# Oldham

## Children's Services

**Improvement Plan 2019-2021** 



#### 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 co-operative services, thriving communities and an inclusive economy.

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.

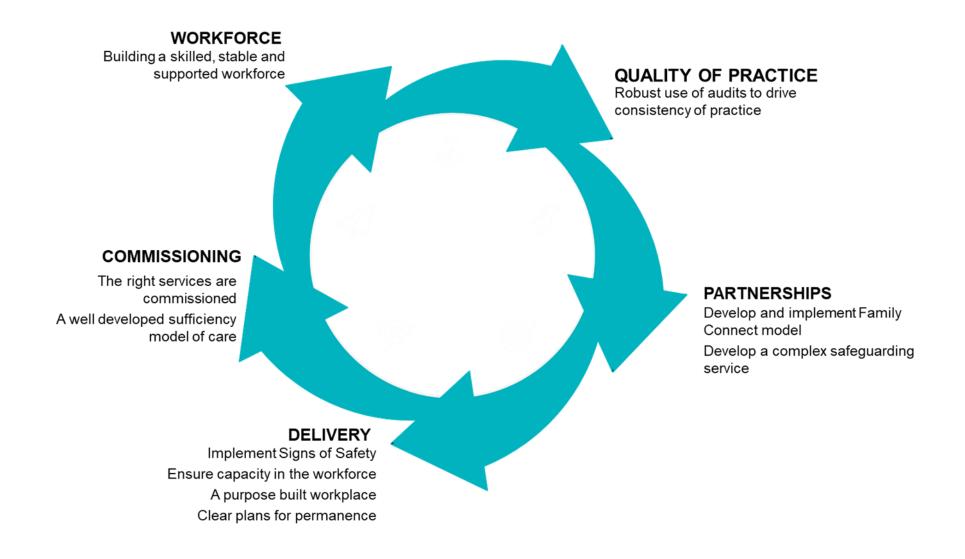
#### What needs to improve?

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

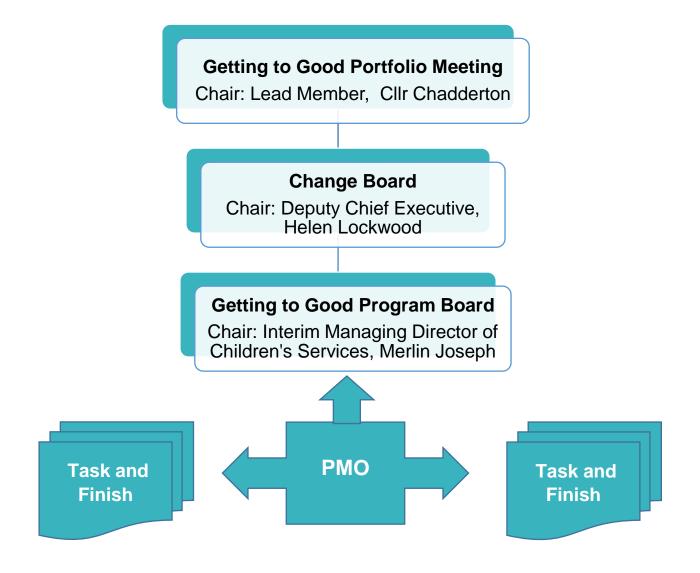
#### Improvement plan

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

### **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

Objectives to	Actions	Lead officer	Timescale	Evidence of Success	Progress update Aug 19	RAG
create change						
The Oldham Practice Hub (OPH) will be our 'centre of excellence for social work practice'	The OPH will embed social work practice standards, policies and procedures and ensure they are up to date  The OPH will ensure all practitioners are clear about what is expected of them through:  • Mandatory briefing sessions • Appraisal and supervision and midyear reviews • Induction and probation procedures • Recruitment processes	Director of Children's Social Care	April 2019 – ongoing	Increased understanding and adherence with expectations evidenced through performance data and audit findings  100% of social workers to have an annual appraisal that meets their learning needs  100% of social workers to have mid-year reviews regular supervisions that demonstrate progress  100% of social workers to have completed the corporate induction	OPH project plan on track to launch by end of September 19 with a risk attached due to current capacity.  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.  All Social Workers and Social Care Staff to have appraisal completed by August 2019.  Social Workers to be put through the new corporate induction as	
	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:  • Mandatory briefing sessions  • Appraisal and supervision and midyear reviews	Director of Children's Social Care	April 2019 - Ongoing	Auditing and performance reporting demonstrates consistent management foot print  Staff report feeling supported and challenged by managers in the annual staff survey	part of new roll out plan.  OPH project plan on track to launch by end of September 19 with a risk attached due to current capacity.  Recruitment and retention remains a high priority. The induction and probation processes have been reviewed and are awaiting sign off by the	

