

Children's Services Improvement Plan

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Name	Signature	Job Title	Date
Sandie Keene		Interim DCS	

1.3 Distribution

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Section A

Demographics of Children's Services in Leeds

1.1 About Leeds

- 1.1.1 Leeds is the second largest metropolitan borough authority in England with a population of three quarters of a million people. It has 178,000 children and young people aged 0 to 19, which represents 23% of the city's total population. The population of children in Leeds is growing, with 2000 more 0-4 year olds in 2007 than there were in 2000.
- 1.1.2 There is significant variation in the social background of children and young people living in Leeds. Whilst approximately a third live in places classified amongst the 20% most deprived areas of the country, at the same time 6% of children and young people in Leeds schools live in areas that are among the 10% most affluent in the country.
- 1.1.3 Of the 107,000 children and young people who attend maintained schools in Leeds, 22,000 (20.5 per cent) are of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) heritage. The proportion of BME pupils has increased steadily in recent years, with a greater increase in primary than in secondary schools.
- 1.1.4 The size and diversity of the city creates opportunities, but also some significant challenges for services. For example, children and young people's social care in Leeds receives more than 15,000 referrals a year. Like many parts of the country, Leeds has recently experienced a significant increase in referrals, up by 19.4% in 2008/9 on the previous year. The council consistently has approximately 5,500 cases of children or young people receiving some form of support from social care. Currently around 430 children in Leeds are the subject of a child protection plan; of these, 79 are from BME backgrounds.
- 1.1.5 For some time Leeds has consistently had relatively high numbers of looked after children (88 children per 10,000 in 2008/9) in comparison with statistical neighbours for whom the average is 63. The total of looked after children is currently more than 1,350 including unaccompanied asylum seeking children. There are over 80 children in Leeds' 13 residential homes. Leeds manages a secure children's home, which caters for 37 children and young people.
- 1.1.6 The size of Leeds means that there is a wide range of settings and services working with children, young people and families every day. Leeds has 268 schools currently. This includes 219 primary schools, 38 secondary schools (of which three are academies), six specialist inclusive learning centres and four pupil referral units. Currently there are 48 children's centres in the city, with a further 10 due for completion (all 58 are designated, only 5 waiting for buildings).
- 1.1.7 The children and young people's workforce in Leeds is extensive. It includes :

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- 485 Integrated Youth Support Service staff
- 1,026 in Children and Young People's Social Care, approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of whom are full time. Of the total, 255 are social workers and there are 36.5 vacancies.
- 960 staff in Early Years
- 20 staff in the Director of Children's Services Unit
- 933 in Education Leeds and
- 18,219 staff in Leeds' schools

1.2 Current children's services arrangements in Leeds

1.2.1 Since 2006, the children's trust arrangements have been supported by a small team called the Director of Children's Services Unit (DCSU). Working closely with the Director, this team has held responsibility for taking a strategic lead across key children's services themes, building and supporting partnership working, particularly locally, and providing support to the Director's role and functions. This team has also led on the development and review of the Children and Young People's Plan.

1.2.2 Within Leeds' children's services, there are three closely linked, but distinct service areas :

- **Education Leeds:** Education Leeds is a not-for-profit company formed in 2001. It was created, under Direction from the Secretary of State, following the receipt of a critical OfSTED report in 1999. The company established its own brand, policies and procedures as it considered appropriate, but maintained close links with the City Council continuing to use the Council's accommodation for its staff and continuing, in most areas, to use the Council's support infrastructure. The Direction was removed in 2006, but the model has been retained with the company now being wholly owned by the City Council. It is led by its own Chief Executive, and oversight of the company is undertaken by a Board consisting of Council representatives, professional educational input, business representation and an independent Chair. Education Leeds is responsible for providing all education support services that relate to children and young people of statutory school age.
- **Children and Young People's Social Care:** CYP Social Care was formed primarily by dividing the former Social Care Department into distinct Adults' and Children's sections. Social care services for children and young people come under a Chief Officer with delegated powers of decision-making. The service across Leeds includes 11 Assessment Teams, 19 Care Management Teams and six Child Health and Disability Teams. Other teams include Pathway Planning (leaving care) team, the Children's Asylum and Refugee team and the Fostering and Adoption services.
- **Early Years and Integrated Youth Support Services:** These services have been brought together under one chief officer and have merged support functions and teams. This was in response to the need to ensure strong links between preventative services across the whole 0-19 age range.

