



Supporting Children and Families, Strengthening Social Care: *A Child Friendly Leeds Action Plan*



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FINAL DRAFT

Foreword

Staff at all levels express pride in what has been achieved since the last full safeguarding inspection, but also recognise there is much more to do; there is no complacency (OfSTED, October 2011)

Outcomes for the most vulnerable children and young people in Leeds are improving. The local partnership is working together better to safeguard children and young people. We have invested and improved our social care services. Our shared strategy is beginning to help us 'turn the curve'. Children and families' strengths and challenges are being identified earlier and more effective early help is being put in place, improving outcomes and reducing the need for children and young people to enter care. Those who do need extra help and protection are being given quicker, better support from social care.

Despite this progress, we need to do much more. We have a clear ambition to be the Best City for children and young people, a Child Friendly City. We aim to be the Best Council in the UK. At present, despite our hard work and investment, challenges remain and not all our services and all our work meet the standards of the best. Furthermore, the bar is being raised. The Munro Review quite rightly sets out new, higher expectations for social care and partners to work better together, and most crucially to work in new ways that pay more attention to the voice of children and young people. National government and OfSTED are impatient to see evidence of improvement. Lastly, in the context of austerity, children's services need to resolve how to improve the support we offer whilst making efficiencies.

The capacity for improvement is good. The local authority and its partners have made the improvement of safeguarding services for children their highest priority. There is a strong sense of shared responsibility for this work with agreement secured across partner agencies at the highest level.

*The message is that, in Leeds, 'safeguarding is everyone's business'.
(OfSTED, Oct 2011)*

To achieve our ambitions and to meet these new challenges, we need to follow the logic of the statement above. The Council and its partners need to find new ways to continue to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of vulnerable children. Central to our new approach is an emphasis on restorative working, which means that our services will work *with* children, families and communities - building on their strengths and engaging them in finding solutions to make sure all the children and young people of Leeds are safe and thriving.

This action plan sets out our crucial next steps, and how we aim to increase the pace of change over the next eighteen months.

Cllr. Judith Blake
Lead Member – Children's Services

Nigel Richardson
Director of Children's Services



Introduction

The OfSTED inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services in Leeds in December 2009 found that the overall effectiveness of these services were inadequate. As a result of the concerns identified Leeds was made the subject of an improvement notice by the Secretary of State.

An Independent Chaired Improvement Board was established to provide robust external oversight of the implementation of the plan to improve service for vulnerable children.

An unannounced inspection of Leeds City Council's contact, referral and assessment arrangements in January 2011 concluded there had been considerable progress since the last inspection. A subsequent inspection of safeguarding arrangements in September 2011 concluded:

- *The overall effectiveness of services in Leeds in ensuring children are safe is adequate.* Since the last full safeguarding inspection in 2009 the partnership has made significant progress in improving the outcomes for children. The improvement board has very effectively overseen improvements and there is good collaborative working and strong leadership across the Children's Trust Board and the Leeds Safeguarding Children's Board.
- *The capacity for improvement is good.* The local authority and its partners have made the improvement of safeguarding services for children their highest priority. There is a strong sense of shared responsibility for this work with agreement secured across partner agencies at the highest level. The message is that, in Leeds, 'safeguarding is everyone's business'.

As a result of the findings of these inspections the Secretary of State removed the improvement notice for Leeds Children's Services in January 2012.

Since the listing of the improvement notice a number of significant changes have taken place to build on the improvements noted by the inspectors. These include:

- Creating Safeguarding, Specialist and Targeted Services to ensure that vulnerable children receive the right level of service at the right time in a coordinated manner;
- The Children's Social Work Service has been strengthened by the recruitment of an additional 40 social workers and the creation of Advanced Practitioners. Remodelling the service In March 2012 created locality teams. The new model supports greater continuity and better partnership working between social work teams and local services. Specialist Looked After Children's Teams were also established to improve services for looked after children and improve care planning;
- Targeted Service Leaders have been rolled out to all clusters to support improved cluster working;
- 'Advice and Guidance' meetings in clusters are supporting the identification of vulnerable and potentially vulnerable children and the provision of early interventions;
- Children's Services has developed a partnership with a number of nationally and internationally recognised experts to create a framework of external support and challenge (A list of experts is included as appendix A);
- Working with partners and informed by Dr Mark Peel of Leicester University the Common Assessment for Leeds has been remodelled and re-launched;

- The early help offer has been strengthened by the integration of health visiting with Children's Centres to create 25 Early Start Centres;
- The development of a joint commissioning and planning framework to meet the emotional and mental health needs of children and young people;
- The Integrated Safeguarding Unit has been established and is providing robust oversight of planning for children looked after and those subject to a child protection plan;
- Restorative Practices are providing a strong foundation for practice in Leeds. The Family Group Conference service has been strengthened and the Strengthening Families approach to child protection conferences has supported the improved involvement of families in meetings;
- Research by Professor David Thorpe, jointly commissioned by the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board, has been used to remodel the 'front door' of Children's Services to ensure that professionals are able to speak to a qualified social worker about any issues or concerns they have about a child. This development is being taken forward on a multi-agency basis and is being overseen by a reference group from Leeds Safeguarding Children Board.
- The audit framework, which was commended by inspectors, has been strengthened. The case file audit now includes the audit of supervision. A checklist for Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection chairs has been developed. Practice Observations have been introduced and a quality assurance report developed;
- Staff from across Children's Services was involved in commissioning a replacement for Electronic Social Care Record (ESCR). A project team has been established to support implementation. The new system will be delivered in April 2013 and will be fully operational from September;
- The Domestic Violence protocol with the Police has been revised and a social worker is now located with the Police and all domestic violence reports are jointly screened.

These changes are beginning to have an impact on practice and, more importantly, on outcomes for the children in Leeds:

Performance in relation to the three obsessions identified by the Children's Trust Board has improved significantly;

- The number of looked after children in Leeds has decreased from 1474 on the 31 March 2012 to 1431 on the 30th of September and is 21 lower than at the same time last year;
- Primary School Attendance in Leeds in 2011/12 improved significantly, resulting in the highest attendance rate ever. Primary school attendance in Leeds was better than the rate seen in similar areas or the national average. Secondary attendance also improved strongly in 2011/12. Whilst the rate remains slightly below (0.5% points) the rate in similar areas or the national average, the strong rate of improvement helped to narrow the gap.
- Towards the end of the last academic year, in June 2012, the number of young people not in work or education was 7%. This rate was lower than that seen in similar areas. Leeds was improving faster than the national trend, thus narrowing the gap with the national average.

The 9 Point Plan

It was identified that the re-structuring of the Children's Social Work Service would involve significant change – of manager, team or location - for 40% of practitioners and the transfer of around 3,000 cases. It was recognised therefore, that in the early part of the year, managers would need to focus their attention in supporting staff and service through the changes and ensuring that children and young people continued to receive a high quality service. For this reason it was agreed that a detailed plan would not be developed until September.

The development of the 9 Point Plan has been informed by:

- A review of our progress over the past year
- Consultation with partners and the framework of external experts;
- The findings from our programme of internal audits and other quality assurance mechanisms;
- The outcome of scrutiny enquiries
- Feedback from managers and staff from across Children's Services obtained through the staff survey, visits by senior managers and the Lead Member and regular meetings with trade unions;
- Input from children and young people

The 9 Point Plan sets out how the Council intends to work with partners to further improve support for families, strengthen social work and deliver improved outcomes for children. The plan sits with the overall context and framework of the Leeds Children and Young People's Plan and sets out how social care services will contribute to the shared vision of a Child Friendly Leeds.

The plan has been developed to respond to a changing context and raised expectations for social work and children's services. Our local strategy and approach is set out in the Leeds Children and Young People's Plan. This sets out the 11 priorities and three obsessions for improving outcomes for children in Leeds. Central to achieving our aims are three new approaches and behaviours: Outcomes Based Accountability, Restorative Practice and promoting the Voice and Influence of children and young people. Outcomes Based Accountability means a new approach to focusing on outcomes (the quality of life for groups of people) rather than processes, supported by a practical shared language and methods to plan and improve together. Restorative Practice also means a change in the way practitioners and services work – changing to work *with* children and families and building on strengths not focusing on problems. Involving children and young people in developing their lives, their services and their city is the final element of our changed approach. Giving children and young people real 'power and real choices is an end in itself but also important in ensuring that we listen to their views and make the care and support we provide more effective in keeping them safe. These new plans and approaches are encapsulated within and supported by the Council's wider strategy – to recast the way public services, individuals, communities and business work together to improve the quality of life for all in Leeds. This is set out as our ambition to be 'Child Friendly Leeds', the best city for children in the UK.

Leeds' new approach is mirrored in national policy, where significant changes in policy for social work and safeguarding have been informed by the Munro Review. The Review advocates reshaping

safeguarding and social work around the 'journey of the child' through their lives and through support and care. To achieve this Review advocates: better involvement of children; freeing social workers from bureaucracy; developing the skills and professional judgement of social workers and their lead role across children's services. The government has been active in promoting wider change in policy – for example in promoting the importance of *permanence* – settled, stable family placements such as adoption. Above all, the government has rightly made clear its higher expectations for safeguarding and support vulnerable children. OfSTED in turn has reacted to these policy changes and rising standards and adopted a new approach to inspection that changes the focus of inspection from process to outcomes, with a central role for the views of children and families.

The implementation of the 9 Point Plan will be monitored and scrutinised by The Child and Family Scrutiny Panel; The Children's Trust Board and Leeds Safeguarding Children Board; the external expert support and challenge board; Corporate Carers and the Children in Care Council.

The plan is in two parts:

Part One, pages 8 to 14, provides a review of progress structured around the 'journey of the child'.

Part Two sets out the detail of the plan

Reviewing Progress: A lot done, a lot more to do

This section set our assessment of progress and outcomes for the most vulnerable children and families in Leeds. In line with our new approach and national policy, this is structured around the 'journey of the child':

- *Early Help*: this section assesses how well the Council and its partners work together to identify problems at an early stage and provide effective support to risk. This is important as earlier intervention is better for children and families and reduces the cost of escalating problems.
- *Children in Need*: this section assesses the effectiveness of help for those children and families that need extra help from Children's Social Work and other specialist services.
- *Children in Need of Protection*: this section assesses how well the Council works with children, families and other services to protect those children and young people at risk of immediate harm.
- *Looked After Children*: this section consider the effectiveness of services for the over 1,400 children and young people who are Looked After by the Council in Leeds.
- *Moving on – Permanence and Leaving Care*: this section assesses how effective the Council is helping children move on in their lives, in joining new families or in leaving care and living independently.

In addition, there is a final summary that considers the Council's capacity to continue to improve services and support for vulnerable children and families.

Governance Arrangements

The delivery of the plan will be taken forward by the Operational Improvement Group chaired by the Deputy Director (Safeguarding, Specialist and Targeted Services).

The plan will be formally reviewed on a quarterly basis and a progress report will be provided to:-

- The Children's Trust Board.
- Children and Family's Scrutiny Board
- The Leeds Safeguarding Children Board
- Children's Services Leadership Team
- The lead member of Children's Services
- Corporate Leadership Team.




The first report will be provided in March 2013.

Early Help




Early help for vulnerable children and families in Leeds is improving. There is a strong foundation of services for young families in the city's excellent network Children's Centres, now further strengthened by integration of health services to form the 'Early Start' service. Local front line work around 'Clusters' of schools and services is becoming more joined up, established and effective, with example of emerging excellent practice. Importantly, joint working by services *with* children and families is improving through a shared commitment and training in restorative approaches. These developments have been supported by protecting budgets for early help and successfully attracting further funding such as the Troubled Families Initiative to support more investment in evidence based services such as Multi-Systemic Therapy and Family Nurse Partnership. Leeds now has a strong national and international reputation for leading best practice in these new services.

However, challenges remain. Most centrally, despite the progress noted above, too many children and young people in the city continue to need protection or care to safeguard their wellbeing. Levels of need, particularly in deprived areas of the city, continue to be very high and as such demands on social work and other specialist services remain high.




Strengths

	More vulnerable children and families are having their needs met through joined up local services. Referrals to social care are reducing, indicating that local services are becoming more confident and able to meet needs locally. Joined up support through the Common Assessment Framework is meeting the needs of the majority of children and families involved in the programme. Feedback from parents and carers supported through CAF is very positive.
	Joined up working with vulnerable children and families is improving. An academic review of joined up working through the 'Common Assessment Framework' in Leeds concluded that the commitment and approach of the city was excellent, with proportionally more families supported than in similar authorities. The Council has invested in improving leadership and governance for each cluster.
	High quality Children's Centres, now working together with NHS services, provide strong support for young children and their families. 82% of Leeds' Children's Centres are rated as good or outstanding, providing a great resource for helping young families. Children's Centres and health visiting services have merged to create the 'Early Start' service to create a more joined up support for families.

Where we have to Turn the Curve

	We need to further develop the capacity and consistency of locality working. As one might expect, the progress and effectiveness of clusters varies across the city. In addition, the level of need varies markedly between neighbourhoods around Leeds. Some areas need to develop more to be confident and able to support families with significant need without involving social work services.
	We need to further develop the quality and range of targeted preventative services. The Council and its partners have worked well to invest in those evidence based services that can make the most difference to children and families, such as Multi-Systemic Therapy and Family Nurse Partnership. Further work is needed to analyse need and commission services to make sure that the city has the right services in the right place to meet the needs of the most vulnerable families.
	We need to ensure that all children and families are supported through restorative approaches such as Family Group Conferencing. Many staff has been trained in restorative practice and we have successfully piloted teams providing Family Group Conferencing. This is great progress but it is not yet sufficient to meet the needs of all families across the city so we now need to progress with recruitment for more staff to lead this work.




What we will do next

	Continue to support the development of stronger local working in Clusters
	Invest in developing the range and quality of evidence based family support services for the most vulnerable families
	Expand the use of approaches that work with children and families such as Family Group Conferencing




Children in Need

Support for children in need of extra help from specialist services has been markedly improved through recent reforms to the way services work together. Changes to 'front door' arrangements – (i.e. how children and families first get to access extra help) have had a very positive impact since they were implemented earlier this year. Children and families now receive better, quicker assessment and help, supported by better communication, information sharing and referrals between services and professionals. Better local working means that schools, services and social work managers collaborate more closely in day to day work, and when further help is required the new Duty and Advice team is now the single, central point for all contacts and referrals.




Strengths

	Swift responses and assessments for children in need. Leeds has improved the speed of its response to need over recent years. In 2011/12, the city completed more initial and core assessments within timescales than similar authorities and was 10% above the national average for both measures.
	Better referral processes and better referrals. External academic researchers and local partners have provided positive feedback on our new arrangements for managing referrals to social work services. Decision-making is improved, supported by clearer referrals, with more referrals progressing to assessments. All referrals are reviewed by senior officers to quality assure decisions and referrals, and this process shows improving referrals and decision-making.
	Improved support for children and families affected by domestic violence. Domestic violence leads to many of the contacts and referrals for extra help from social care. OfSTED highlighted weaknesses in the way the Council and the Police managed this process in 2011. We have now reviewed arrangements, and put in place stronger joint working supported by a dedicated social worker now located within the police headquarters to provide advice and support on all cases.

Where we have to Turn the Curve

	We need to further improve support to reduce the number of children with higher levels of need. Better early help is starting to reduce the number of children in Leeds with such significant need that they need the support of social work services. However, the rate is still above that seen in similar areas or the national average. In addition, referral rates and re-referral rates remain high in some areas of the city, indicating more work is needed to improve capacity and joint working in those neighbourhoods.
	We need to improve the quality and timeliness of assessments. Quality assurance work has shown that the quality of social work assessments, whilst generally improving, continues to be too variable and some weaknesses remain. In addition, despite continued good performance that is better than similar areas, the timeliness of assessments has dipped this year following restructuring and therefore further work is needed.
	We need to involve children and families better when assessing their needs. Quality assurance work and management scrutiny shows that, despite improvement, more needs to be done to make sure all children and families are involved more in assessing need and planning care.

What we will do next




	Invest in a programme of improvement for assessment skills in social work staff
	Work with children and young people to develop new and better ways for involving them in support
	Undertake a targeted programme of support and challenge for areas of the city where rates of referrals and re-referrals are higher

Children in Need of Protection




The Council and its partners are working more effectively to swiftly protect the children and young people who are at immediate risk of harm. In contrast to delays in previous years, the Council and other services now investigate and respond more swiftly than in other cities. This improvement has been made possible by the Council's investment in a new Independent Safeguarding Unit (ISU) which has significantly more capacity and expertise to support child protection. The ISU has further improved support for the children most at risk by developing more effective restorative approaches to safeguarding. This increased capacity and stronger joint working have helped to safely and appropriately reduce the need for children to be subject to a Child Protection Plan.

Despite these improvements, the Council and its partners are determined to improve further. The number of children needing to be subject to a Child Protection Plan must continue to be reduced through better early help and more restorative solutions. Particular help is needed to support those children who need to be helped through a Child Protection Plan more than once – though the numbers are low, these families have complex needs. Lastly, whilst joint working is improved there is more to do to improve the way the 'core groups' of professionals operate to protect these children, and to continue to sharpen the front line practice of the social workers that coordinate this vital work.




Strengths

	Children in need of protection are supported more quickly. The Council and its partners are now very effective at responding quickly when a child is in need of protection. Investigations are initiated swiftly and more Child Protection Conferences take place within timescales than in similar areas or the national average.
	Safeguarding capacity has been strengthened. The Council has invested in creating a much stronger, independent service to support safeguarding in Leeds. The Independent Safeguarding Unit has far greater capacity to support multi-agency work with children at risk.
	Restorative practice is making a difference for children needing protection. The Council has successfully implemented the 'Strengthening Families' approach to helping children in need of protection. This is the largest implementation of this approach in the country and it has worked well to engage children and families more effectively at resolving problems and reducing risk.

Where we have to Turn the Curve

	We need to further reduce the number of children and young people that need the extra safeguarding of a Child Protection Plan. Better support for children has allowed the number of children on a Child Protection Plan to be reduced safely from its peak of nearly 1100 in Autumn 2011 to just over 900 now. However, the proportion of children in Leeds that need such protection is still significantly higher than the rate in similar areas or the national average.
	We need to further improve the quality of joint working to support children with a child protection plan. Our quality assurance has shown that despite good progress across child protection work there are still some weaknesses in the working of 'Core Groups' that bring services together to support children with a Child Protection Plan. Further work is needed to ensure all partners provide timely support and that children and families are better involved in resolving problems.
	We need to reduce the number of children that need the support of a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time. Although the proportion of children that become subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time is in line with the national average, this rate has risen recently and so is a cause for concern.

What we will do next




	Extend the use of restorative working to find ways to provide effective protection for children within their wider family and community.
	Implement an action plan to improve the consistency of the work of the 'Core Groups' that implement Child Protection Plans
	Undertake a detailed review into all cases where children have a second or subsequent Child Protection Plan.

Looked After Children




Leeds has one of the highest populations of Looked After Children in the country, with over 1,400 children and young people in care. Support for these vulnerable children is improving strongly, due to investment in new, dedicated teams to support and manage their care. Investment in these new teams and in recruiting and training extra social work staff has reduced case loads and improved care. In turn, better care from social work teams has improved outcomes for Looked After Children – most crucially attendance and attainment are improving sharply. In addition to improving the capacity of front line social work, further services have been developed. The creation of the new Independent Safeguarding Unit (ISU) has also improved care by ensuring that children and their carers are engaged more regularly in reviewing progress and agreeing new plans. The development of the new Placements Service has improved the quality of fostering and residential placements for Looked After Children.

Despite these important improvements, there is more to do. Now that we have invested in more capacity to support Looked After Children we need to continue to develop the quality of support from these new teams and staff. Central to this will be developing social work practice. This has improved but more needs to be done, particularly around more regular opportunities to involve Looked After Children in better care planning. In addition the residential homes in Leeds need significant reform and investment to become more suitable for the needs of children and to improve the quality of care they provide.




Strengths

	The attendance and achievement of Looked After Children in school is improving. In primary schools Looked After Children's attendance has improved and is better than the city average, and in secondary schools great improvement has nearly closed the gap with the city average. Persistent absence has been significantly reduced. Alongside these successes, and in part due to improving attendance, interim data show that attainment has improved markedly at all key stages. These data suggest results are above the national average at both Key Stage 2 and GCSE, and significantly narrow the gap with the city average.
	Looked After Children are supported by stronger services and better social work. Social work services have been restructured and dedicated teams have been set up to support Looked After Children, with separate specialist teams for those aged 0-12 and those aged 13+. These teams are based across the areas of the city and have strengthening links with wider services through Clusters. The Council has invested in additional staffing, supported by new training programmes and Advanced Practitioners to provide extra mentoring to newly qualified staff. As a result of this investment caseloads have been reduced markedly from well over 25 to nearly 20.
	The care of Looked After Children is more regularly and effectively independently reviewed. The creation of the Independent Safeguarding Unit, and investment in additional Independent Reviewing Officers, has strengthened the quality assurance of care and support for Looked After Children. Crucially, this has allowed more regular and timely reviews, and more involvement of the children and young people in making choices and shaping their own care.

Where we have to Turn the Curve

	We need to improve the quality of residential provision for children and young people in care. Local and OfSTED inspection of residential provision shows improvement but that the majority of care is still not what we would expect.
	We need to further improve the quality of social work practice. Quality assurance shows that although practice is generally sound, there are some weaknesses in care planning and variability in the regular involvement of Looked After Children.
	We need to further improve the quality of planning for education and health. Audit shows that a particular weakness of care planning is in the dedicated plans for promoting education and health.

What we will do next




	Implement a programme of improvements for care planning.
	Invest in improvements to residential home for Looked After Children
	Invest in developing more fostering and adoption placements in Leeds

Moving on – Permanence and Leaving Care




Leeds is successful in achieving 'permanence' in a settled family home for Looked After Children. The proportion of children and young people placed for adoption or other permanent arrangements is well above the national average. The Council's support for adoption is good and improving, with further investment and work to promote adoption and permanent placements underway. Support for Care Leavers has been strengthened in the restructuring of social work, with dedicated teams in each area of the city providing specialist support and care for young people.

Despite this progress support for Care Leavers needs further improvement if it is to match the success of our adoption service. Planning to support Care Leavers is variable and sometimes limited. Too many Care Leavers are not engaged in learning and work and relatively few progress to Higher Education.




Strengths










	Children and young people in Leeds are more likely to be successfully placed for adoption or other permanent placements. The proportion of Looked After Children placed for adoption or other forms of permanence is over a quarter higher than the national average.
	Children and families are well supported through adoption. In 2011 OfSTED rated the Leeds Adoption Service as 'good' with significant strengths and strong management. Work since that inspection has further improved the services.
	The Council has reformed and invested in services for Care Leavers. As part of the restructuring of social work services, specialist teams were set up to support young people aged 13+. These provide support for Care Leavers and have stronger links to wider local services through Clusters.

Where we have to Turn the Curve

	We need to ensure that all young people leaving care are in education or work. The latest data show that over a third of care leavers were not in education or work by the age of 19, well above the average for their peers.
	We need to improve the quality of planning and support for young people leaving care. Quality assurance and case file audits indicate pathway plans are variable and some require improvement to ensure they provide timely, effective support for promoting the wellbeing and independence of care leavers.
	We need to support more young people leaving care to move on to Higher Education. The proportion of care leavers from Leeds progressing to University is much lower than the national average, with only 3% going into higher education compared to a national average of 7%

What we will do next

	We will implement a programme of improved support for Care Leavers to ensure all are in learning or work.
	We will review, update and improve all Pathway Plans that support Care Leavers
	We will develop partnership with Higher Education Institutions in order to increase the number of care leavers entering higher education.

Capacity to Improve	
<p>Leeds has made good progress in recent years and is strongly placed to not just continue to improve but to raise the pace of change. A clear strategy is in place, supported by strong political and professional leadership and effective partnership working. This shared direction, commitment and leadership has enabled significant investment and driven forward change. Central to this improvement has been the opening up of the city to national and international expertise that has supported and informed the development of new restorative approaches, engaged the wider city and shaped the restructuring of new services.</p> <p>This first stage of improvement is now complete, and new services and arrangements such as the new 'front door' are now in place. These changes are starting to make an impact and to improve the lives of vulnerable children, young people and families across the city. The challenge now is to build on these strong foundations and in particular to develop the confidence, quality and leading role of social work in our new restorative approach to supporting children and young people in the city.</p>	
Strengths	
	<p>The ambition of the service, Council and wider city. Leeds' ambition is clear - to be 'The Best City in the UK', and also to be the best city for children and young people. The Council has led national developments in new approaches to entrepreneurial civic leadership, and the impact of this approach is beginning to be seen in initiatives such as Child Friendly Leeds, that is engaging local business and communities in support for the children's agenda. This new approach has been well supported by the effective and open use of external support and expertise, such as international experts in restorative practice, social care and performance management.</p>
	<p>Leadership and partnership in children's services. Political and professional leadership of children's services in Leeds is effective, as noted by OfSTED in 2011. This has been further strengthened over the past year through the recruitment of a new management team within the Council, and improvements within the Safeguarding Board and Children's Trust.</p>
	<p>Investment and reform in improved services. The ambition and leadership of the city and service has not just protected vital budgets for children's services amidst national and local budget cuts but has secured investment from local partners and central government in key areas such as intensive family support. Services have been successfully and radically restructured and integrated in the largest ever reorganisation within the Council.</p>
Where we have to Turn the Curve	
	<p>We need to reform and develop the workforce and leadership of social work services. The social work service has seen significant investment, recruitment and development over recent years but there is more to do. Across the service all need more training on key issues as detailed in the sections above, and also in deepening their knowledge of restorative working. In addition there are two key areas that require additional tailored support: firstly leaders and manager to enable them to lead and manage change more effectively; and secondly extra help for the high numbers of newly qualified staff.</p>
	<p>We need to further develop the use of external support and expertise. Leeds has become much more open to the advice and help of external experts to support and inform change, and more successful in engaging the wider community and business in our agenda. This needs further development, increasing challenge and change and attracting new support and funding.</p>
	<p>We need to reshape our performance and quality assurance around the views and journey of children and young people. National and local performance and quality assurance systems have been overly focused on process and procedures, as noted in the Munro Review. We have made progress in adapting our systems to focus more on quality and the views and experiences of children and young people. In particular we need to strengthen the involvement of children in assessing and improving services.</p>
What we will do next	
	<p>Develop and implement a renewed Workforce Reform and Leadership Development strategy</p>
	<p>Engage outstanding Local Authorities and wider expertise to support and challenge our work</p>
	<p>Develop and implement a revised approach to Performance and Quality Assurance</p>

Resourcing the plan

Implementing this plan will require robust prioritisation of the Council's resources. Public sector funding is facing unprecedented pressures due to the recession and central government's budget strategy. Despite these pressures, the Council has been successful over recent years at targeting investment for social work and wider services for vulnerable children. This funding has been crucial in supporting improvement in services. However, over the period of this plan we aim to increase the pace of change whilst at the same time managing even more significant reductions in Local Authority funding.

In this context, the Council is preparing a medium term 'Invest to Save' budget strategy. This strategy seeks to build on recent progress that has seen better services and better management helping to 'turn the curve' and start to reduce the number of children needing to be in care and the number in high cost external placements. Over the next three years the Council intends to continue to prioritise investment in early help and social work services in the short term in order to reduce longer term costs.

This budget strategy should provide the time, funding and opportunity to further strengthen services that work with the most vulnerable children and families in Leeds. Better, earlier help should help reduce risks escalating and problems becoming embedded. More restorative approaches should help services work better with families and communities to work together in new ways to solve problems and protect children. All local and national research shows that early help and prevention are more cost effective than waiting until problems have become worse and entrenched in the lives of children and families.

The detailed proposals are still subject to ongoing consideration and consultation but in broad terms are as follows:

- *Prioritise investment in early help and prevention:* the Council intends to borrow £4M from existing balances to protect funding for preventative services, and provide an additional £2.5M (including £1.7M from the national Troubled Families initiative) investment in restorative early help services such as Family Group Conferencing, Multi-Systemic Therapy and locality services.
- *Protect Social Work budgets:* the budget proposals aim to seek to protect core social work budgets as much as possible. The Council aims to do this by protecting children's services budgets where possible, and within children's services making the majority of savings in services other than social work. Significant savings are planned in youth and education services and additional savings through making back office functions more efficient.
- *Reduce the need for expensive external placements:* the budget strategy is supported by better management and commissioning of residential and fostering placements. These should deliver £7M of savings by March 2014, with additional savings of up to £1M through better regional commissioning of placements.

1 - Strengthening the voice and influence of children and young people:

- Children and young people receiving services have a positive relationship with a named and consistent worker
- Children and young people are able to contact their worker or another named person easily and whenever they need to
- Children and young people's views influence the plan for their care and have choices in the services they receive
- Children and young people have opportunities to inform the development of services
- Children and young people have the opportunity to influence the recruitment of staff and the training they receive
- All children and young people have access to a trusted adult who will work as their independent advocate

	Priority	Lead	Action	Milestones
1.1	Ensure children are observed if under 5 and spoken to if over 5 prior to their LAC review and that children over 10 years are spoken to before their ICPC or Review Conference and that younger children's views and wishes are sought appropriately	Carol Carson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly report LAC • Pilot Child Protection project – preparation stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Live Jan 2012
1.2	Ensure all children have a consistent social worker	Sal Tariq	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See recruitment and retention section below • Renew transfer protocol from cluster team to LAC team • Implement new arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan 2013
1.3	Strengthen arrangements for involving children and young people in developing services	Vicki Marsden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'have a voice council' will have regular discussion and debate with head of social care at the have a voice council meeting. This includes 'have a voice council' age 12+ and 'care leavers have a voice council' age 16+. • A system for all LAC will be developed to ensure all voices of LAC are represented at the 'have a voice council'. • Information will be shared with the Leeds Youth Council and have a voice council. Members will work together to increase involvement in the shaping of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of social care receives and acts upon issues with young people every quarter. • All LAC will be aware of the have a voice council by DEC 2012. • LYC and 'have a voice council' members will link together by Dec 2012. • Social care will be aware and improve services in highlighted areas. Head of social care will feedback to CYP • Leeds Promise Booklet promoted and CYP aware of the promise

			<p>services. Members can sit on both councils.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service delivery manager of the children's rights service to meet monthly with head of social care to discuss ongoing themes and issues for LAC. • Launch of the Leeds Promise for LAC under 10. • Children's Rights Service to receive list of all LAC in Leeds every month to continue communication and ensure up to date. • Case reviews will include the voice and influence of the child in care plans and be evidenced clearly. • An annual survey to all LAC will take place to capture their experience of being a Leeds LAC. • An advocacy service for children at child protection conferences will be piloted 2012/13 	<p>Dec 2012. The promise has been sent to LCC graphics to be redesigned under CFL. Expected date of completion 30 Nov.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All LAC will have information about the children's rights service. • The voice of cyp in care will be evidenced in care plans Oct 2012. • By January 2013 feedback from the annual survey will be collated and reported. • January 2013 a pilot project will start. April 2013 children and young people will report back about the experience and the difference it has made
1.4	Improve complaints and customer services processes	Josie Warwick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New protocol being put together which will ensure all officers involved in complaints will be aware of their responsibilities and support available. There will be a clearer tracking system and an agreed escalation route if cases are not resolved within timescales and to correct standards. • The customer access program will be used to identify where we can change processes to meet the changing needs of our customers and work more effectively with partners. • A number of customer service modules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New protocol in place by November 2012/ • Phase two being implemented throughout 2013 • 01.10.12

			produced and published to all staff in customer service week.	
1.5	Review and strengthen current advocacy arrangements	Carol Carson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All LAC will meet with the children's rights service or receive a pack when first entering care. They will receive information about the service and how the advocacy service can support them and involvement in the 'have a voice council' at their choice Commissioning for CP conferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly report to go to corporate Carers – numbers not themes
1.6	Review and strengthen the role of Corporate Carers	Wendy Winterburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review terms of reference and seek approval from Corporate Carers Implement renewed Corporate Carers structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Carers sign off revised terms by December New structure in place by Jan 2013. New approach reviewed by Jul 13
1.7	Reform MALAP to improve multi-agency joint working	Wendy Winterburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review arrangements Introduce new arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> November 2012 January 2013
1.8	Develop new ways for children and young people to get information and keep in touch using online and mobile technologies	Girish Solanki & Jon Nevill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work will begin with Core logic regarding accessing a 'Child's Portal' through their Framework solution. This has potential to allow CYP (LAC) to access part of their record and contact their SW. This of course has potential for use to CYP who are involved with the CIN & CP process. Direct work and consultation has begun with a group of CYP who are LAC, at the appropriate time this will continue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 'Child's Portal' will become part of the 'second phase' of development with Core logic. However scope will be developed from April 2013 onwards. Ongoing throughout the implementation and system build of Framework
1.9	Ensure the new ESCR system captures the voice of the child and enables practitioners to follow their journey	Jon Nevill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First and foremost the specific assessment process (Child & Family Assessment) and <u>all</u> plans that will be built into the system starts with the principal of being able to capture the child's voice. This will be in Framework's 'Best Practice Configuration' and has been 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> System build and social work practice training, May 2013 onwards. Go live date anticipated to be September 2013.

			<p>completed with a number of other LA's and in conjunction with the Munro Review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First and foremost this is a social work practice issue and not an IT systems solution. Significant practice training will be linked into the formal systems training as it is planned and rolled across the CSWS. • Framework 'Best Practice configuration' has been thoroughly evaluated by a significant number of social work practitioners and their managers along with colleagues from the wider Children's Services. All staff has been unanimous in the view that Framework offers substantial and significant improvements and enables practitioners the tools to capture the child's journey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2013-September 2013 • November 2012-September 2013; with various in built 'check points' to the system build.
1.10	Hold a LAC Celebration Event	Vicki Marsden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be planned with the In Care Council • VIC team working in partnership with children's rights service and have a voice council to plan the event. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2013

2 - Improve provision for looked after children and young people:

- At the point where a child becomes looked after or where they need to change their current placement, there is a choice of placement and they are matched with one that is appropriate to their needs
- Looked after children and young people have a placement that is as close to their family and community as possible and appropriate
- All looked after children and young people are placed in high quality placements. All residential provision should be rated by OfSTED as good or better
- All Leeds residential provision is underpinned by restorative philosophy and practices, are small, homely and have a consistent and well trained staff group with whom children and young people can form positive relationships

	Priority	Lead	Action	Milestones
2.1	Increase the number of Leeds foster carers	Sarah Johal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing the fees and allowances to carers. • Ongoing campaigns and marketing booked through to may 2013. Specific recruitment campaigns in the autumn for caring for babies and specific recruitment for permanency • Increase and widen use of social media • Extend telephone enquiry line into the evening. • Explore alternative ways to ensure a 24/7 response to enquiries. • Develop the business links to develop the benefits to carers/ rewards etc. New post created 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 2 increase in January; full implementation of amended allowance and fee structure by April 2013 • Review impact of recruitment campaigns and retarget appropriately • November 2012 • December 2012 • January 2013 • November 2013
2.2	Complete a review of existing fee and allowances structure for foster carers	Sarah Johal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing payments • Implement new payment scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review complete by March 2013 • New payments in place by April 2013
2.3	Complete a review of staffing arrangements within the fostering and adoption service including the support available for private fostering and special guardianship	Sarah Johal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete review • Implement new structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review complete by March 2013 • New structure in place by April 2013
2.4	Develop a corporate and city offer to Leeds foster carers	Sue Rumbold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Friendly City – foster friendly employers, free transport, max card? • Holding Turning the Curve event for 	

			CSLT.	
2.5	Develop a new approach to promoting kinship care	Sarah Johal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake an action research project with academic partners and outstanding local authorities to develop options for promoting care • Pilot new approach • Evaluate and roll-out approach if successful • CSDMs meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review kinship care arrangements and decision making framework and mechanisms to cut down time spent and repetition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research project complete, proposals agreed by April 2013? • Pilot completed by Mar 13 • New model adopted citywide from April 2014
2.6	Complete a review of current residential provision and plan a program of improvement in order to deliver the vision for residential children's homes.	Sal Tariq	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review statement of Purpose – identify those homes that need this • Clarity of future role of residential • Develop model for buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 2012 • January 2012 for homes for disabled children
2.7	All residential staff to have completed training in Restorative Practices and Therapeutic Crisis Intervention	Andy Lloyd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all residential staff has received high quality training around restorative practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 95% trained by April 2013 (to date 165 staff Level 1 trained – 33 staff Level 2 trained – 59 staff booked for Spring).
2.8	Close the gap between the learning outcomes of LAC/Care Leavers and their peers	Alun Rees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the impact of interventions used by the 'Virtual School for LAC' on learning outcomes • Develop a sustainable strategy for the QA of Personal Education Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Annual LAC Outcomes report for Corporate Carers in December 2012 • Quality assure all Personal Education Plans by mid-December 2012 • Review and re-issue guidance to social care staff by end-Oct 2012 • Revised monitoring and QA in place from January 2013
2.9	Close the gap between the EET outcomes of Care Leavers and their peers	Alun Rees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure appropriate monitoring of EET status of care leavers • Develop a sustainable strategy for the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clear 'service offer' from specialist LAC Connexions PA's to 13+ LAC Teams and support

			QA of Pathway Plans	<p>Team Managers with operational leadership of PA's during interim period prior to letting of new IAG contract by November 2012</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular reporting of 'LAC-EET' status from January 2013 • Review and re-issue Pathway Planning guidance to social care staff as part of the review of Nov 2012 • Audit Pathway Plan compliance for all care leavers by mid-December 2012
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3 - Strengthen the role of families:

- We will be clear with families about any concerns we may have and what needs to be done to resolve these.
- All services provided are underpinned by a restorative approach that works with families to achieve safe and appropriate solutions for the issues that they face.
- Wherever a statutory intervention is being considered, such as a child protection conference or a child becoming looked after, the family will be offered a family group conference.
- The views of families are used to inform future service planning and commissioning

	Priority	Lead	Action	Milestones
3.1	All social workers have completed training in Restorative Practice	Andy Lloyd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 182 Social Workers already trained to level 1. 150 on the waiting list. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer sufficient Level 1 training through Spring 2013 to ensure a target of 90% of Social workers training by April 2013
3.2	Increase the family group conferencing offer across the city to enable all families where there are concerns that a child under 5 may become looked after to be offered a family group conference	Jim Hopkinson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop revised procedures for identification of families and request for service pathways • Implement family group conferencing expansion project plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan 2013 • March 2013
3.3	Develop mechanisms to gather the views of families on services to inform future service planning and commissioning	Vicki Marsden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A standard questionnaire will be developed for families who have/are receiving social care services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 6 month/annual review will collate all views of service users (families) reporting to contracting and commissioning to shape services.
3.4	Ensure the new ESCR system captures the voice of the child and family and enables practitioners to follow their journey	John Nevill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above and below. • Specific types of interventions to be utilised within the assessment process and built in to the 'Best Practice Configuration' of Framework, for example the strengthening families model. Rolled out through the engagement of the system build by social work staff and the training for all staff required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 2012 to go live date
3.5	All plans are informed by and take account of the views of the child and family	Sal Tariq	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate into the appraisal system 	

4 - Developing social work practice:

- All staff in Safeguarding, Specialist and Targeted Services feels valued, supported and engaged in improving the service and outcomes for children and young people.
- The service has clear leadership that provides them with direction and a sense of purpose.
- All staff receive the high quality training, supervision and support they need:
 - To develop their skills and expertise.
 - To deliver a high quality service.
 - To have ownership of the service.
 - To take pride in their work.
- All staff experience Leeds Children's Services as a good place to work.
- The Leeds Practice Guarantee offers a wide range of support and a clear career development pathway that enables all staff to progress their career and reach their potential with Leeds.
- Leeds becomes a first choice employer for newly qualified and experienced staff

	Priority	Lead	Action	Milestones
4.1	Ensure all staff receive regular, high quality supervision and appraisal	Sal Tariq	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training and support for managers and staff • Embed supervision audit programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First audit cycle completed by Nov 2012, reports to CSLT and Lead Member • All staff trained in appraisals by Dec 2012 • 100% staff have appraisals and reviews
4.2	Create a leadership development programme specifically for Social care leaders in the first instance with a future plan of widening out to partners.	Andy Lloyd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue team manager modular programme • Identify cohort of aspiring leaders • Develop middle manager programme and accelerated leadership development programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a coherent Team manager programme by December 2012 with roll out through 2013.
4.3	Continue to improve support for NQSWs	Andy Lloyd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and Implement in 2012/13 Assessed and Supported Year of Employment (ASYE) programme of induction, support and learning • Deliver ongoing support for the NQSWs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review with NQSW ASYE, July 2013 • Implement any changes

			<p>and their Team Managers, particularly around assessment and PCF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and support Advanced Practitioners to enable them to effectively mentor NQSWs 	
4.4	Pilot the role of Principal Social Worker	Steve Walker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research proposal developed • Research commissioned • Report on outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid November 2012 • 1st December 2012 • 30th June 2012
4.5	Develop professional peer networks to provide advice and support to develop practice	Andy Lloyd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot skill share events to share best practice • Develop 'expert groups' of social workers with specialist experience and knowledge to advise their peers • Develop best practice exemplars and promotional materials from within the service • Create a peer mentoring and coaching scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 skill share events take place by July 2013. Feedback positive • 2 expert groups in place by July 2013 • Materials on case writing and recording developed by April 2013 • Coaching scheme in developed by April 2013 with initial pilot scheme running by that date.
4.6	Extend partnerships with leading academics and Universities to promote better, evidence informed, practice	Sal Tariq	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot expert seminars with local HEIs • Create online resources directory of research, e-learning etc. • Define programme of work on developing front line practice with York University SPRU • Manage delivery of SPRU development programme • Complete work with Prof Thorpe on 'Front Door' arrangements • Complete with Dr Mark Peel on CAF and early help arrangements • Agree programme of work with Research in Practice • Agree programme of work with Making Research Count • Promote making research count and Research in practice development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 expert seminars completed by July 2013. All social workers attend at least 2 • Online resources directory created in SharePoint by Jan 2013 • SPRU programme complete by June 2013. Audits and supervision demonstrate improved practice. • Complete work with Prof Thorpe 2013. • Complete work with Dr Peel's March 2013. • All social workers signed up to making research count and research in practice. 50% to have taken up learning

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> opportunities to all staff Explore potential for ongoing formalised partnership between local authorities and universities on city-region or Yorkshire wide basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> opportunities HE Partnership proposals finalised by July 2013
4.7	Develop a clear career pathway that sets out the expectations of social work staff at all levels but also their entitlements in relation to their professional support and development in the Practice guarantee	Paul Harris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with stakeholders to develop Leeds Practice Guarantee, including: pay; conditions; support; training; action research; sabbaticals Consult and negotiate with staff, managers and trade unions on career pathway proposals Support programme for managers to identify stress and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation and Implementation of new career structure for Social Workers by April 2013 Staff absence due to sickness reduced to nearer corporate target of 8.5 days. Pathways for team managers and unqualified staff in place March 2014.
4.8	Develop a recruitment and retention programme for social work staff	Paul Harris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with regional social work employers to promote recruitment Developing relationship with HEI to broaden recruitment pools for newly qualified social workers Improve pastoral support programme for social workers, including: stress management; emotional resilience joint workshops with Occupational Health; promote use of Care First counselling service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spend on agency staff reduced Ratio of applicants to jobs improved Staff turnover reduced Staff absence reduced
4.9	Establish clear mechanisms for staff at all levels to have contact with senior management and executive member	Wendy Winterburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree regular cycle of senior leaders and elected members meeting front line staff at team meetings and in office visits Set up processes for online communication and sharing of views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process agreed October 2012. All staff and sites visited at by December 2012 SharePoint site developed by March 2013 Engagement survey results improving by April 2013

4.10	Hold an annual social work conference to celebrate and acknowledge the role of social work in supporting vulnerable children in Leeds	Steve Walker	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop proposals for conference timing, sponsorship, speakers etc• Promote and prepare for event	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proposals agreed by Dec 2012• Event completed by March 2013.• Feedback positive from attendees
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5 - Improving communication and engagement across social care

- There are robust systems in place that ensure that staff is aware of service developments and plans that enable them to contribute to these.
- There are systems in place that keep staff up to date with developments in policy and practice at local, regional and national levels.
- All staff has access to up to date practice guidance, research and local good practice examples.
- There is regular engagement between leaders and front line staff

	Priority	Lead	Action	Milestones
5.1	Establish a planning framework and timetable for developing the service plan for Safeguarding Specialist and Targeted services the enables and supports the involvement of staff in the process.	Claire Walker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new framework in partnership with stakeholders at all levels across service • Engage service in planning for 2013 onwards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framework agreed by March 2013. • Wide range of staff engaged in service planning for 2013/14 • Feedback from staff at all levels positive
5.2	Put in place clear communication framework that keeps staff up to date with service developments and enable them to contribute to the process.	Catherine Wright	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop proposed framework for strong two-way internal communications, in line with best practice • Consult with key groups, such as social care service delivery managers group to develop and deliver final framework • Link into regional children's social work matters campaign, in particular, the recent insight work 	
5.3	Maintain our contract with research in Practice and develop relationships with the Centre for Child and Family Research at Loughborough University and the Social Policy Research Unit at York.	Research in practice - Andy Lloyd SPRU (York) – Sal Tariq CCFR (Loughbrough) – Steve Walker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See section on professional and practice development above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and deliver a robust and comprehensive Workforce Development offer.

6 - Improving ICT Systems and the estate for social work and families:

- Social workers are happy with the ICT systems and satisfied that they support their work effectively
- Ensure that back office systems are fit for purpose and service delivery
- All ICT systems change is well-managed and led by professional needs
- Social workers' case recording system is fast, simple and easy to use, reflecting the needs of practitioners.
- Social workers have the appropriate ICT hardware to support them in carrying out their roles
- ICT support for the case recording system and front line staff is swift, responsive and customer focused
- There is a well established training programme
- All social work staff is located in offices which provide them with a good working environment.
- Social work teams are co-located with the services and agencies that support them to carry out their role wherever possible
- Social work teams are located in offices and with other services that are most helpful to local families
- The social work estate has high quality ICT and secure file storage

	Priority	Lead	Action	Milestones
6.1	Develop a clear vision for co-location of social work teams and a plan to implement this	Steve Walker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with wide range of stakeholders: staff, partners; clients on options for change • Complete report setting out vision for change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation complete by June 2013 • Report complete by September 2013
6.2	Review all existing accommodation in line with new vision	Steve Walker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise workshops between Social Work Leadership Team, Estates teams and relevant partners to review accommodation and options for change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops complete by January 2013.
6.3	Re-locate social work teams from Roundhay Rd or re-furbish the premises.	Viv Buckland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative accommodation found 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff moved to new premises by 31.03.13.
6.4	Implement programme to relocate/refurbish all area offices	Viv Buckland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steve Walker (or representative) to provide outline accommodation requests for follow up. • Requests will be part of the CS AMP and facilitated through LCC AMB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2013
6.5	Ensure all offices have the appropriate ICT and equipment that staff need to do their job	Girish Solanki	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all relevant staff have secure GCSx email • Develop options for Electronic Document and Record Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GCSx emails in place for all staff by Oct 2012 • EDRMS system in place by implementation of new core logic

			<p>System to better manage files and automate management of paper records, post etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue Web and Intranet Replacement Programme to provide social care staff with opportunities for sharing information; networking and better online access to council information 	<p>IT system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SharePoint resources available to social care staff by March 2014. Staff satisfied with ICT provided
6.6	Ensure that the replacement to ESCR is developed with input from staff at all levels	John Nevill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant engagement with a large number of staff at all levels has already begun throughout the evaluation process. This will continue throughout the implementation and system build with all areas within CSWS and the wider Children's Services Directorate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> December 2011-May 2012 approximately 60 frontline staff and their managers have been actively involved in the procurement process. November 2012-September 2013 continued involvement and engagement with all the above staff to build and support the training (both system and practice training).
6.7	Ensure that the replacement ESCR meets the needs of practitioners	John Nevill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practitioners are actively involved in the system build of Framework to be in use within Leeds CSWS and the wider Children's Services. At each point of the social work process (i.e. contact & Referral) specific Business Leads, supports and the Core Team of social work staff will be involved in the system build on behalf of the colleagues. Significantly the CSCS Project along with the social work practitioners has actively been involved in choosing the Core logic as the Leeds new ESCR. We already know and are confident that Core logic's system (Framework) is significantly more user friendly and client 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This work will begin in full from November 2012 and will be completed by May 2013.

			sensitive that the current Leeds ESCR.	
6.8	Implement the new system by September 2013, and formally review impact in April 2013	John Nevill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement new ESCR, including: training; development; infrastructure etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New ESCR live from September 2013 Staff satisfied with new system Staff time required by new system lower than existing system Case file audits demonstrate improved case recording
6.9	Review social worker's requirements in relation to mobile working	Girish Solanki	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot use of tablet computers with social work staff Work with new ESCR supplier to ensure new database accessible securely from mobile devices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tablet pilot in Osmondthorpe and MST teams complete by June 2013. Core Logic ESCR available on mobile devices by March 2014.
6.10	Re-locate the ISU staff to three area bases with rooms to facilitate more effective locality working and the strengthening families framework and Provide venues for LAC reviews and Child Protection Conferences which facilitate the Strengthening Families approach and the participation of children and families	Carol Carson Steve Walker and Viv Buckland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop financial model with Estates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> June 2013

7 - Developing peer support and challenge:

- Service development in Leeds is influenced by external expertise, best practice and robust evidence
- Leeds has well established links to regional, national and international expertise and best practice
- Leeds contributes to the improvement of services in other authorities
- Leeds is an active participant in research, pilots new approaches and has a reputation as a learning organisation

	Priority	Lead	Action	Milestones
7.1	Have a peer review of looked after children's services led by North Lincolnshire	Sue Rumbold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up meeting arranged to agree timetable and scope of review and challenge • 13th Dec - Mick Gibbs (N Lincs) with Steve Walker and Sal Tariq 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 2012 set up. • March 2013, review completed.
7.2	Peer challenge of our 'front door' arrangements by the Wirral	Steve Walker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framework for review agreed with Wirral • Peer challenge takes place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9th November 2012 • June 2013
7.3	Use input from the Family Rights Group to inform the development of our family group conference offer	Jim Hopkinson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop revised request for service and identification procedures. • Work with family rights group to develop best practice with expanded family group conferencing service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2013 • Jan 2013
7.4	Work with Paul Nixon and Mike Dooley to develop the Leeds approach to restorative practice	Andy Lloyd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with Paul Nixon and Mike Dooley when they visit Leeds in November 2012 • Work with colleagues to develop the Leeds way to RP • Develop and deliver a training programme for all CS staff and partners to understand and encourage them to embrace the principles of RP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nov 12 • By March 13 • From April 13 and ongoing
7.5	Develop a joint research post with the Centre for Child and Family Research at Loughborough University	Steve Walker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary discussions • Job descriptions developed and formal arrangement with Loughborough in place • Post in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30th October 2012 • End January 2013 • 1st March 2013

8 - Strengthening quality assurance and performance management:

- Performance and quality assurance is owned by everyone in children's services.
- We have robust systems in place that enable us to assess the cost effectiveness and impact of our services.
- We have a robust performance quality assurance framework that includes qualitative and quantitative measures.
- Performance management information will be used to inform strategic planning, service development, resource allocation, training and commissioning.
- Performance information including information on budgets will be available in 'real time' to team managers and practitioners.
- The views of service users are integral to service evaluation and development.

	Priority	Lead	Action	Milestones
8.1	Review social care (operational) performance management arrangements; in response to service changes and national direction.	Peter Storrie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review key performance indicators and where presented to better represent journey of the child, with data development where needed • Social Care performance framework renewed, articulated and operating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised monthly report January 2013 • Revise framework drafted by February 2013 with details on standard performance products / processes their ownership, intended use and reporting schedule. • Revised framework operational from April 2013
8.2	Review social care case file and supervision audit arrangements; in response to service changes and national direction	Sal Tariq Peter Storrie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review file audit process and outputs, agreeing programme for 2013 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised service report and new leadership summary report following Q3 audits - February 2013 • Agree audit programme, file selection, audit responsibilities for 2013-14 – February 2013
8.3	Review and strengthen the voices of the child in quality assurance	Vicky Marsden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collate existing efforts and identify any gaps • Agree 2013 arrangements for user led engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map existing engagement and learning from engagement – January 2013 • Produce options for 2013/14 – March 2013
8.4	Strengthen evaluation around the child's journey and service quality. To include evidence of the child's voice and to ensure effective learning from all audits and intelligence. Inclusive of both social care	Peter Storrie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish directorate level quarterly evaluation process and summary report around the journey of the child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop held led by external support - October • Pilot activity quarters 3 and 4 • Fully operational from 2013/14 quarter one

	processes and early intervention and family support work.			
8.5	System reporting needs are met in terms of robust social care performance data that meets operational management, statutory returns and intelligence requirements. Both in terms of current practice and with the implementation of the new case management/IM system.	Clare Walker David Blake Peter Storrie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System reporting provides practitioners and managers with required operational performance information from day 1 • Statutory return processes reviewed and systemised within the directorate • System recording, DQ and reporting processes support all statutory returns • Systems facilitates extraction of data for intelligence and analysis purposes both through set reports and bespoke reporting capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task and finish groups around system reporting / statutory returns established. – November <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for ongoing statutory returns and 2012-13 returns in place – December • Agreement on management of 2012-13 returns and 2013-14 recording for statutory returns in the context of new system - February <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved process for adoption returns in place for Q3 Analysis of reporting requirements for new system undertaken with gaps identified – January 2013 • Core Logic and Leeds City Council business intelligence reporting solutions in place for new system - September 2013 • Development of dashboards and reports for all live operational information requirements to be available from day 1 of new system. – September 2013 • Development of reports and query tools for performance accountability and analysis; ongoing work plan agreed for post September developments - September 2013
8.6	Work with and support the LSCB to provide and share multi-agency audits, performance reports and QA work.	Bryan Gocke & Sal Tariq		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular LSCB audits undertaken to inform practice. November 2012 onwards.

8.7	Ensure performance reporting to members contains a focus on child protection and safeguarding	Peter Storrie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and revise council business plan actions and measures Deliver spring area committee cycle strengthening the local context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CBP updated – April 2013 Agree how local context will be embedded in area committee reports – December Deliver spring reports March 2013
8.8	Leeds to play active role in regional children's performance work	Peter Storrie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in regional network Support establishment of regional model for self evaluation Support regional data sharing including in year monitoring of provisional KPIs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial sharing and baseline position in January Leeds self evaluation from 2013 to reflect regional model – May 2013 Data sharing - ongoing
8.9	Continued development of performance arrangements around early intervention and prevention	Peter Storrie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Start performance reporting established Families first performance reporting established Review provision and reporting of CAF and cluster early intervention/targeted services performance measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Start reporting schedule and data development agenda established in conjunction with health colleagues – January 2013 Quarterly Early start reports from Q3 city & cluster including process for locality dissemination - February 2013 Families First performance group and work programme established – December 2013 Families First PBR framework in place – January 2013
8.10	Support development of Complex Needs service performance framework	Peter Storrie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of Complex Needs performance materials for CHAD and SEN Robust service performance processes operating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing practice and agree improvement activity – February 2013
8.11	Improve coordination and presentation of Looked After Children's outcomes	Peter Storrie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree and deliver regular reporting of Looked After Children's Outcome indicators, complimenting placement dashboard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope existing performance indicators, where and when available – from Q4 April 2013

9 – Strengthening Early Help / Early Intervention and Prevention:

- We have strong local partnerships managing effective clusters
- We have a clear strategy for Early Intervention and Prevention shared by all partners
- We have a comprehensive offer of evidence informed services for all vulnerable children and their families
- We have a shared understanding of thresholds, processes and services

	Priority	Lead	Action	Milestones
9.1	Carry out a needs analysis to identify the medium term needs of vulnerable children and their families across the city	Jim Hopkinson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete an audit of CAF's and cluster 'Top 100' lists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2013
9.2	Complete the update of the Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy and guidance documents and then undertake training, communication and engagement work with staff and partners	Jim Hopkinson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete strategy and share with Children's Trust Board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan 2013
9.3	Commission expanded services for early help including Family Group Conferencing, