fully populated by the year end. The new Operating Model places an additional 17 FTE Social Work roles in the new structure and enhances some grades to attract experienced staff to Oldham. These posts are to be placed across the Assessment, Long Term, Permanence and Fostering teams to improve the quality of Social Work.
- 3.10 Additional roles have been created in the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service to reduce caseloads and improve the quality of independent review of Social Work to ensure that adequate professional oversight of cases takes place to ensure that children receive the right services and care planning appropriately.
- 3.11 The programme is supporting the creation of our designated professional learning and development structure the Oldham Practice Hub to provide high quality learning and development to our Social Workers to improve the quality of practice. It is anticipated the Hub will be fully recruited to by December 2019.
- 3.12 The Programme will also support the capital move to more appropriate accommodations in November 2019 to allow Social Workers to practice high

quality social work with children and young people in a specifically designed child-friendly environment.

3.13 The Directorate is also rolling out a recognised set of tools with Signs of Safety to support consistent decision making in social work practice. These tools will help to improve consistency of practice using recognized methodology and approaches that support good outcomes.

3.14 The Council is also implementing our localised version of Stockport Family Model to improve our pre-statutory early help offer (Oldham Family Connect). The Council has been awarded £390k through GMCA to adapt the model of early help to meet our needs. Oldham Family Connect will work with partners such as schools and early years settings to help better support children and families beyond the front door to help manage demand and to help reduce the number of re-referrals.

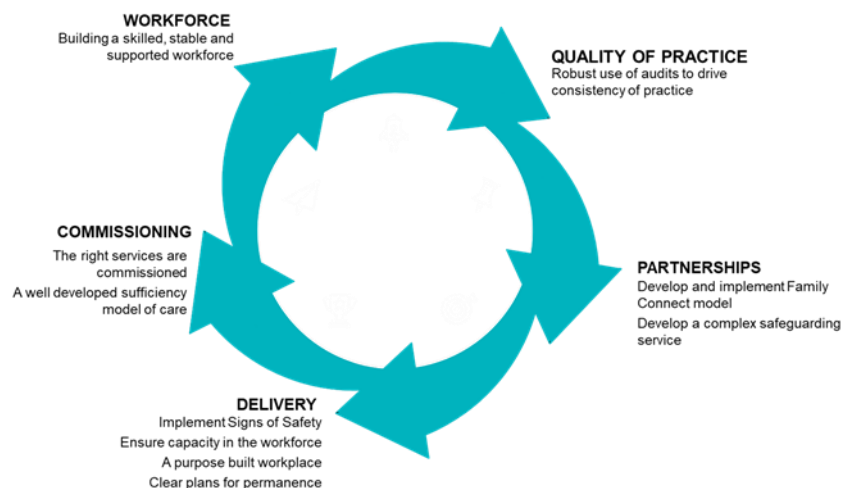
4.0 Ofsted Improvement Plan

4.1 The ILACS inspection in January 2019 mandated the Local Authority to create an improvement plan to address areas of Social Work Practice that require improvement.

4.2 We have made significant strides to understand ourselves better and know that more needs to be done to deliver on our ambitions. Prior to the inspection from July to December 2018, targeted management activity was focused on delivering operational and long-term sustainable activities to improve the overall performance of Children's Services. Our Improvement Plan focusses on four key areas of improvement that include; Standards of Practice, Practice Improvement, Learning and Development and Quality Assurance. The actions of the improvement plan are focused around the core themes of our improvement journey in Oldham.

4.4 The Council submitted the draft improvement plan to address the areas of improvement that were deemed necessary by Ofsted on 11th June 2019. The plan was created with partners across the Council to capture the quality improvement that is required to get services to Good. The plan identifies individual task and finish activities to which officers will track improvements under the overview and governance arrangements that are outlined in the Improvement plan.

4.5 In July 2019, the Draft Improvement Plan was provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The purpose of providing the plan is to ensure that sufficient review and challenge can be provided on the progress being made against the areas of improvement identified to Ofsted.



4.6 Ofsted have written formally to the Council on 21st August 2019, to confirm that the plan satisfactorily reflects the areas identified for improvement in the inspection report. The Regional Lead Inspector has also confirmed that the plan identifies clear actions to address these areas to improve the services for children in Oldham. A copy of the letter has been included for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as Appendix 1.

5.0 Improvement Plan Activity

5.1 The Directorate are now formally tracking progress against the four areas of the Plan, that was approved in August 2019, on a monthly basis. The actions being undertaken are now being monitored with individual ratings to provide scrutiny and challenge to the areas of improvement that have been identified.

5.2 As part of the DfE approved Partners in Practice agreement (PIP), Stockport Council are now supporting our improvement journey and a PIP plan is in place to improve key areas of our practice that were identified by Ofsted and that are included in our improvement plan. These specifically relate to Early Permanence, Care Leavers and Complex Safeguarding.

5.3 The plan has been assigned ratings based on improvement. The plan is currently in its launch period and will be subject to audit and ongoing feedback. Rating thresholds have been created to test the current activity and performance activity against each action. A red rating will be applied where the activity is behind schedule or below the required rate of improvement. An amber rating is applied where activity is in the process of being delivered or is awaiting sign off and completion. A green rating is applied where the activity is on track or has been completed.

5.4 The plan, which is now in its first review cycle, is currently rated Amber overall. This position is line with our estimation at this stage of the start-up activity and where the current improvements are to be expected across the 18-month improvement plan.

5.5 Two areas at this stage are currently rated Red. These are likely to be downgraded to Amber once the Auditing schedule has been formally approved in

September 2019.

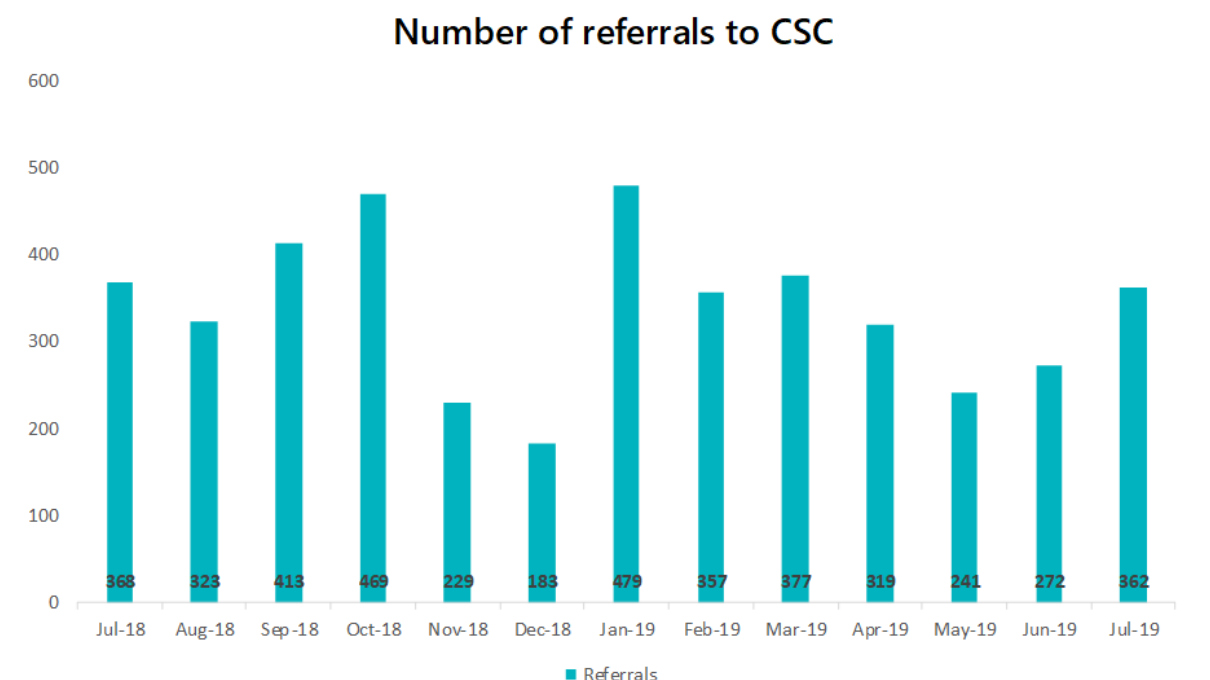
5.6 The below table demonstrates the summary of actions and their ratings. These ratings relate to the initial startup works being undertaken across Children’s Social Care to improve practice. The Improvement Plan is attached with this report as Appendix 2.

Plan Area	Rated Green	Rated Amber	Rated Red
Standards of Practice	0	6	0
Practice Improvement	1	8	1
Learning and Development	0	3	0
Quality Assurance	0	5	1
Total	1	22	2

Table 1- Areas of plan mapped to RAG Rating - Month 1 August 2019

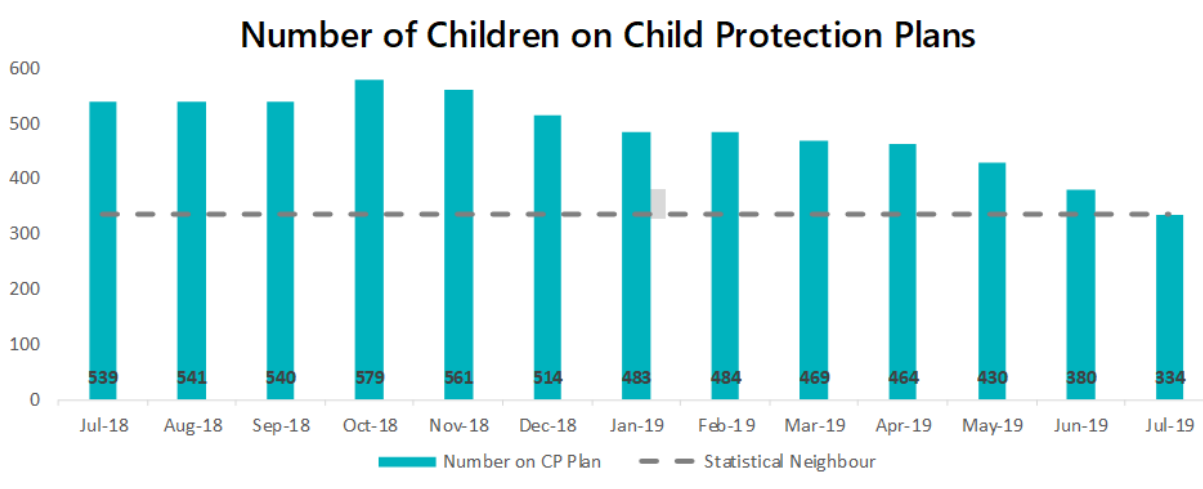
6.0 Children’s Social Care Demand

6.1 There has been a decrease in demand experienced across a range of key profile areas. This is the direct opposite to last year’s report to Overview and Scrutiny, which showed increased demand across our key indicators. This is due to increased management oversight and supervision from the management team. The following data illustrates the full extent of the improvement across the past year:

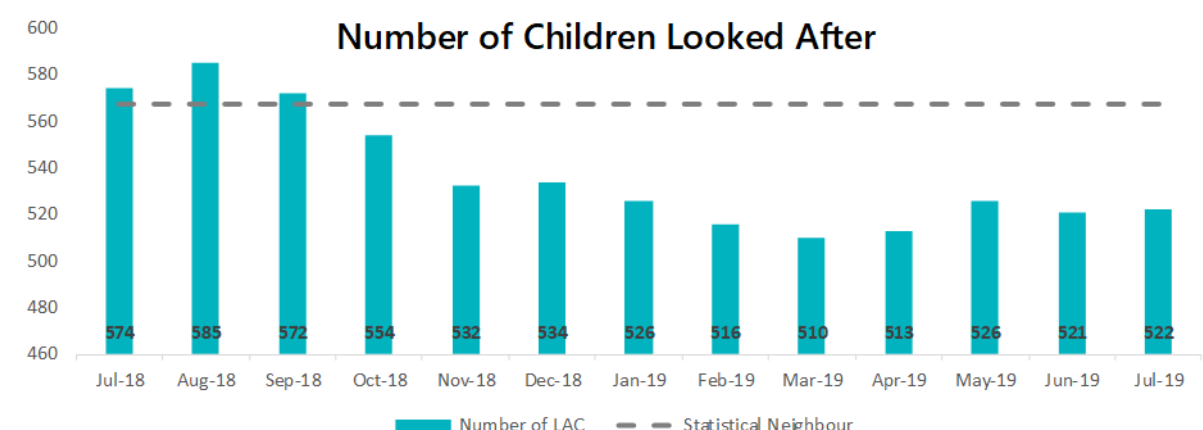


6.2 The rate of referrals for social work assessment has decreased overall over the last 12 months. 366 referrals on average each month have been made to

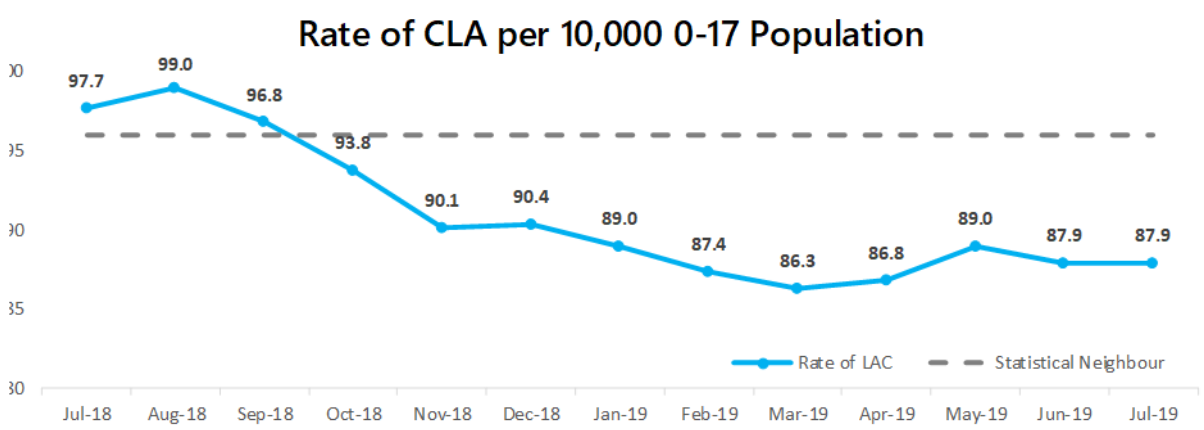
Children’s Social Care. In the last quarter the average number of referrals has dropped to 291 referrals per month.



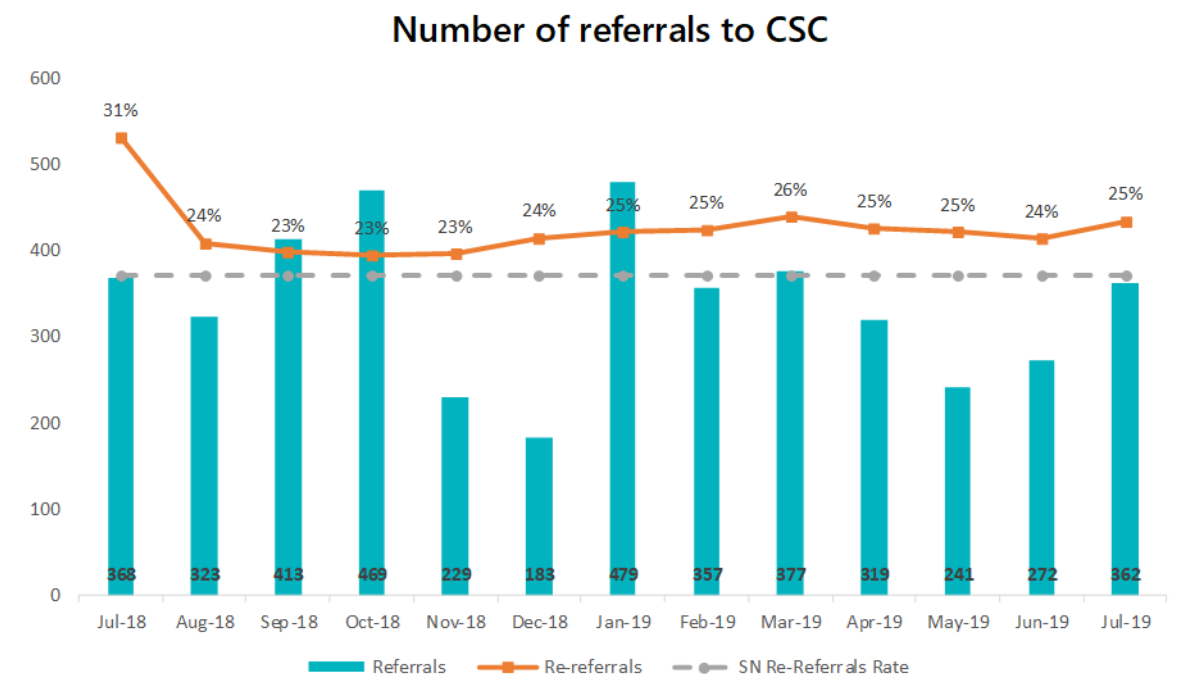
6.3 A significant rise in child protection plans (541 in August 2018) had been experienced in Children’s Social Care over the past 2 years. The level of children who were subject to Child Protection Plans far exceeded our statistical neighbours. This demand was creating substantial difficulty across Social Work Teams to manage their workloads. Since the last Overview and Scrutiny meeting in July 2018, the number of Children on a Protection Plan has fallen significantly due to improved management and oversight of cases. Our current numbers have fallen to slightly below Statistical Neighbour levels (334 in July 2019).



6.4 At the previous Overview and Scrutiny meeting in 2018; the numbers of Children who are Looked After Children (574 at July 18) was above our above statistical neighbours. Since July 2018, a marked reduction in the numbers of Children who are Looked After has reduced to below statistical neighbour levels. The number has now stabilised at approximately 522/3 children who are looked after.



6.5 In keeping with the previous measure, the rate of children who are looked after has fallen per 10,000 of our population to below Statistical Neighbour levels across the past 12 months.



6.6 The number of re-referrals is still 3% higher than our statistical neighbours. A contributing factor is not making the right intervention first time in cases.

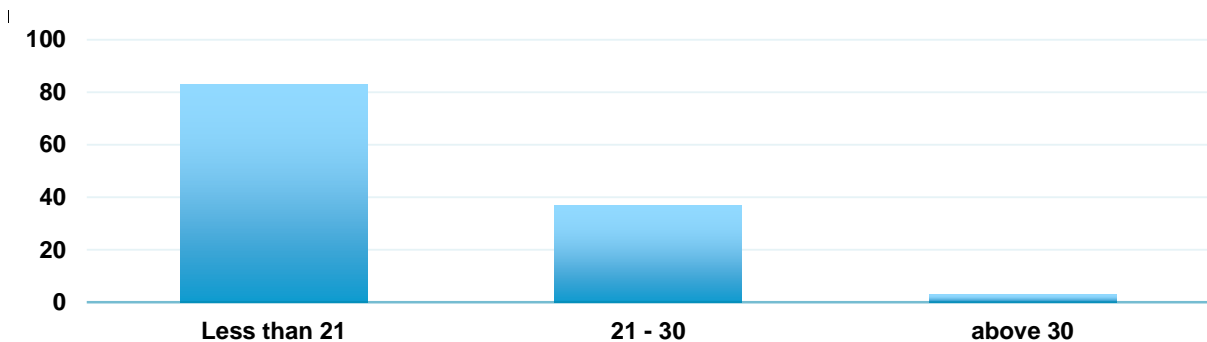
6.7 Work to develop our early help offer around schools is ongoing as discussed earlier in the report. The design work for our new model (Oldham Family Connect) is underway and the prototype will be delivered in early 2020. It is anticipated that the development of the model will help to reduce referrals to Social Work to bring our re-referrals to around or below statistical neighbours.

6.8 Due to improved management oversight, the conversion of agency social workers to permanent and the early impact of Transformation, demand is falling across

key performance measures.

7.0 Caseloads in Social Work

7.1 Caseloads have fallen substantially across Social Work Teams since the last report to Overview and Scrutiny in July 2018. The below table shows that of our Social Work staff the vast majority have a manageable caseload of less than 21 cases. The average caseload that a Social Worker has in Oldham currently is 17 cases.



7.2 The Local Authority has set a target, on average, of having 18 cases per social worker to give Social Workers a manageable caseload to improve the quality of social work. As of August 2019, this target is being met. This is a substantial reduction from the average of 21 cases per social worker last year. With the roll-out of the Structural Investment Plan and an increased number of Social Workers we aspire to meet the optimum number of 15 as identified in best practice guidance for Social Worker caseloads.

7.3 Presently 30% of social workers have a high caseload and 3% have a very high caseload (30+). This is a reduction from 50% of Social Workers having high caseloads and 18% having very high caseloads last year.

7.4 In addition front line managers have had their direct reports reduced to improve the management span of control to 7 in field work teams from up to 10 reports as per last year's report. We are improving the operating conditions for managers to achieve the consistent oversight and understanding of all the cases that their Social Workers are holding. This will allow our Social Workers to focus on improving the quality of practice and to improve outcomes for children. A commitment to rolling out reflective supervision remains an ongoing commitment to ensure improvements are made.

7.5 The demand for child protection and Looked After Children puts pressure on the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) caseloads, which are now above those recommended by statutory guidance (stated as 70 in the IRO Handbook). Children Looked After IRO's currently average 74 cases and child protection

Chairs average 77 cases. IROs play an important quality assurance role across the system as they independently oversee and challenge the progress of individual children’s cases to prevent drift and delay. This involves chairing Children Looked After reviews, visiting children to gain their wishes and feelings and escalating cases to senior managers where progress is not being made. The current workload pressures within this service undermines the IRO’s capacity to ensure rigorous oversight and challenge and waters down an important quality assurance safeguard across the system.

8.0 Financial Performance

8.1 Currently the directorate is managing its overspend position. The ongoing work through the financial recovery planning activity, the High Costs Placements activity, Workforce Planning and the roll out of the delivery model has reduced the potential overspend position from an initial £1,152k at the end of May to £471k at the end of June, as shown below.

2019/20 Month 3	Revised Budget £000	Forecast £000	Use of Reserves £000	Variance £000
Children in Care	24,681	24,886	-	205
Childrens Safeguarding	1,476	1,476	-	-
Fieldwork & Family Support	9,500	10,045	(279)	267
Children's Social Care Total	35,657	36,407	(279)	471

8.2 Work is ongoing to provide a balanced budget position and the financial position is stabilising across children’s social care. A significant improvement on the budgetary position has been obtained from an overspend position of £3.85m at the end of 18/19.

9.0 Conclusion

9.1 The challenges that were reported to Overview and Scrutiny in July 2018 are in the process of improving. Particular attention has been provided to reduce the numbers of children in care and the numbers of children who are subject to a child protection plan, where safe to do so. This is in part due to improved oversight and management action to improve practice operationally. There is a need to maintain caution on the reduction in demand until a full audit cycle is carried out to satisfy ourselves that our thresholds aren’t set too high. This process of auditing has just commenced and will be included in any future updates to Overview and Scrutiny.

9.2 The improvement in caseloads is significant and Social Workers are now being given manageable caseloads. This will ensure that a focus can be on the quality of social work. This is in tandem with reducing the management span of control for managers across Social Work Teams to allow them to focus on cases and to provide support and challenge to Social Workers.

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- 9.3 Oldham Council fully recognises the continuing requirement for improvement and there is full ownership over the delivery of the improvement plan to improve practice. The plan is in the early stages of being undertaken and activities to improve practice are in the process of being embedded. The key priorities over the next 18 months will be delivering the improvements outlined in the transformation plan.
- 9.4 The Council accept that in order for improvements to be sustainable then the transformation programme must provide the services with the right structures and tools to do the job to the best standards possible. The mobilisation of the new leadership and operational structures will provide the right resources to improve practice and provide the right capacity in key areas to consolidate and build on our improvements.
- 9.5 The financial position for Children’s Social Care is improving and there is a commitment to move to a balanced budgetary position for the financial year. This marks a substantial improvement on the overspend positions of the previous years report.
- 9.6 The Council are in the process of delivering new models to improve our services and Oldham Family Connect will help to manage referrals working with schools and early years settings to manage demand and reduce the numbers of re-referrals.

10.0 For the committee to note

- That Children’s Services implement the actions in the Improvement Plan and report to Overview and Scrutiny on a 6-monthly basis on progress.
- That the new operating model is recruited to ensure that gains that have been made are consolidated and built upon.
- That new models of practice are delivered to support the overall stability in Children’s Social Care.
- That an ongoing commitment to managing caseloads is maintained and through the increased capacity that caseloads do not rise to previous levels.
- That management spans of control remain at the current levels to allow managers to have better oversight of casework amongst social work practitioners.
- That work continues to move towards a balanced budget in year and that financial commitments are maintained where possible.

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21 August 2019

Merlin Joseph
Director of Children's Services
Oldham Council
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Andrew Cook HMI
Regional Director, North West

Dear Merlin

Inspection of Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council children's services - Improvement Plan

Thank you for sending me a copy of your local authority's improvement plan, following the standard inspection under the ILACS framework in January and February this year.

As you will be aware, Ofsted is not responsible for signing the action plan off or for endorsing it; this is your responsibility as the Director of Children's Services. However, I can confirm that it satisfactorily reflects the areas identified for improvement in the inspection report and that it identifies clear actions to address these areas to improve the services for children in Oldham.

We will consider the progress that you have made, and the difference that the actions taken have made to children's experiences, when we meet for the annual conversations in October 2019 and early 2020.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Cook HMI
Regional Director, North West

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Oldham

Children's Services

Improvement Plan 2019-2021

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Oldham
Council

Introduction

Oldham Council has the highest ambitions for our children and young people. We want Oldham to be a place where children and young people thrive. We have made significant strides to understand ourselves better and know that more needs to be done to deliver on our ambitions. Our self-assessment is an honest reflection of the outcomes achieved to date and additional work required - all of which demonstrates our commitment to improvement. There is momentum in Oldham and a strong ambition to deliver a sustainable and collective offer for our children and young people. Our approach is to critically self-evaluate and enact root and branch reform where required. We are fully supported by elected members and there is a commitment across the respective partnerships to support and co-produce improvement activity. This is reflected in the move towards bringing Children's Social Care, Early Help, Education, Early Years and Skills together under a Managing Director for Children's Services. There is a thirst for a strong strategic partnership to fully support the children and young people's agenda, across organisational boundaries, and to collectively ensure that all children and young people in Oldham thrive.

Context of improvement

There are big changes happening in Oldham as we shift our overall operating model to a place-based approach. Place based, multi-agency integration is key to the transformation and reform of public services and communities both here in Oldham and across Greater Manchester (GM). Only by developing a single approach to building resilience, that is informed by insight into what actually drives demand and shapes behaviour in communities will we shift the stubborn inequalities that exist within our borough. The learning, both locally, within GM and nationally has shown the necessity to take a different approach to building cooperative services, thriving communities and an inclusive economy.

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To achieve sustainable change, we know that we have to fundamentally rethink

- the way the public sector operates, and the relationship with communities
- how we work with individuals and families with problems
- how we connect with the community to both develop community connectedness, and build confidence
- how we have potentially challenging conversations that prompt a desire for change
- how we operate as a 'system' to unblock the barriers and system conditions that prevent people being able to make good choices and to live good lives
- how we intervene earlier, prevent failure demand and escalating levels of need leading to long term system-wide savings

Children's Service's is leading the way with this system shift with the development of the Oldham Family Connect Model and is well on the journey to continuous improvement. We are relentless in our core purpose of achieving excellence for our children and young people.

The Ofsted Inspection

In January 2019 Ofsted carried out their inspection of children's services and returned a judgement of "Requires Improvement to be Good". Ofsted recognised that as a Local Authority Oldham has an accurate evaluation of the quality of social work practice and that we have well developed plans to transform services that will be secured through a structural investment plan and a new operating model. As an organisation we are self-aware and accept and embrace our challenges.

Key findings:

Children who need help and protection

Children in Oldham who are at immediate risk of harm receive services that keep them safe. For other children in need of help, the quality of social work practice across all teams is inconsistent. Although a minority of children experience good assessment and planning, for others, assessments are ineffective because they do not analyse children's needs well. This leads to ineffective planning and intervention, and a lack of improvement in children's lives, with some experiencing repeat periods of statutory involvement with little change. Although some groups of vulnerable children receive support that helps them, others wait too long to get a service that meets their needs.

Children in care and Care Leavers

Most children in care in Oldham live in stable placements with people who look after them well. Many children make good progress at school or college and receive appropriate support to meet their needs, including their emotional health and wellbeing needs. However, some children do not have up-to-date care plans that support their progress or that lead to timely permanence planning. Some children live in short-term placements for too long and, for many who are entitled to support as care leavers, pathway planning is not effective in ensuring that clear, coordinated and timely plans are developed for their future.

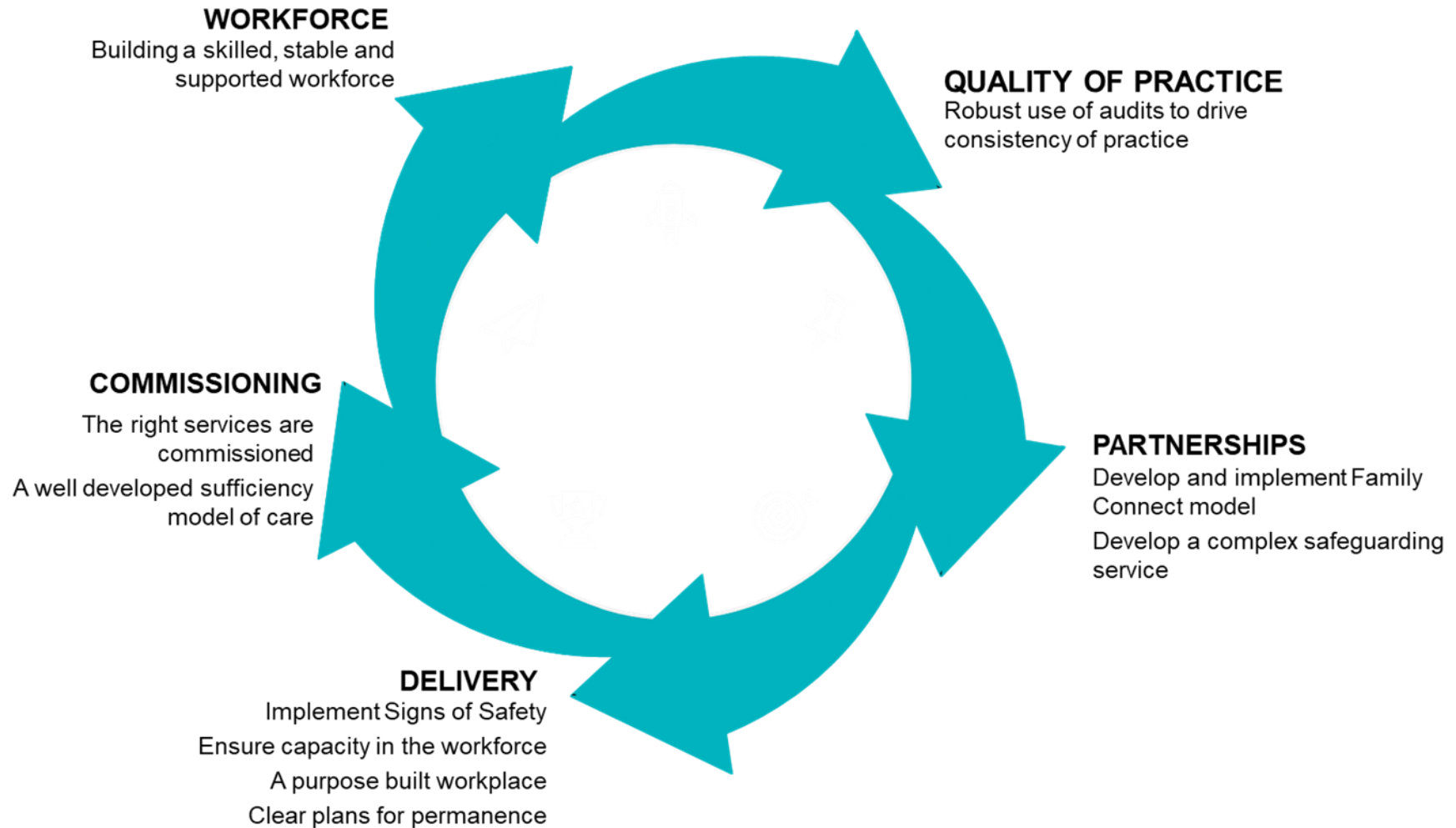
What needs to improve?

In line with our self-assessed areas for transformation and improvement Ofsted identified the following key recommendations across Standards of Practice, Practice Improvement, Learning and Development, Quality Assurance and Performance.

- The quality of assessments to effectively analyse risks and parents' capacity to meet children's needs
- Effective assessments of the needs of disabled children that lead to well-coordinated planning to meet their needs
- The quality of evidence gathering during child protection investigations
- The timeliness and effectiveness of pathway plans that lead to provision of effective support into independence
- The internal audit of practice to provide effective analysis of the impact on children
- Management oversight and practice leadership at all levels in the organisation to ensure that consistent, and good quality social work practice is in place

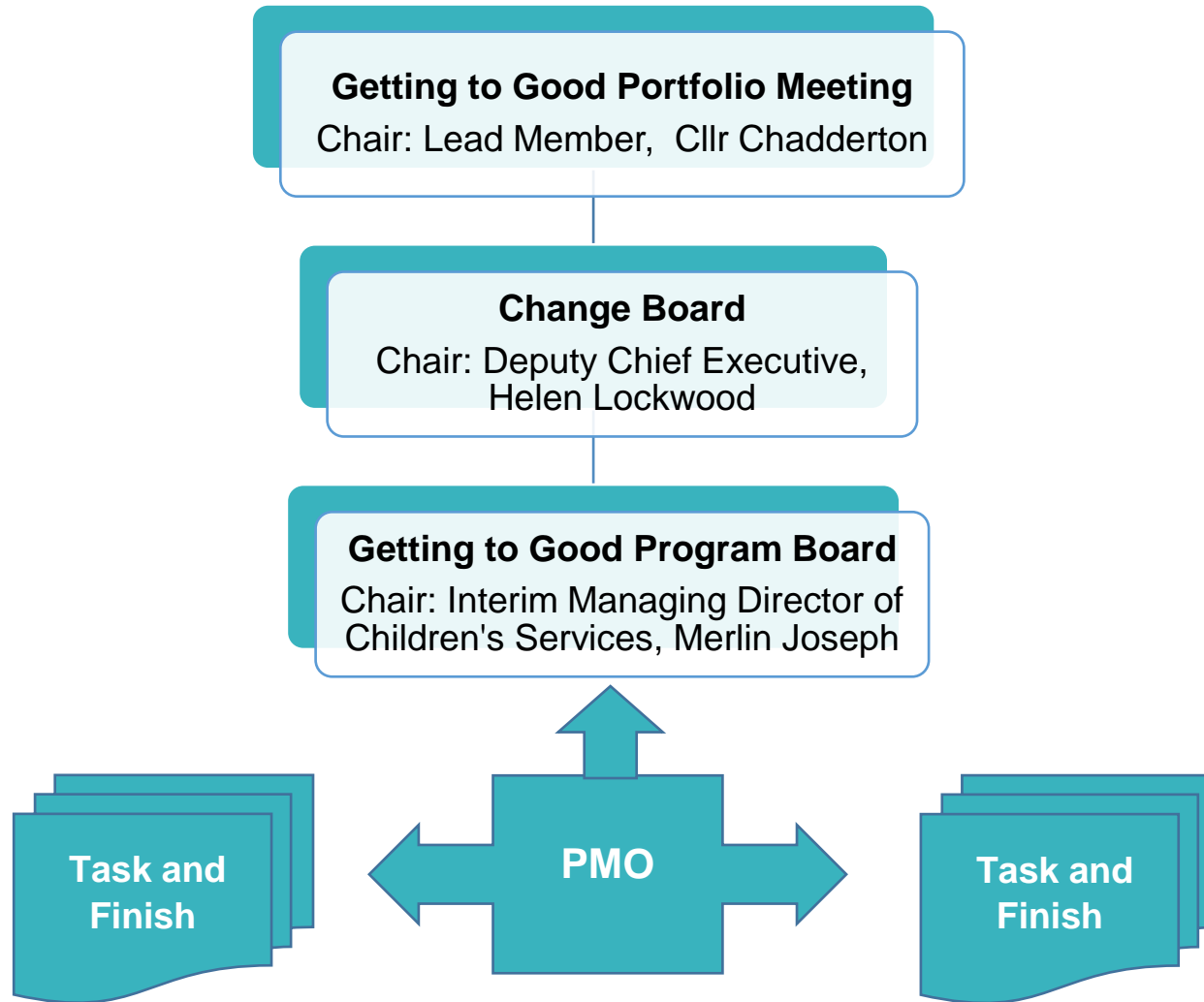
Improvement plan

Our Children Services Improvement Plan sets out all of the development activity across children's services. The activity has been summarised below setting out the five work streams of the transformation agenda.



Governance

The five priorities will be delivered through a range of programmes, supported by the Programme Management Office and governed through the Getting to Good Programme Board, chaired by the Managing Director of Children’s Services.



Making a Difference to all stakeholders

Oldham and its partners are committed to making a difference to the lives of its children and young people, and it's really important for us to ensure that we all understand what good looks like.

Below, we have captured what this difference will look like for people involved, most importantly for children, young people and their families. We have described how this will be measured, and how we will know we have made a difference.

What does making a difference look like?	
Children and young people	Children are safer and will be helped earlier. Children will have their voice heard. We will carry out audits to ensure that this is happening. We will ask children and young people for their direct feedback and engage them in shaping services. We will monitor engagement of children and young people in their assessments, their participation in reviews and the timeliness in which we see them. Our CICC will hold us to account and challenge our performance
Parents and carers	We will work with parents to build their capacity and help them to effect and sustain change in their family's lives. Parents and carers will have their views taken into account and will own their own plans. They will see an improved early help offer and be able to work with a range of agencies to access support at an early stage to avoid issues escalating
Our partners	All professionals and voluntary agencies in the town will know how they contribute to services for children and young people, particularly in relation to prevention and early help. Together we will establish new ways of working together to safeguard children. The Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP) will be recognised as being effective. Everyone will play a meaningful part in safeguarding
Children's workforce	All professionals working with children will be confident, competent and skilled. They will be supported to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people. They will receive regular and effective supervision and we will monitor this through surveys and audits. All workers in Children Services will be supported to work effectively with children, young people and families. Their caseloads will be manageable
Front line managers	Front line managers will provide effective management oversight and opportunities for reflective practice which contribute to better outcomes for children and young people
Senior management	Senior Managers will drive change to improve services and visibility to staff. They will ensure the appropriate governance is in place and performance is regularly monitored and that improvements are having a positive impact. They will develop effective relationships with partners to ensure the system works effectively for children and young people

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Ofsted Improvement Plan: Standards of Practice

Elected members	Elected Members will hold Managers to account. They will have confidence in the workforce to deliver a safe and consistent service
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Objectives to create change	Actions	Lead officer	Timescale	Evidence of Success	Progress update Aug 19	RAG
The Oldham Practice Hub (OPH) will be our 'centre of excellence for social work practice'	<p>The OPH will embed social work practice standards, policies and procedures and ensure they are up to date</p> <p>The OPH will ensure all practitioners are clear about what is expected of them through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory briefing sessions • Appraisal and supervision and mid-year reviews • Induction and probation procedures • Recruitment processes 	Director of Children's Social Care	April 2019 – ongoing	<p>Increased understanding and adherence with expectations evidenced through performance data and audit findings</p> <p>100% of social workers to have an annual appraisal that meets their learning needs</p> <p>100% of social workers to have mid-year reviews regular supervisions that demonstrate progress</p> <p>100% of social workers to have completed the corporate induction</p>	<p>OPH project plan on track to launch by end of September 19 with a risk attached due to current capacity.</p> <p>Recruitment and retention remains a high priority. The induction and probation processes have been reviewed and are awaiting sign off by the G2G board in September 19.</p> <p>All Social Workers and Social Care Staff to have appraisal completed by August 2019.</p> <p>Social Workers to be put through the new corporate induction as part of new roll out plan.</p>	Yellow
	<p>The OPH will build on and embed a plan to operationalise the social care manager's handbook and practice standards to ensure all managers are clear about what is expected of them through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory briefing sessions • Appraisal and supervision and mid-year reviews 	Director of Children's Social Care	April 2019 - Ongoing	<p>Auditing and performance reporting demonstrates consistent management foot print</p> <p>Staff report feeling supported and challenged by managers in the annual staff survey</p>	<p>OPH project plan on track to launch by end of September 19 with a risk attached due to current capacity.</p> <p>Recruitment and retention remains a high priority. The induction and probation processes have been reviewed and are awaiting sign off by the</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction and probation procedures • Recruitment processes 				<p>G2G board in September 19.</p> <p>The Council is currently recruiting the additional Social Workers to populate the new structure who will all go through the corporate induction.</p> <p>The Recruitment and Retention Board in 19 have approved a new process pathway for recruitment.</p> <p>Reflective Supervision will take place on a monthly basis as part of the full roll out of the new operating model in Q3.</p>	
	<p>The OPH will analyse KPIs, national and local intelligence, including complaints, feedback from parents, carers, children and young people and where appropriate audit any emerging risk to ensure continuous impact and improvement in practice</p>	<p>Assistant Director of Quality Assurance and Safeguarding</p>	<p>April 2019 – ongoing</p>	<p>Audit activity consistently evidences:</p> <p>Good care planning with clear outcomes, that measure and evaluate progress and impact for children</p> <p>Quality of assessments are consistently good</p> <p>Any dips in performance are addressed quickly and remedial action is taken</p>	<p>Performance clinics are in place and systematically use data and intelligence to inform audit assurance activity. These are taking place weekly currently.</p> <p>Any findings are scrutinised by the Children’s Assurance Board which takes place monthly.</p> <p>Recruitment to OPH to be undertaken in September 2019.</p>	

	Improve the quality of supervision through routine auditing under the QA Framework / OPH and embed good practice examples for managers (e.g. supervision policy and procedures, templates and practice observations)	Assistant Director of Quality Assurance and Safeguarding	April 2019 – March 2020	Auditing and staff feedback demonstrate improved quality of supervision and is reflective	Practice week will take place the w/c 23 September of which supervision files will be audited. A Programme of Auditing Supervision to be created and rolled out in 2019/2020.	
	Monitor performance around supervision and follow up on non-compliance to ensure that all practitioners are receiving sufficient support and challenge from their line managers	Director of Children's Social Care	April 2019 – March 2020	Performance data evidences staff receive regular supervision in line with policies and procedures	Exploratory work on how supervision data is recorded in the service is currently ongoing. An agreed model that is consistent for Supervision to be developed by the OPH in Q3 to be fully embedded before year end.	
Implementation of Social Work Methodology	Implement and embed the new social work practice model in Signs of Safety (SoS) across Children Services workforce	Director of Children's Social Care	April 2019 – March 2021	Evidence from audit and observation demonstrates that Signs of Safety is consistently used in practice Evidence from audits demonstrate improvement in quality and impact of care planning	Signs of Safety implementation underway and exceptions reported separately at the Getting to Good Board. The first 5 days training has been completed across Social Work Teams. Follow on training plan to be delivered for the next	

Ofsted Improvement Plan: Practice Improvement

Objectives to create change	Actions	Lead officer	Timescale	Evidence of Success	Progress update Aug 19	RAG
<p>Create a skilled stable and supported workforce at all levels who are proud to work for Oldham Council</p> <p>Page 27</p>	<p>The Senior Management of Children's Services is restructured to provide fit for purpose leadership within the Council</p> <p>The new overarching Operating Model is delivered, with subsequent £12m of investment to front line services</p> <p>Stockport, Partners in Practice, to support Oldham to implement Stockport's model of value-based recruitment</p>	<p>Chief Executive and Managing Director of Children's Services</p>	<p>April 2019-Sept 2019</p>	<p>A fit for purpose senior management and leadership team is in place to oversee and drive the required improvements in Children's Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in staff turnover to 12% • A stable and skilled workforce • Staff report manageable caseloads 	<p>The recruitment to Senior Leadership roles to follow the appointment of the MD.</p> <p>Recruitment is underway to the Operating Model. (Sept 2019)</p> <p>Staff turnover has reduced to target of 12% and is on track.</p> <p>84% of social workers are permanent compared to 16% agency.</p> <p>Average caseloads have reduced to 17 from 21 at the end of qtr 1.</p>	

	<p>Stockport, Partners in Practice, to support Oldham Children's Services with its improvement journey.</p> <p>Areas of focus will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early permanence and care planning for children and families • Working with Care leavers • Workshops and observations of Stockport's practice 	<p>Managing Director of Children's Services</p>	<p>June 19 – Dec 19</p>	<p>Audit activity consistently evidences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing drift and delay in permanency • Good care planning with clear outcomes, that measure and evaluate progress for children • Care Leavers pathway plans lead to effective transition to independence • Managers of staff know "<i>what good looks like</i>" 	<p>This will be monitored through the Partners in Practice improvement plan.</p> <p>Contact details have been shared and the first visits have now taken place. A review of the meetings and learning activity and the first meetings have now taken place in July and August .</p> <p>Baseline audit activity in permanence and spotlight audits with care leavers have been undertaken.</p> <p>26 permanence planning audits – 31% rated good.</p> <p>We are on track to audit complex safeguarding during practice week in September.</p>	
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	<p>Improve the quality of assessments to effectively analyse risk and parents capacity to meet their children's needs through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice learning sets • Reflective group supervision • Live audit and dip sampling of assessments • Research in Practice workshops • Suite of evidence based practice tools e.g. Graded Care Profile; Restorative Practice and Signs of Safety 	Director of Children's Social Care	April 2019-Sept 2020	<p>Audit activity demonstrates improvements in the analysis, quality of assessments and improved care planning</p> <p>Baseline audits of assessments for CIN, CP and CLA are judged Good or Outstanding:</p> <p>55% by October 2019 70% by June 2020 85% by Sept 2020</p> <p>S47 enquiry moving into an ICPC in the past 12 months is in line with Statistical Neighbours</p>	<p>Programme of audits on quality of assessments underway and ongoing.</p> <p>31.4% of S47 enquiry moving into an ICPC against stat neighbour average of 36.7%</p> <p>Audit activity on track subject to separate reporting arrangements.</p>	
	<p>Improve the quality of written plans across the service to ensure they are SMART, child focused and include contingency plans.</p> <p>To Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children in Need (CIN) Plans • Child Protection (CP) • Care Plans for CLA • Pathway Plans <p>Assure impact through bi-monthly thematic case audits</p>	Director of Children's Social Care	April 2019-Sept 2020	<p>Audits demonstrate improvements in the quality of plans and contingency planning</p> <p>Performance data evidences an improvement in the number of children and young people with a SMART plan across all services</p> <p>Improved outcomes for Children and Young People</p> <p>Baseline audits of CIN, CP and CLA plans judged Good or Outstanding:</p> <p>55% by October 2019 70% by June 2020 85% by Sept 2020</p>	<p>All social workers and first line managers have /will be trained in SMART planning</p> <p>Ongoing audit activity to measure progress.</p> <p>45 baseline audits conducted since April 19 – 24% Good</p>	
Improving	Continue to improve the quality of	Director of	April 2019-	Audit activities demonstrates	Completed cycle of	

Practice in the Children's with Disabilities Team	<p>assessments for the Children with Disabilities Team that lead to well-co-ordinated planning to meet their needs through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Working with children with disabilities in the 21st Century" training to be delivered by Research in Practice • Live Audit / coaching to drive improvements 	Children's Social Care	March 2020	<p>improved management footprint, quality of practice and SMART planning</p> <p>Baseline audits of plans for Children with a Disability are judged Good or Outstanding:</p> <p>55% by October 2019 70% by January 2020 85% by March 2020</p>	<p>quality assurance activity which shows an improving picture</p> <p>12-week improvement action plan completed subject to separate report.</p> <p>30% of baseline audits judged Good.</p> <p>Cycle of audit activity will be repeated (Sept 19) to ensure improvements are maintained and as a percentage of audits will improve.</p>	
	Operationalise the additional Service Manager role for Children with Disabilities into the new operating model to strengthen management expertise and practice support	Director of Children's Social Care	April 2019-October 2019	<p>Audit activity demonstrates improved management footprint and quality of practice</p> <p>Staff understand their role, report feeling supported and challenged</p>	<p>The permanent role is to be advertised in September 2019 as part of the structural investment plan.</p> <p>The Interim Service Manager has undertaken a number of audits and the quality is improving as shown in the update above.</p>	

Pathway Planning	<p>Improve the timeliness and quality of pathway planning to ensure that plans are up to date and lead to effective support into independence This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional personal advisors to work with the allocated social worker to support pathway planning from 15 years of age • Dedicated IRO to chair reviews post 18 years • Continue to track the timeliness and quality of pathway plans 	Director of Children's Social Care	April 2019-June 2020	<p>Audits demonstrate timeliness and quality of pathway plans</p> <p>100% of young people aged 15 years 9 months and above will have a up to date pathway plan that will be reviewed bi-annually</p>	<p>Action learning sets are in place across the Quality Assurance Unit and Fieldwork Teams to support and challenge the improvements of pathway planning.</p> <p>53.8% of young people aged 15 years 9 months and above have an up to date pathway plan.</p>	
	Monitor the impact of the 'Staying Put' offer to test whether this is allowing more young people who wish to do so stay with their foster carers	Assistant Director of Children in Care	April 2019-Ongoing	More Care Leavers are in 'Staying Put' arrangements	<p>Young People in foster care are being supported with 'Staying Put' arrangements.</p> <p>60% of young people in foster care who became 18 remained living with their former foster carer. This is above the stat neighbour average of 53%</p>	
	Continue to work with Housing Colleagues to ensure appropriate accommodation for Care Leavers so they can live independently if they are ready to do so and have a place to call home	Director of Children's Social Care	February 2020	Care Leavers tell us they are supported to live independently	<p>Programme of work has been agreed and programme plan will be completed by February 2020.</p> <p>The Youth Protocol for child</p>	

					<p>homelessness has been agreed in July 2019.</p> <p>Work is ongoing to develop the Virtual Landlord model.</p> <p>Further work to draw closer the work on cases where there are no recourse to public funds is to be undertaken in September 2019.</p>	
	<p>Re-launch the Care Leavers Local Offer and ensure Care Leavers understand their entitlements</p>	<p>Director of Children's Social Care</p>	<p>30 Sept 2019</p>	<p>Care Leavers tell us they understand their entitlements and know how to access them</p>	<p>Children in Care Council are helping to improve the Local Offer for Care Leavers.</p> <p>Work has already been undertaken to provide free prescriptions to care leavers.</p> <p>A programme of activities as part of the Corporate Parenting Programme is underway across the next year,</p>	

Ofsted Improvement Plan: Learning and Development

Objectives to create change	Actions	Lead officer	Timescale	Evidence of Success	Progress update Aug 19	RAG
Improved Management Oversight And Practice Leadership	<p>The Learning from the Social Workers' Health Check, annual performance appraisals and corporate L+D plans will be incorporated into the workforce training and development plan</p> <p>Launch and deliver the Learning and Development Offer</p>	Director of Children's Social Care	June 2019 - March 2020	<p>Staff report they are satisfied with the induction programme through the annual staff survey</p> <p>Staff feedback they are aware of L+D opportunities</p> <p>100% of managers have undertaken supervision CPD</p> <p>100% of managers have undertaken Leadership and Management CPD</p>	<p>68% of all PPF's have been completed with the majority of the fieldwork PPF's completed.</p> <p>Exploratory work on how CPD data is recorded in the service is currently ongoing the aim is to get to 100% for the annual conversation.</p> <p>A tracker is to be monitored through the Workforce Meeting to ensure this is achieved.</p>	
	<p>The Oldham Practice Hub will operate as a virtual and physical space, with a clear design identity and is marketed through social media and other digital platforms</p>	Director of Children's Social Care	Sept 2019-ongoing	<p>Staff will engage and use the Oldham Practice Hub to improve social work practice</p> <p>Social Workers will have access to high quality learning and training materials that supports good social</p>	<p>OPH project plan on track to launch by end of September 2019.</p> <p>The OPH will lead on audit assurance</p>	

				work practice	<p>activity, R & R, provides practice briefs, guidance, training and development.</p> <p>The Role profiles for the OPH are to be completed by the end of August in the new structure.</p> <p>Recruitment to roles in the Oldham Practice Hub is to commence in October 2019.</p> <p>The new move to Metropolitan Place which will serve as the physical hub space to be completed before Christmas 2019.</p>	
	<p>Research in Practice will provide mandatory training workshops for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis and critical thinking in assessment • Building emotional resilience in the Children's and Families Service (Team Managers) • Leading and championing evidence informed practice 	Director of Children's Social Care	April 2019 – March 2020	<p>Audit activity will demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis and critical thinking in assessments • Evidence of improved information gathering during child protection investigations resulting in more appropriate outcomes • Quality of assessments are consistently good 	<p>Mandatory training and workshops have been commissioned to be delivered by end of December 2019.</p> <p>Reflective Supervision is to be rolled out by the Social Work Consultants once</p>	

	<p>(Middle Managers development Programme)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective supervision • Impact of culture and diversity in practice 				<p>they are recruited in November/ December 19.</p> <p>An analysis tool to understand culture and diversity in practice is to be developed in October 2019 for roll out in January 2019.</p>	
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Ofsted Improvement Plan: Quality Assurance

Objectives to create change	Actions	Lead officer	Timescale	Evidence of Success	Progress update Aug 19	RAG
A strong quality assurance framework to assist the Council to deliver and efficient and effective service	<p>The OPH will embed the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) and lead the cycle of assurance audit activity, through an annual programme of thematic audits to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of Practice • Voice of the Child • Cultural Diversity • CP Decision Making (S47 processes) 	Director of Children's Social Care	Quarterly updates	<p>Single and multi-agency audit of practice will provide effective analysis of the impact on children</p> <p>Cases will consistently demonstrate good quality assessments that leads to SMART plans and contingency planning</p> <p>The quality of evidence gathering during Child Protection enquiries will support good decision making</p>	<p>Quality Assurance Framework launched.</p> <p>The Children's Assurance Board is established and oversees performance and audit outcomes monthly.</p> <p>An Auditing schedule is included in the QAF.</p>	
	<p>To implement and embed a Young Inspectors Programme (age 15-25) to contribute to the quality assurance of provisions for Children and Young people to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care Leaver's Local Offer • Residential Homes • Fostering and Adoption • Virtual School • Health Services / Mental Health 	Director of Children's Social Care	Sept 2019 – Ongoing	<p>Children in Care Council tells us that we have listened and heard their views on the quality of services and act upon their recommendations</p> <p>Audit evidence demonstrates improvements in the quality of provision</p>	<p>Children in Care Council presented the Young Inspectors proposal to June's Corporate Parenting Panel.</p> <p>A programme of activity is to be agreed to be rolled out in Q3/Q4 2019.</p>	
	Embed a more systematic tracking and monitoring process for Public Law Outline to minimise delays for children and	Director of Children's Social Care	October 2019	<p>More children have a clear plan for permanence</p> <p>Auditing demonstrates fewer</p>	Action learning sets are in place across Quality Assurance Unit and Fieldwork	

	improve timeliness			<p>delays in achieving permanence.</p> <p>90% of children will have a permanency plan at second LAC review</p>	<p>Teams to support and challenge permanence planning.</p> <p>The areas is subject to support from the Partners in Practice agreement with Stockport Council and the first meetings have taken place in July 2019 to share best practice to support improvement in Oldham.</p> <p>An Early Permanence tracker is being developed with support from Stockport Council.</p> <p>47% of children have a permanency plan at second LAC review.</p>	
	Continue to develop auditors and moderators with shared understanding of “ <i>what good looks like</i> ” through workshops with social workers and managers	Assistant Director of Quality Assurance and Safeguarding	April 2019-Ongoing	Shared understanding of “ <i>what good looks like</i> ”	<p>Workshops delivered through the Oldham Practice Hub.</p> <p>Work through the partners in practice arrangement with Stockport Council is now underway.</p>	

					<p>Exchange visits have already taken place in July 2019 / August 2019, to improve the quality of practice in Early Permanence and Complex Safeguarding. The first visits on Care Leavers are to commence in September 2019.</p> <p>Social Work Consultants to be advertised in September / October 2019.</p>	
	<p>Monitor and challenge the compliance of remedial action from case audits</p>	<p>Assistant Director of Quality Assurance and Safeguarding</p>	<p>April 2019-Ongoing</p>	<p>Remedial actions from audits are completed and demonstrate improvements in the quality of outcomes for children and young people and case recording</p>	<p>Work is underway to assess the quality of our work through structured auditing of case work.</p> <p>In the Permanence team, 26 cases were audited, 8 were rated good, 10 required improvement and 8 were rated inadequate. Actions have now been provided on these cases to improve the quality of social work.</p>	

					<p>In the Children's with Disabilities Teams 16 out of 57 audits judged inadequate in April 19. All 57 audits were reviewed in June 19. 23% had improved to Good, 72% were RI and 5% remained inadequate</p>	
	<p>Quarterly "spotlight deep dive clinics" and bi-annually practice weeks leads to improved compliance with service standards and quality of practice</p>	<p>Managing Director of Children's Services</p>	<p>April 2019-Ongoing</p>	<p>Performance data and audit activity demonstrates improvements in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team performance • An accurate picture of quality • Senior Leaders have a good understanding of performance and quality of practice 	<p>Analysis of spotlight audits will be presented at the Children's Assurance Board in October 19.</p>	

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