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IYSS was established in April 2008 in response to the national Youth Matters strategy and to the Education and Inspections Act. The provision of youth work and Connexions services were the two original principal and statutory functions of IYSS, the Youth Offending Service having been added as a third key strand in January 2009. (*Further information to follow*) IYSS also includes youth volunteering, youth engagement, Positive Activities for Young People, Targeted Youth Support, and the Out of School Activities Team whose work includes Breeze on Tour and other events. Connexions services are delivered by a range of agencies commissioned by IYSS. Approximately 85% of youth work is delivered by Leeds Youth Service and the rest by VCFS organisations. The Early Years Service aims to raise the achievement of young children, narrow the outcome gap between the more and less advantaged children and promote social inclusion. The service works through the Sure Start Partnership to deliver key statutory responsibilities and proactively lead in all areas of early education, childcare, parenting, early intervention and preventative services. The service is organised in three main teams to deliver the four key statutory duties of the Childcare Act: children's centres programme, childcare sufficiency, Early Years Outcome Duty, and the 0-19 Information Duty.

- 1.2.3 The Senior Officer from each of these service areas, along with the Director and Deputy Directors from within the Director of Children's Services Unit make up the Council's Children's Services Leadership Team (CSLT).

Wider Partnerships

- 1.2.4 Leeds introduced its first Children and Young People's Plan and the Children's Trust Arrangements established to deliver against this in 2006. The trust arrangements were originally developed uniquely for Leeds to incorporate: a broad partnership that works regularly with children and young people to shape and influence policy and strategy - namely the Children Leeds Partnership; and a smaller distinct senior leadership group from across key partners, which takes forward collective commissioning of services to target priority areas - namely the Integrated Strategic Commissioning Board. The safeguarding responsibilities of the partners across the trust arrangements are overseen by the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board, which in Leeds is independently chaired.
- 1.2.5 From the initiation of the trust arrangements in Leeds, these citywide bodies have been complemented by an emphasis on locality working, developed through a range of pilot initiatives and connected to the council's elected members through its area committees.
- 1.2.6 Work is currently underway to review the children's trust arrangements in Leeds, including the Safeguarding Children Board, in response to both external inspection findings and new government guidance. New arrangements will be in place by spring 2010.

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- 1.2.6 Through the trust arrangements and other local and service specific arrangements, council and education services work closely together and with the other key partners involved with children and young people across the city, including colleges, health partners, West Yorkshire Police and the voluntary, community and faith sectors.
- 1.2.5 NHS Leeds, the local Primary Care Trust (PCT), commissions health services for people in Leeds and shares the same boundary as Leeds City Council. These services include child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), health visiting and children's community nursing. These are delivered by the organisation's provider arm, NHS Leeds Community Healthcare. NHS Leeds also commissions general practitioners, pharmacists and dentists to provide local healthcare services.
- 1.2.6 The main provider of children's acute hospital services is the Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust. NHS ambulance services throughout the city are provided by the Yorkshire Ambulance Services NHS Trust, which was formed in July 2006. NHS organisations are performance managed by NHS Yorkshire and the Humber.

Democratic Leadership

- 1.2.7 The Children Act 2004 required the appointment of a Lead member for Children's Services. In Leeds an Executive Member (Cllr Golton) is responsible for the political oversight of the Children's Services portfolio and undertakes the Lead Member responsibilities as defined by the Act. As a consequence of the size of the portfolio, another Executive Member (Cllr Harker) has been appointed with responsibility for political oversight of Learning, Early Years and Integrated Youth Support. This Member is the key political interface with Education Leeds.

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Key findings of the internal Children's Services Review

To be added once finalised.

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Key findings of recent external reviews and inspections

Inspection context

3.1 The Joint Area Review (published May 2008) was positive in its overall assessment of work taking place, it described children's services in Leeds as 'good', although on the 'stay safe' judgement Leeds was rated as 'adequate' with good capacity to improve.

3.1.1 The Annual Performance Assessment (2008) of children's services in Leeds, found services to be adequate overall, but highlighted some particular concerns, around for example:

- the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training in Leeds and school attendance rates;
- outcomes for vulnerable groups in Leeds, including looked after children and young people;
- the number of under 18 conceptions;
- the need to improve the participation of children and young people in their reviews;
- timeliness of reviews and the need to reduce the social worker vacancy factor.

3.1.2 In July, as part of its new framework for inspections of children's services (published in May 2009) Ofsted carried out an **unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment in Leeds**. This highlighted some significant issues, including that:

- case files suggested some children had been left at potential risk of significant harm;
- our response to child protection referrals was not consistently in line with statutory guidance;
- there were some weaknesses in our performance management, quality assurance and supervision arrangements;
- inconsistent recording was found;
- the thresholds for accessing services were unclear; and
- our child protection procedures were outdated.

3.1.3 In December 2009 Ofsted published its latest **annual rating for children's services** in Leeds. This rating was informed by the unannounced inspection (undertaken in July) and therefore reported that although the majority of services inspected during the year had been found to be good or better, that the significant concerns found around safeguarding during the unannounced inspection were such that the overall rating for children's services was inadequate. Ofsted also drew attention to :

- performance in secondary schools, school sixth forms and special schools
- achievement at Early Years Foundation Stage
- attainment of specific minority ethnic groups at 11 and 16
- achievement of Level 2 qualifications by age 19

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- numbers entering the youth justice system and numbers and relatively high numbers of young people sentenced to custody
- high numbers of young people not in education, employment or training

3.1.4 Coinciding with the publication of this annual rating, between late November and early December Ofsted carried out its **announced inspection of safeguarding and looked after children's services**. This found improvements and progress. It judged the overall effectiveness of services for looked after children to be adequate, with adequate capacity to improve. Overall effectiveness for safeguarding was found to be inadequate, and capacity to improve adequate. Importantly, feel safe and stay safe were judged as adequate. A number of recommendations for improvement were made. These include, for safeguarding, improving

- the timeliness and quality of social work responses for assessments, case planning and recording, including the analysis of risk;
- performance management and quality assurance frameworks;
- the electronic recording system;
- the capacity for the delivery of child protection conferences
- the capacity of the workforce;
- high levels of social worker caseloads and team manager capacity; and
- the contact centre procedures.

3.1.5 Looked after children services' areas for improvement are to :

- review the level of resource available;
- improve the quality of core assessments and case records;
- strengthen arrangements for monitoring the quality and outcomes of external placements;
- ensure all looked after children and young people are made aware of how to complain and that their views are taken into account in the reshaping of services;
- develop a clear and understandable set of measures and targets for the achievement of the Care Promise;
- review the level of resource available to support the children in care council and increase awareness of its role and membership so that it is more representative of the looked after children population;
- improve the range of placement choice available;
- improve the effectiveness and relevance of personal education plans; and
- improve the regularity and timeliness of information-gathering on the progress of looked after children.

3.1.6 Significant change has been implemented and improvement realised in response to the findings of external inspections; however a significant amount of work remains.

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The Improvement Notice

Draft version, supplied by DCSF officials on 8 February

Improvement Notice

To: Name LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

Address Civic Hall, Calverley Street, Leeds LS1 1UR

4.1 This Improvement Notice is being issued due to poor performance in:

4.1.1 Children's services

4.2 on the basis of evidence contained in:

4.2.1 Ofsted's August 2009 unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements.

4.2.2 Ofsted's annual assessment 2009, which judged Leeds' children's services to be "performing poorly".

4.2.3 Ofsted's January 2010 inspection of safeguarding and looked after children's services which judged Leeds' overall effectiveness of safeguarding services to be "inadequate".

4.3 The duration of the Improvement Notice will be:

4.3.1 From date of issue until the final review of progress relating to October 2011 is delivered. The Secretary of State may, at his discretion, choose to lift the Improvement Notice at an earlier date if he is satisfied that the necessary improvements have been made and are sustainable.

4.4 The following measure(s) are needed for you to comply with this Improvement Notice:

4.4.1 The Council must take action to:

- a. improve areas of weakness identified in the reports from the above inspections and assessments,
- b. improve performance against key indicators in the areas concerned; and
- c. put in place robust and sustainable arrangements to sustain and build on the improvements secured. In particular:

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5.1 Safeguarding children

5.1.1 **Developing services and front-line practice:**

- The Council is expected to improve the response to child protection referrals to meet statutory guidelines, and ensure discussions with the police and other agencies take place in a timely manner in all relevant circumstances, as set out in *'Working Together to Safeguard Children'*
- The Council must have clear multi-agency thresholds in place, shared with and understood by partners, in order for children and young people to access appropriate services and to ensure consistent and high quality referrals from other agencies.
- The Council needs to ensure that it has effective information management arrangements in place, ensuring that records for all children and young people are up-to-date and that assessment reports are routinely shared with parents as appropriate.
- The Council needs to ensure that it has effective quality assurance arrangements in place to monitor the quality of contact, referral and assessment services and ensure that assessments are of a consistently high standard.
- The Council must further embed the use of the CAF in practice across children's services so that it is effectively used to inform early intervention.
- The Council must demonstrate improvements in staff satisfaction (measured through the Council's corporate staff survey and the local social worker survey) and in the satisfaction of children and families (measured through various service specific surveys) throughout the term of the Improvement Notice.
- The Council must establish clear and agreed processes with partners in the Children's Trust and LSCB to ensure effective scrutiny and training takes place so that the quality of contacts, referrals and assessments improve.

5.1.2 Demonstrate clear evidence of improvement in outcomes, evidenced by improvements in the following performance indicators:

- NI 59 - whilst maintaining high quality, increase the percentage of initial assessments for children's social care carried out within timescale to 72% for the month of March 2010, to 80% for the month of October 2010 and to 80% by end of March 2011 (i.e. the annual cumulative figure)
- NI 60 - whilst maintaining high quality, increase the percentage of core assessments for children's social care that were carried out within 35 working days of their commencement to 80% for the month of March 2010, to 84% for the month of October 2010 and to 85% by the end of March 2011 (i.e. the annual cumulative figure)

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5.2 Other areas of concern

5.2.1 The Council must:

- Working with the National Challenge Board and any other government agencies as appropriate, effectively deliver the National Challenge Programme, implement the Council's agreed plan for Schools Vulnerable to the National Challenge and ensure agreed targets are met.
- Deliver improvements in the following outcomes:
 - NI 78 - reduction in number of schools where fewer than 30% of pupils achieve 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE and equivalent including GCSEs in English and Maths to no schools in the 2011 examinations, with plans in place and demonstrable progress towards that goal by September 2010
 - NI 79 – increase achievement of Level 2 qualifications by the age of 19 to 75.2% in the 2009/10 academic year.
 - NI 102 - narrow the achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving a 5 ppts reduction at Key Stage 4 in the 2010 examinations
 - NI 108 - achieve a sustained upward trend in the achievement of black and mixed heritage pupils by the end of the academic year 2010/11
 - NI 117 – reduce the number of 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) to 6.8% in 2010/11
- Working with DCSF, GOYH, National Strategies and other government agencies as appropriate, the Council is expected to demonstrate overall improvements in LAA indicators relating to children's services and statutory attainment targets through the period of this Improvement Notice.

5.3 Building capacity and capability to deliver and sustain improvements

5.3.1 The Council, working with its partners must ensure robust leadership and implementation of an effective improvement programme covering all staff and elected members and engaging partners, with a clear focus on improving outcomes for children and young people, particularly in relation to safeguarding. It must:

- Cooperate with the independent chair to establish an Improvement Board and support the Board in providing effective challenge across the partnership to drive swift and sustainable progress through a robust improvement plan. The Council must provide the Improvement Board with robust evidence of both quantitative outcomes and qualitative processes as required. The Council must take full account of the advice and recommendations of the Improvement Board to deliver

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improvements in its children's services, and to continue to improve partnership arrangements.

- Prepare a robust Improvement Plan to be agreed with the Improvement Board for delivering improvements across children and young people's services, addressing all areas of weaknesses highlighted in Ofsted inspections, the 2009 Comprehensive Area Assessment and other areas of concern as appropriate.
- Monitor improvement in children's social care, by establishing rigorous performance management and quality assurance systems which deliver regular monitoring, scrutiny and quality assurance of social care performance.
- Increase capacity within children's social care, in particular at team manager and social worker levels, by ensuring that there is an effective senior management team responsible for social care.
- Review social workers' responsibilities and workloads to ensure that responsibilities are clearly and tightly defined, and that no staff carry too wide a range of work. This will need to involve consideration of whether a restructure of children's social care services is necessary to deliver high quality services.
- Develop a comprehensive programme of training, mentoring and continuous professional development for all social care staff so that they have the skills to complete high quality and timely assessments

5.4 Improvement against the above measures will be assessed as follows:

5.4.1 The Improvement Board will receive regular updates on performance against the above measures. The Chair of the Improvement Board will report to the Department for Children, Schools and Families and Leeds City Council on a bi-monthly basis.

5.4.2 This will be supplemented by interim reviews in regard to performance at:

- The end of March 2010 (reported in May 2010)
- The end of September 2010 (reported in November 2010)
- The end of March 2011 (reported in May 2011)

as well as a final review at the end of October 2011. The Secretary of State may exceptionally require additional reports in light of these scheduled reviews.

5.5 by:

5.5.1 The Department for Children, Schools, and Families, who will, on the basis of measurable progress towards the targets outlined above, advise Ministers on any necessary follow-up action, taking account of reports from the Improvement Board and Leeds City Council.

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5.6 Failure to comply with this Improvement Notice by the assessment dates may lead to:

5.6.1 The Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families using statutory powers of intervention (s497A Education Act 1996) to direct the Council to enter into an appropriate arrangement to secure the necessary and rapid improvements required in children's services.

Signed: **Date:**

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Section B

Role, scope and membership of the Children's Services Improvement Board

6.1 Background

6.1.1 On 7 December 2009, Leeds City Council formally agreed with Dawn Primarolo MP, Minister of State for Children, Young People and Families, to establish an Improvement Board led by an independent chair.

6.1.2 This proposal was in response to a range of challenges identified across children's services following an unannounced inspection of contact, assessment and referral services in July 2009 and subsequent inspections/assessments. The key inspections/assessment included:

- Ofsted's July 2009 unannounced inspection of contact, referral, and assessment services which identified a number of 'priority areas for action';
- Ofsted's annual children's services assessment published in 2009 which concluded that 'whilst the majority of the local authority's inspected and regulated services provision in children's services are good or better there are significant weakness in areas of social care provision' which led to a performance assessment of performing poorly;
- The Area Assessment published in December 2009 which identified safeguarding as being a key issue of concern and identified as a 'red flag';
- The announced inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children which was published on 7 January 2010 and identified that whilst positive progress was being made, significant challenges remain, particularly in regard to safeguarding which remains to be assessed overall as being inadequate. The assessment for capacity to improve was judged as being adequate.

6.1.3 The DCSF has also issued Leeds City Council with a (currently draft) Improvement Notice specifying the performance measures required to comply with the Improvement Notice; a range of actions to be progressed; timescales for those changes; how delivery against the Improvement Notice will be monitored and assessed; and, the action that may be taken by the DCSF if there is a failure to comply with the requirements of the Improvement Notice.

6.1.4 Progress against the requirements of the Improvement Notice will be assessed by:

1. The Improvement Board receiving regular updates on performance and actions against the measures and actions identified;

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2. The Chair of the Improvement Board reporting to the Minister for Children, Young People and Families and Leeds City Council on a bi-monthly basis, and;
3. Interim reviews in regard to performance being provided to the Improvement Board, Leeds City Council and DCSF at times specified within the Improvement Notice.

6.1.5 An Improvement Plan will be produced by the Council, in partnership with others as appropriate, incorporating not only the Improvement Notice and key inspection findings but also the outcomes of the significant review of children's services leadership, governance and partnership arrangements that the authority has undertaken. The Improvement Plan will be signed off by both the Council and the Improvement Board and will provide the context for the Board's work.

6.2 Purpose:

6.2.1 The Leeds Children's Services Improvement Board will advise on, and challenge the content of, delivery, progress and outcomes of the Improvement Plan and monitor compliance with the terms of the Improvement Notice.

6.3 Chair:

- The Board will be chaired by an independent chair
- Bill McCarthy, Chief Executive of NHS Yorkshire and Humber has been jointly appointed by Leeds City Council and DCSF to undertake this role.
- If the Chair is unable to attend any meeting then he/she shall appoint an appropriate person from the existing Board membership to deputise in his/her absence.

6.4 Board Membership:

- Bill McCarthy, Chief Executive of NHS Yorkshire and Humber
- Paul Rogerson, Chief Executive of Leeds City Council
- Councillor Stewart Golton, Lead Member for Children's Services
- Chief Superintendent Gerry Broadbent, Leeds North East Divisional Commander, West Yorkshire Police
- Peter Roberts, Chief Executive of Leeds City College
- John Lawlor, Chief Executive of NHS Leeds
- Penny Thompson, external challenge and support

6.5 Others in Attendance:

- The Council's Director of Children's Services
- James Rogers, Assistant Chief Executive (Planning, Policy and Improvement)
- Senior colleagues from children's services, Education Leeds and partner organisations will attend and report into the Board as required

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- A representative from GOYH and the DCSF Intervention Team will be invited to attend in an observer capacity

6.6 Meeting Frequency:

6.6.1 The Board will meet on a monthly basis and a schedule of meetings will be agreed for 2010 in the first instance. Meeting requirements for 2011 will be considered by the Board in the autumn of 2010.

6.7 Quorum:

6.7.1 The Improvement Board has no specified quorum. It will be a matter for the chair to determine whether there are sufficient members either present or able to attend to undertake the necessary business of the Board.

6.8 Alternates:

Members of the Board will be required to attend in person or send their apologies. Deputies cannot attend in place of Board Members. For others attending the Board to support its work, deputies may attend with the prior agreement of the chair.

6.9 Roles and Responsibilities

6.9.1 The Board will:

1. Consider, comment upon and agree the detail of an Improvement Plan (to be prepared and agreed formally by the Council) which will provide a focus for the Board's work;
2. Ensure the requirements of the Improvement Notice, as issued by the DCSF, are adequately and appropriately addressed within the Council's Improvement Plan;
3. Receive proposals for addressing the key performance issues identified within the Improvement Notice and monitor progress including the receipt of relevant performance management information;
4. Oversee, monitor and challenge progress on, the implementation of the Council's Improvement Plan;
5. Advise on the implementation of the Improvement Plan, assessing risk and considering issues that arise that may be impeding on the delivery of the plan e.g. constraints such as IT, financial or staffing issues;
6. Assure itself that front-line practitioners, customers and partners are all being appropriately engaged by the Council in addressing the key performance issues identified within the Improvement Plan;

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7. Assure itself that the Council is implementing revised arrangements and practices which are sustainable in the longer term in order to maintain a high standard of performance, particularly in the area of children's social care;
8. Agree the future work plan of the Board;
9. Support the chair in agreeing the key issues to be formally reported to the Council and the DCSF as part of the formal reporting requirements, and;
10. Consider reports from the Council and its partners, as may be required, on the wider improvement agenda in children's services.

6.10 Dissolution of the Board

6.10.1 The Board will be dissolved by a joint-decision of the Minister of State for Children, Young People and Families and Leeds City Council following a recommendation from the Board that all of the key requirements in the Improvement Notice have been sufficiently met and are sustainable. Any change in the Board membership will need to be agreed with the DCSF, the Council and the Independent Chair.

6.11 Administration

6.11.1 Leeds City Council will be responsible for the preparation of the agenda and papers for the meetings of the Board, in consultation with the Independent Chair. Papers will be distributed to Board Members at least five working days in advance of the meeting. Leeds City Council will also be responsible for the administration, clerking and hosting of the Board meetings and will ensure that minutes are taken and distributed to Board members within one week of a Board meeting. The Chair should agree minutes before circulation.

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Section C

Reporting lines of the Children's Services Improvement Board

8.1 Reporting

8.1.1 The Children's Services Improvement Board will receive monthly monitoring reports about progress with delivering the Improvement Plan. The Summary Monitoring report will be produced on an exception reporting basis and will highlight any key issues and risks arising. In addition details of any changes made to the plan will be reported as will a brief overview of progress against key actions and those nearing completion.

8.1.2 These reports will be timed so that the information is as up to date as possible for the Board and will then be used as a basis for updating a number of other groups and Boards as shown in the table below.

Key Meetings	Purpose of Meeting	Frequency of Meeting
Children's Services Support Group Chair – Paul Rogerson	Challenge and support for the delivery of the plan from a cross-council perspective	Once a month
Children's Services Leadership Team Chair – Eleanor Brazil	Improvement plan monitoring and clearance of papers for the Improvement Board	Once a month
Children's Services Improvement Board Chair – Bill McCarthy	Advise on and challenge delivery, progress and outcomes of the Improvement Plan Monitor compliance with the terms of the Improvement Notice. Provide material for Bill McCarthy to update DCSF and Council Leaders once every two months.	Once a month
Children's Trust Board Chair - TBC	Understanding our progress against the Children's Services Priority Improvement Plan and driving forward progress	Monthly
Corporate Leadership Team Chair – Paul Rogerson	Monitoring and, where appropriate, supporting the delivery of the Children's	Bi monthly

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Leader Management Team Chair – Leader of the Council	Briefing on progress against the plan and challenge as appropriate	Bi monthly
Member Reference Group Chair – Paul Rogerson	Briefing on progress against the plan and challenge as appropriate	Once a month
Children's Services Scrutiny Chair – Cllr Bill Hyde	Monitoring our progress against the plan on a quarterly basis, including a 6-monthly review of progress against the Improvement Plan	Quarterly
DCSF Ministers	Update via Bill McCarthy	Bi monthly
Executive Board	6-monthly review of progress against the Improvement Plan	6-monthly

8.2 So, in summary:

- Each month, there will be a monitoring report that is produced primarily for the Children's Services Improvement Board reported at various meetings every two months, there will be progress update meetings provided to DCSF and Council Leaders by Bill McCarthy.
- Every quarter, along with the normal quarterly performance reporting, a consolidated position will be provided to the Council's Scrutiny Board.
- Every 6 months, a formal review against the Improvement Notice will be provided to the DCSF, the Council's Executive Board and the Council's Scrutiny Board.

8.3 A timetable of reporting meetings can be seen in Appendix A.

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Section D

An overview of the key themes of the improvement plan

9.1 Background

9.1.1 The Children and Young People's Plan 2009-2014(CYPP) sets out a vision for all the children of Leeds to be happy, healthy, safe, successful and free from the effects of poverty. The CYPP sets out two important cross cutting priorities, very relevant to the context that Leeds is now in given more recent inspection findings, which are:

- improving safeguarding
- enabling integrated working

9.1.2 Additionally, the CYPP set out 8 further short term priorities and 10 longer term ambitions. All of the short term priorities are relevant to the themes in the Improvement Plan and many of the targets feature in the Improvement Notice. The short term priorities are:

- Improving outcomes for looked after children
- Improving attendance and reducing persistent absence from school
- Improving early learning and primary outcomes in deprived areas
- Providing places to do and things to do
- Raising the proportion of young people in education or work
- Reducing child poverty
- Reducing teenage conception
- Reducing the need for children and young people to be in care

9.2 Structure of the Improvement Plan

9.2.1 However, it is clear that we need to increase the pace of improvement in a number of areas in Leeds and this Improvement Plan will provide a focus for that increased pace and impact. The Improvement Plan is organised around five themes, in order to provide comprehensive and coherent coverage of the issues. The themes are:

- Effective leadership and governance of integrated children's services in Leeds
- Excellent safeguarding standards and practice
- Improve outcomes for looked after children
- All young people participating fully, socially and economically
- A highly skilled, well motivated, motivated and continually developing workforce

9.2.2 The detail of what will be done, by, when and who, how, and how we will measure success is all laid out in section E of the Improvement Plan – a detailed implementation plan across all the themes. However, these can also be summarised as:

- Effective leadership and governance of integrated children's services in Leeds

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- Implement new Leadership and Governance arrangements for Children's Services, including developing an accountability framework for the delivery of outcomes for children and young people at a local level
 - Create a new Children's Trust Board with appropriate governance arrangements at both citywide and local level
 - Review the Children and Young People's Plan
 - Establish robust commissioning arrangements
 - Develop a strong performance management culture and framework, and develop robust quality assurance systems
 - Consider requirements for budget realignment to support delivery of children's services priorities
- Excellent safeguarding standards and practice
 - Establishment of high quality operational procedures with strict compliance, good record keeping and clear risk assessed decision making backed up by excellent quality assurance processes
 - Revise the operation of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board to ensure it is able to carry out all its functions effectively
 - Improve Early Intervention and prevention by: good information sharing, adherence to clear thresholds, use of CAF and effective interagency working
 - Improve outcomes for looked after children
 - Improve placements for looked after children
 - Reduce the number in care and time spent in care
 - Ensure effective planning for children and young people in care and leaving care
 - All young people participating fully, socially and economically
 - Implement an action plan to reduce the numbers of NEET (including the number of not knowns)
 - Improve attainment with particular focus on under achieving groups and settings (Eg. LAC relevant BME pupils, SEN and Free School Meals, National Challenge)
 - Improve school attendance with a particular focus on secondary and persistent absentees
 - Reduce the numbers of young people involved in burglary and reduce the high number of young people in the youth justice system who receive a custodial sentence
 - A highly skilled, well motivated, motivated and continually developing workforce
 - Produce workforce development plan for an integrated C&YP workforce to include recruitment, retention, training, skills development and provide improved clarity of roles and responsibilities
 - Ensure staff are enabled to carry out their responsibilities efficiently by provision of effective IT systems and adequate support

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- Ensure C&YP Social Care staff have appropriate and manageable workloads, and are kept under regular supervision

9.2.3 The Annual Review of the CYPP 09-14 will take place during March/April, set within the context of the revised children's trust arrangements. This Annual Review will take account of the Improvement Plan.

9.3 How we will know when we've got there

9.3.1 We want to secure excellent services for children and young people in Leeds by 2014. This will mean no areas for priority action being found in our next unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment, and improved annual performance ratings to "adequate" in 2010 and "performing well" in 2011.

9.3.2 During the lifetime of the Improvement Notice we will embed revised Children's Trust arrangements city-wide and at local level. This will include effective Children's Trust and Local Safeguarding Children Boards, with the appropriate level of representation across all partners, and the necessary supporting and consultative groups, with robust linkages between the different elements, in order to drive our improvement through the Children and Young People's Plan. Our leadership arrangements will be redefined to better manage and support effective integrated frontline services.

9.3.3 Through internal self- evaluation and external scrutiny we have increased our self-awareness and understanding of risk .We will build on this approach in a more systematic way, embedding it into our routine performance management. Delivery of services for children and young people will be backed by integrated support functions including commissioning and performance management to achieve greater coherence across the whole system and enable robust prioritisation and alignment of resources to priority improvement areas and sustaining good quality services. Our longer term approach to financial planning will ensure that budget allocations are kept under review and aligned to the delivery of our plans and priorities. Any such planning will need to take place in the context of the national funding picture and the impact of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review.

9.3.4 Strengthening the leadership and challenge role of the Local Safeguarding Children Board will help us to ensure that practice in Leeds is robust and agencies are working together effectively to safeguard vulnerable children and young people. An Integrated Safeguarding Unit will help to deliver a robust child protection system in which children, young people and families are properly engaged. Promotion of safeguarding, learning the lessons from Serious Case Reviews and delivering comprehensive training are all important elements that will be secured to improve our safeguarding arrangements.

9.3.5 We recognise that we cannot secure the improvements we need for our children and young people without a skilled, motivated and well supported

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workforce that continues to develop, and this will be reflected in our Integrated Workforce Strategy.

- 9.3.6 It is of critical importance that frontline staff have appropriate case loads and are well supported, trained and supervised. Staff will be deployed into multi-disciplinary and multi-agency teams as best fits the needs of the children, young people, families and communities we are here to assist. To achieve this we will require strong leadership and a clear agreed vision for the delivery of integrated children's services in Leeds.
- 9.3.7 Clear thresholds for intervention have been developed and will be fully understood and utilised by staff across all agencies. Integrated front-line services targeting support for children and families with additional and multiple additional needs will deliver timely responses to problems using appropriate care pathways. As the whole system is strengthened to respond more effectively to meet families' needs, we expect to see a reduction in the numbers of children and young people becoming looked after.
- 9.3.8 Whilst outcomes for our looked after children are improving, they lag behind those for their peers and this is unacceptable. We will continue to narrow that gap through better assessment, planning and co-ordinated individualised support for looked after children and young people and their carers. We will make sure that we are listening to what looked after children and young people are telling us about their experiences and use this to evaluate and improve our provision. A better range of local placements will not only improve choice and stability for children and young people, but will also have an impact on one of our major budget pressures, thus freeing resources for other priority areas of activity.
- 9.3.9 We want to see a greater proportion of our young people engaging fully in their community, thriving socially and economically. This means that we will focus our collective efforts more keenly on those groups of children and young people who are particularly vulnerable to under achievement. The gap between them and their peers must reduce progressively. We will tackle disengagement through our approach to Raising the Participation Age : ensuring we have the right range of opportunities for learning and training that will excite and motivate our young people, and providing them with good quality advice and support to access them. Our systems for information, advice and guidance will be strengthened to track young people more effectively and ensure that they stay within a supportive network that will help them to succeed. Partnership activity including a "Think Family" approach and integrated offender management will be used to reduce burglary and re-offending.
- 9.3.10 Leadership across all levels of our children's trust partnership in Leeds needs to be active, visible and effective in sustaining high quality responses to improve outcomes for our children and young people, particularly the most vulnerable. As our Improvement Plan develops we expect it to provide further

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evidence of strong partnership activity to deliver on our priorities, and increased satisfaction of both service users and staff.