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	Assistant Director of Quality Assurance and Safeguarding	April 2019 – ongoing	Audit activity consistently evidences: Good care planning with clear outcomes, that measure and evaluate progress and impact for children Quality of assessments are consistently good Any dips in performance are addressed quickly and remedial action is taken	G2G board in September 19.  The Council is currently recruiting the additional Social Workers to populate the new structure who will all go through the corporate induction.  The Recruitment and Retention Board in 19 have approved a new process pathway for recruitment.  Reflective Supervision will take place on a monthly basis as part of the full roll out of the new operating model in Q3.  Performance clinics are in place and systematically use data and intelligence to inform audit assurance activity. These are taking place weekly currently.  Any findings are scrutinised by the Children's Assurance Board which takes place monthly.  Recruitment to OPH to be undertaken in September 2019.	
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	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	
	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	

						stage.	
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### **Ofsted Improvement Plan: Practice Improvement**

Objectives to create change	Actions	Lead officer	Timescale	Evidence of Success	Progress update Aug 19	RAG
Create a skilled stable and supported workforce at all levels who are proud to work for Oldham Council	The Senior Management of Children's Services is restructured to provide fit for purpose leadership within the Council  The new overarching Operating Model is delivered, with subsequent £12m of investment to front line services  Stockport, Partners in Practice, to support Oldham to implement Stockport's model of value-based recruitment	Chief Executive and Managing Director of Children's Services	April 2019- Sept 2019	A fit for purpose senior management and leadership team is in place to oversee and drive the required improvements in Children's Services  • Reduction in staff turnover to 12% • A stable and skilled workforce • Staff report manageable caseloads	The recruitment to Senior Leadership roles to follow the appointment of the MD.  Recruitment is underway to the Operating Model. (Sept 2019)  Staff turnover has reduced to target of 12% and is on track.  84% of social workers are permanent compared to 16% agency.  Average caseloads have reduced to 17 from 21 at the end of qtr 1.	

Stockport, Partners in Practice, to support Oldham Children's Services with its improvement journey.  Areas of focus will be:  • Early permanence and care planning for children and families  • Working with Care leavers  • Workshops and observations of Stockport's practice	Managing Director of Children's Services	June 19 – Dec 19	Audit activity consistently evidences:  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 "what good looks like"	This will be monitored through the Partners in Practice improvement plan.  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.  Baseline audit activity in permanence and spotlight audits with care leavers have been undertaken.  26 permanence planning audits – 31% rated good.  We are on track to audit complex safeguarding during practice week in September.	

	Improve the quality of assessments to effectively analyse risk and parents capacity to meet their children's needs through:  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	Audit activity demonstrates improvements in the analysis, quality of assessments and improved care planning  Baseline audits of assessments for CIN, CP and CLA are judged Good or Outstanding:  55% by October 2019 70% by June 2020 85% by Sept 2020  S47 enquiry moving into an ICPC in the past 12 months is in line with Statistical Neighbours	Programme of audits on quality of assessments underway and ongoing.  31.4% of S47 enquiry moving into an ICPC against stat neighbour average of 36.7%  Audit activity on track subject to separate reporting arrangements.	
Improving	Improve the quality of written plans across the service to ensure they are SMART, child focused and include contingency plans.  To Include:  Children in Need (CIN) Plans Child Protection (CP) Care Plans for CLA Pathway Plans  Assure impact through bi-monthly thematic case audits	Director of Children's Social Care	April 2019- Sept 2020	Audits demonstrate improvements in the quality of plans and contingency planning  Performance data evidences an improvement in the number of children and young people with a SMART plan across all services  Improved outcomes for Children and Young People  Baseline audits of CIN, CP and CLA plans judged Good or Outstanding:  55% by October 2019 70% by June 2020 85% by Sept 2020	All social workers and first line managers have /will be trained in SMART planning  Ongoing audit activity to measure progress.  45 baseline audits conducted since April 19 – 24% Good	
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	assessments for the Children with Disabilities Team that lead to well-co- ordinated planning to meet their needs through  • "Working with children with disabilities in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century" training to be delivered by Research in Practice • Live Audit / coaching to drive improvements  Operationalise the additional Service Manager role for Children with Disabilities into the new operating	Children's Social Care  Director of Children's Social	April 2019- October 2019	improved management footprint, quality of practice and SMART planning  Baseline audits of plans for Children with a Disability are judged Good or Outstanding:  55% by October 2019 70% by January 2020 85% by March 2020  Audit activity demonstrates improved management footprint and quality of practice	quality assurance activity which shows an improving picture  12-week improvement action plan completed subject to separate report.  30% of baseline audits judged Good.  Cycle of audit activity will be repeated (Sept 19) to ensure improvements are maintained and as a percentage of audits will improve.  The permanent role is to be advertised in September 2019 as	
	model to strengthen management expertise and practice support	Care	2010	Staff understand their role, report feeling supported and challenged	part of the structural investment plan.  The Interim Service Manager has undertaken a number of audits and the quality is improving as shown in the update above.	

Pathway Planning	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:  • 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	Audits demonstrate timeliness and quality of pathway plans  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	Action learning sets are in place across the Quality Assurance Unit and Fieldwork Teams to support and challenge the improvements of pathway planning.  53.8% of young people aged 15 years 9 months and above have an up to date pathway plan.	
	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	Young People in foster care are being supported with 'Staying Put' arrangements.  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%	
	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	Programme of work has been agreed and programme plan will be completed by February 2020.  The Youth Protocol for child	

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

## **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	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	Director of Children's Social Care	June 2019 - March 2020	Staff report they are satisfied with the induction programme through the annual staff survey  Staff feedback they are aware of L+D opportunities	68% of all PPF's have been completed with the majority of the fieldwork PPF's completed.	
	Launch and deliver the Learning and Development Offer			100% of managers have undertaken supervision CPD  100% of managers have undertaken Leadership and Management CPD	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.  A tracker is to be monitored through the Workforce Meeting to ensure this is achieved.	
	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	Director of Children's Social Care	Sept 2019- ongoing	Staff will engage and use the Oldham Practice Hub to improve social work practice  Social Workers will have access to high quality learning and training materials that supports good social	OPH project plan on track to launch by end of September 2019.  The OPH will lead on audit assurance	

			work practice	activity, R & R, provides practice briefs, guidance, training and development.  The Role profiles for the OPH are to be completed by the end of August in the new structure.	
				Recruitment to roles in the Oldham Practice Hub is to commence in October 2019.	
				The new move to Metropolitan Place which will serve as the physical hub space to be completed before Christmas 2019.	
Research in Practice will provide mandatory training workshops for the following:  • 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	<ul> <li>Audit activity will demonstrate:</li> <li>Analysis and critical thinking in assessments</li> <li>Evidence of improved information gathering during child protection investigations resulting in more appropriate outcomes</li> <li>Quality of assessments are consistently good</li> </ul>	Mandatory training and workshops have been commissioned to be delivered by end of December 2019.  Reflective Supervision is to be rolled out by the Social Work Consultants once	

(Middle Managers development Programme)  • Reflective supervision	they are recruited in November/ December 19.
Impact of culture and diversity in practice	An analysis tool to understand culture and diversity in practice is to be developed in October 2019 for roll out in January 2019.

## **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	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:  • Quality of Practice  • Voice of the Child  • Cultural Diversity  • CP Decision Making (S47 processes)	Director of Children's Social Care	Quarterly updates	Single and multi-agency audit of practice will provide effective analysis of the impact on children  Cases will consistently demonstrate good quality assessments that leads to SMART plans and contingency planning  The quality of evidence gathering during Child Protection enquiries will support good decision making	Quality Assurance Framework launched.  The Children's Assurance Board is established and oversees performance and audit outcomes monthly.  An Auditing schedule is included in the QAF.	
	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:  Care Leaver's Local Offer  Residential Homes  Fostering and Adoption  Virtual School  Health Services / Mental Health Embed a more systematic	Director of Children's Social Care	Sept 2019 – Ongoing	Children in Care Council tells us that we have listened and heard their views on the quality of services and act upon their recommendations  Audit evidence demonstrates improvements in the quality of provision	Children in Care Council presented the Young Inspectors proposal to June's Corporate Parenting Panel.  A programme of activity is to be agreed to be rolled out in Q3/Q4 2019.  Action learning sets	
	tracking and monitoring process for Public Law Outline to minimise delays for children and	Children's Social Care	2019	permanence  Auditing demonstrates fewer	are in place across Quality Assurance Unit and Fieldwork	

importante time aliment		1	dolove in ophicuire	Tooms to sure set	
improve timeliness			delays in achieving permanence.	Teams to support	
				and challenge	
			90% of children will have a	permanence	
			permanency plan at second LAC review	planning.	
				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.	
				Oldriam.	
				An Forly	
				An Early	
				Permanence tracker	
				is being developed	
				with support from	
				Stockport Council.	
				47% of children	
				have a permanency	
				plan at second LAC	
				review.	
Continue to develop auditors	Assistant	April 2019-	Shared understanding of "what	Workshops	
and moderators with shared	Director of	Ongoing	good looks like"	delivered through	
understanding of "what good	Quality	3359	G = 1	the Oldham Practice	
looks like" through workshops	Assurance			Hub.	
with social workers and	and				
managers	Safeguarding			Work through the	
Indiagoio	Jarogaaranig			partners in practice	
				arrangement with	
				Stockport Council is	
				now underway.	

				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.	
				Social Work	
				Consultants to be	
				advertised in	
				September / October	
				2019.	
Monitor and challenge the	Assistant	April 2019-	Remedial actions from audits are	Work is underway to	
compliance of remedial action	Director of	Ongoing	completed and demonstrate	assess the quality of	
from case audits	Quality		improvements in the quality of	our work through	
	Assurance		outcomes for children and young	structured auditing	
	and		people and case recording	of case work.	
	Safeguarding				
				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	
	I	i		Laughty of cocial	
				quality of social work.	

				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	
Quarterly "spotlight deep dive clinics" and bi-annually practice weeks leads to improved compliance with service standards and quality of practice	Managing Director of Children's Services	April 2019- Ongoing	Performance data and audit activity demonstrates improvements in  Team performance An accurate picture of quality Senior Leaders have a good understanding of performance and quality of practice	Analysis of spotlight audits will be presented at the Children's Assurance Board in October 19.	