

Ofsted Post Inspection Action Plan – Leeds City Council

Background

Children's services in Leeds have been on a significant and wide-ranging journey of improvement over a number of years. In July 2009 Ofsted carried out an unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements and judged that Leeds services did not adequately safeguard children. In March 2010 the Government placed an Improvement Notice on Leeds. An improvement Plan was developed and an Independently Chaired Improvement Panel was established.

Since the 2009 inspection a new Executive Member for Children's Services (May 2010), Chief Executive of the Council (August 2010) and Director of Children's Services (September 2010) were appointed and have collectively and consistently articulated a clear strategic vision for children's services in the city – Child Friendly Leeds.

In January 2011 Ofsted carried out an unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements and found 'remarkable and impressive improvement' in quality and safety.

Over the past five years Children's Services in Leeds have undertaken a programme of transformational change to both services and in its approach to working with vulnerable children and families. The approach has been underpinned by the ambition to make Leeds a child friendly city.

The changes, which have been actively supported by partners in the Children and Families Trust Board and the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board, include a re-organisation of the service; a focus on 'doing the simple things better'; implementing restorative practices; having timely, quality conversations; and investment in workforce training and development. Children's Social work has been a particular focus of this work with a conscious effort made to raise the profile of the service, strengthen practice, improve staff retention and reduce case loads. The approach taken has been one of incremental change built on a strong, objective, evidence based foundation to ensure that improvements can be sustained and to create a more confident, secure and forward-thinking service.

The comprehensive change programme implemented to make these changes has come at a time of significant funding reductions for local government. Leeds has consistently taken the decision to invest disproportionately in children's services, recognising this as a cornerstone of the longer-term economic and social growth strategy for the city.

The unannounced Ofsted inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers; and the effectiveness of partnership working, including the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board, was therefore a key test of the progress that this work and investment has made. The inspection took place over four weeks and commenced on 20th January 2015 and concluded on 11th February 2015.

The outcome of the inspection is that Ofsted has rated services in Leeds as 'Good' overall. There are five key areas that contribute to this overall judgement and on four of these: children who need help and protection; children looked after and achieving permanence; adoption performance; and experience and progress of care leavers, Leeds is rated as 'good'. In the fifth

area, 'leadership, management and governance' we are rated as 'outstanding'. Alongside this, the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) was also found to be 'good'.

In the inspection report Ofsted comment very positively on the Leeds journey of improvement, 'The local authority has taken a thoughtful and methodical approach to improvement and has followed the child's journey. Firm foundations underpin the effectiveness of services. Leeds has placed a considerable emphasis on creating an environment where good quality social work can flourish.' Over the course of the four weeks, the inspectors recognised the clear strategic direction being taken across the city, the partnership approach that underpins this and the centrality of children's services to Leeds' wider ambitions.

The inspection– as Ofsted intended when the framework was introduced – focused on following the journey and experience of the child. It is therefore particularly encouraging that inspectors found that: 'professionals across the city put children and young people at the heart of their work'; 'staff take the right action quickly when there is a risk of a child being unsafe', that 'partners work effectively together to safeguard children and young people'. Inspectors commented that professionals in Leeds working with children and young people work 'tenaciously' with 'pride', 'know them [children] well' and 'do not give up on them'.

Ofsted has not identified any priority or immediate actions for Leeds to respond to; however, as is the case for all authorities inspected, Ofsted requires Leeds to state how identified areas for improvement will be addressed. The areas for improvement identified by Ofsted are in line with Leeds own awareness and our aspirations to take the service forward. The Leeds response to the areas for improvement is set out in this document.

Areas for improvement

Leadership, Management and Governance

- 1. Extend the reach of the outcomes-based accountability approach, so that outcomes are clearly identified in all children's written plans to improve children's and families' lives and inform service development**

What will we do?

By December 2015 we will have developed revised planning formats that clearly identify the outcomes to be achieved for the child by the next review of the plan in a way that enables information to be aggregated to inform service planning.

The revised formats will be implemented by April 2016

How will we do it?

This work will be led by the Chief Officer for the Children's Social Work Service and will form part of the Children's Social Work Service Plan.

A working party will be established from across the service and with input from partners including the Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Chairs. Consultation with children and young people will be integral to the development of the new formats and

accompanying guidance and a number of reference groups will be used supported by the Voice and Influence Team.

The new formats will be integrated into the Frameworki system and we will work with colleagues from IT to ensure that we are able aggregate data from the new formats to inform service planning to produce performance management reports

How will we know that we are making a difference?

The impact of the revised formats will be evaluated by the Practice Improvement Group from September 2016 which brings together quantitative and qualitative data, including feedback from children, young people and families.

2. Ensure that all frontline managers and staff fully understand the capability of the electronic recording system, in order that they can produce reports that help them to effectively understand their performance and further drive improvements in the quality of services offered to children and their families

What will we do?

We will develop a range of performance reports and accompanying guidance that will enable practitioners and managers to produce the performance reports they need to understand their performance. We will monitor and support their use at an individual level through supervision and appraisals and at a strategic level through the Performance Improvement Meeting.

How will we do it?

The Chief Officer for Children's Social Work has established a Frameworki Reference Group, which includes practitioners and managers, to work on improvements to the system. The group will look at the performance reports that practitioners and managers find most helpful and develop guidance on how these can be used to.

Leeds is in negotiation with Core Logic, the provider of the Frameworki system, to implement the 'Mosaic' system upgrade. This upgrade provides easier, simpler and increased functionality and reporting. The implementation of Mosaic, anticipated in April 2016, provides an ideal opportunity to carry out training to frontline managers and staff.

How will we know that we are making a difference?

By September 2016 all team managers and front line staff will be able to produce management reports from Frameworki. Feedback from supervision and appraisals demonstrates that practitioners are confident in using performance information and there is an overall improvement in performance.

3. Further embed the culture of continuous professional development by ensuring that managers agree challenging learning goals with social workers as part of the appraisal cycle, and reinforce this through regular, reflective supervision

What will we do?

By April 2016, when the next annual appraisal cycle commences, we will have developed new guidance and processes for appraisal and supervision to strengthen its focus on the on-going professional development of staff to deliver high quality practice and good outcomes for children, young people and families.

How will we do it?

This work will be led by the Chief Officer for the Children's Social Work Service and will form part of the Children's Social Work Service Plan.

A working party will be established from across the Children's Social Work Service. We will use expert advice in developing our new systems. The new formats will be integrated into the Frameworki system and we will work with colleagues from IT to ensure that we are able aggregate data from the new formats to inform service planning to produce performance management reports

How will we know that we are making a difference?

Feedback from managers and practitioners; improved retention and reduced turnover of staff; and improvements in the quality of practice identified through audits and feedback from partners.

Help and protection

4. Ensure that assessments, plans and formal meetings consistently give attention to the individual characteristics of children and their families, for example, ethnicity, culture, faith, gender

What will we do?

To further strengthen practice, the revisions to planning formats led by the Chief Officer for Children's Social Work, outlined at 1 above, will be part of a wider review of existing assessment and reviewing formats.

Revised assessment and reviewing formats will be developed by December 2015 and implemented by April 2016

How will we do it?

This work will be led by the Chief Officer for the Children's Social Work Service and will form part of the Children's Social Work Service Plan.

This issue has already been discussed at the Practice Improvement Meeting and will be a focus of the work of the group over the next six months. Child Protection Chairs and

Independent Reviewing Officers have looked at how meetings take full account of the individual characteristics of children and families.

A working party will be established from across the service and with input from partners including the Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Chairs. Consultation with children and young people will be integral to the development of the new formats and accompanying guidance and a number of reference groups will be used supported by the Voice and Influence Team. The new formats will be integrated into the Frameworki system and we will work with colleagues from IT to ensure that we are able aggregate data from the new formats to inform service planning to produce performance management reports

How will we know that we are making a difference?

From July 2016 the impact of the revised formats will be evaluated by the Practice Improvement Meeting, which considers a range of quantitative and qualitative data, including feedback from children, young people and families.

5. Improve agency attendance at all initial child protection meetings to improve the identification of risk, and plans to ensure children's safety; in particular, that of police, general practitioners and mainstream midwifery services

What will we do?

We will work with partners to ensure that all initial child protection conferences have the information and attendance that they need to ensure that they are able to make decisions and plans that are informed by the views of relevant professionals.

How will we do it?

The Leeds Safeguarding Children's Board is aware of the issue. The Board has tasked the Policies and Procedures Sub-Group with addressing the issue. The Policy and Procedures sub group is working with a multi-agency group to develop a protocol and guidance to ensure that Initial Child Protection Conferences have the information and attendance they need.

Performance reports will also be developed that will enable agencies and the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board to monitor the contribution of agencies to initial child protection conferences.

The overarching protocol will be agreed by December 2015.

How will we know that we are making a difference?

In addition to information on the attendance and contribution of agencies the Leeds Children's Safeguarding Board will also undertake a programme of audits, which includes the quality of initial child protection conferences.

6. Improve access and waiting times for CAMHS for children in need of help and protection

What will we do?

We will work with partners in Health to ensure that children in need and protection can access the support that they need.

This work will be completed by autumn 2016.

How will we do it?

A whole system review of the emotional and mental health support and services in Leeds took place between September 2014 and March 2015. An implementation group to take forward the recommendations of the review has been established. This will ensure that there are clear pathways for children in need and protection

Actions have already been taken to address the waiting times for first consultation clinic (for assessment and first intervention) and for ADHD; and are now both below the 18 week standard.

The Clinical Commissioning Groups have commissioned additional capacity to address the waiting list for autism assessments to within NICE guidelines of 12 weeks; and for the addition of a CQUIN to further reduce waiting times to the consultation clinic and to provide support to children and young people whilst waiting

How will we know that we are making a difference?

Progress of achieving and sustaining improved access and waiting times for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services assessment and interventions will be lead and monitored by NHS Leeds South and East CCG through the existing Contract Management Infrastructure. Progress will be reported to the Children and Young People's Emotional and Mental Health Programme Board, which has chief officers from all key partners as members.

Looked after children

7. Ensure that findings from return home interviews are collated and analysed at a strategic level in order to understand the reasons why young people go missing, and any emerging trends and themes that can inform future service planning

What will we do?

We will work with partners in the Police to ensure that information on children who go missing from home or care is collated and analysed to identify key themes, patterns and trends.

How will we do it?

As part of our commitment to strengthen our response to children at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation Children's Services has appointed a dedicated Missing Coordinator. The

Missing Coordinator is reviewing the current return interview format on Frameworki to ensure that gather information in a way that supports more targeted analysis.

Children's Services, with the support of the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board, have seconded a data analyst to work with colleagues in the Police in the new Safeguarding Intelligence Hub to develop reports.

The new return interview format will be available on Frameworki by September 2015 and data collation and analysis arrangements will be operational and reports initiated by December 2015.

This work will be taken forward through the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Sub-group.

How will we know that we are making a difference?

Quarterly reports will be presented to the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Sub-group for analysis at a strategic level; and emerging trends and themes will inform the Missing from Home and Care strategy and action plan.

8. Ensure that all foster carers have access to training in child sexual exploitation

What will we do?

We will develop specific guidance and training for Foster Carers on Child Sexual Exploitation.

The training needs analysis will be completed by June 2015 and the Child Sexual Exploitation training programme will be developed by September 2015.

How will we do it?

The Leeds Safeguarding Children Board Learning and Development sub-group will oversee the development of the Child Sexual Exploitation training programme following the culmination of the training needs analysis. The need for a specific training package on Child Sexual Exploitation has been recognised and this is under development. The Leeds adolescent foster carer forum has been consulted to ensure that the programme reflects the needs of foster carers.

How will we know that we are making a difference?

Children's Workforce Development will monitor access and take up of training to foster carers and analyse feedback received through completion of course evaluation forms.

The risk of sexual exploitation to children placed in foster care will be reduced.

9. Ensure that schools are held to account for their use of the pupil premium in optimising the attainment of children looked after

What will we do?

We will strengthen our arrangements for gathering information on the use of Pupil Premium to enable the Head of the Virtual School to identify how schools are using Pupil Premium to support the attainment of looked after children.

How will we do it?

An online portal for the collection of pupil progress data and pupil premium expenditure will be rolled out to identified pilot schools; a review of the pilot will take place and will inform the full roll out of the portal in October 2015.

Training and development will be provided for all Designated Teachers and Designated Teacher Champions will be confirmed across all clusters by April 2016.

How will we know that we are making a difference?

We will know how pupil premium is being used to support all our looked after children. The attainment of looked after children will improve.

10. Improve the current care planning format to make it easier to understand the long-term goals for children and young people, and enhance their ability to understand what is happening to them

What will we do?

By December 2015 we will have developed revised planning formats that clearly identify the long term goals for children and young people in a way that is easily understood with them.

The revised formats will be implemented by April 2016

How will we do it?

This work will be led by the Chief Officer for the Children's Social Work Service and will form part of the Children's Social Work Service Plan.

Over the past two years the Children's Social Work Service has worked with Professor Mike Stein and Dr Emily Munro to strengthen our planning arrangements for looked after children and young people and care leavers. The Service will seek their support in taking this area of work forward.

A working party will be established from across the service and with input from partners including the Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Chairs. Consultation with children and young people will be integral to the development of the new formats and accompanying guidance and a number of reference groups will be used supported by the

Voice and Influence Team. The new formats will be integrated into the Frameworki system and we will work with colleagues from IT to ensure that we are able aggregate data from the new formats to inform service planning to produce performance management reports

How will we know that we are making a difference?

The impact of the revised formats will be evaluated by the Practice Improvement Group from September 2016 which brings together quantitative and qualitative data, including feedback from children, young people and families.

11. Improve Personal Education Plans, ensuring that they contain SMART targets which can be used to drive sustained improvement in pupils' performance

What will we do?

The Head of the Virtual School and the Head of Service Looked after Children Service will lead on the improvement of Personal Education Plans.

How will we do it?

The Virtual Head has been working on this issue. A programme of improvements will be implemented which will include: training to Designated Teachers and Team Managers and Social Workers on SMART target setting; a review of the PEP format, process and guidance using the on-line portal to support ownership by schools; review of the PEP workflow within Frameworki and quality assurance process; and the provision of a Virtual School surgery/drop-in to CSWS bases.

- Training programme to Designated Teachers will commence in June 2015.
- Revised Personal Education Plan workflow on Frameworki and Quality Assurance process will be completed by June 2015
- Review of Personal Education Plan format, process and guidance will be completed by September 2015.
- Virtual School surgery/drop-in to Children's Social Work Service area bases to inform them of the revised system will commence in July 2015

How will we know that we are making a difference?

The quality of Personal Education Plans will be monitored by the Virtual Head with the support of the Independent Reviewing Officers. Quarterly reports will be provided to the Practice Improvement Meeting.

The educational achievement and attainment of looked after children will improve.

Adoption

12. Ensure that all post-adoption support plans are measurable and outcome based.

What will we do?

To further strengthen practice, the revisions to planning formats led by the Chief Officer for Children's Social Work, outlined at 1 above, will be part of a wider review of existing assessment and reviewing formats.

Revised assessment and reviewing formats will be developed by December 2015 and implemented by April 2016

How will we do it?

This work will be led by the Chief Officer for the Children's Social Work Service and will form part of the Children's Social Work Service Plan.

A working party will be established from across the service and with input from partners including the Independent Reviewing Officers. Consultation with children and young people will be integral to the development of the new formats and accompanying guidance and a number of reference groups will be used supported by the Voice and Influence Team. The new formats will be integrated into the Frameworki system and we will work with colleagues from IT to ensure that we are able aggregate data from the new formats to inform service planning to produce performance management reports

How will we know that we are making a difference?

The impact of the revised formats will be evaluated by the Practice Improvement Group from September 2016 which brings together quantitative and qualitative data, including feedback from children, young people and families.

13. Ensure that 'later in life' letters are personal, and that the language used is easily understood.

What will we do?

By September 2015 we will have developed revised guidance and formats for later in life letters.

How will we do it?

This work will be led by the Assistant Head of Service for Looked after Children and will form part of the Children's Social Work Service Plan. We will look at best practice regionally and nationally and consult with adopters and former adopted children on the content and style of letters.

How will we know that we are making a difference?

We will undertake quarterly audits of a sample of later in life letters.

Care leavers

14. Improve Pathway Plans so that they contain the detail needed regarding specific targets and outcomes for young people.

What will we do?

By December 2015 we will have developed revised planning formats that clearly identify the long term goals for children and young people in a way that is easily understood with them. The revised formats will be implemented by 1st April 2016

How will we do it?

This work will be led by the Chief Officer for the Children's Social Work Service and will form part of the Children's Social Work Service Plan.

Over the past two years the Children's Social Work Service has worked with Professor Mike Stein and Dr Emily Munro to strengthen our planning arrangements for looked after children and young people and care leavers. The Service will seek their support in taking this area of work forward.

A working party will be established from across the service and with input from partners including the Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Chairs. Consultation with children and young people will be integral to the development of the new formats and accompanying guidance and a number of reference groups will be used supported by the Voice and Influence Team. The new formats will be integrated into the Frameworki system and we will work with colleagues from IT to ensure that we are able aggregate data from the new formats to inform service planning to produce performance management reports

How will we know that we are making a difference?

The impact of the revised formats will be evaluated by the Practice Improvement Group from September 2016 which brings together quantitative and qualitative data, including feedback from children, young people and families.

15. Ensure that all young people have information in relation to their health history and about their entitlements.

What will we do?

We will develop and implement a process for providing a Health Passport to young people as they leave care so that they have their health history by December 2015.

We will develop and implement a process to ensure all young people leaving care have information about their entitlements by December 2015.

How will we do it?

The Care Leavers Sub-group of the Multi-Agency Looked after Partnership (MALAP) will take forward this work in conjunction with the Head of Service Looked after Children and the Designated Nurse for Looked after Children

How will we know that we are making a difference?

The Care Leavers MALAP Sub-group will report on progress to MALAP and Corporate Carers by April 2015.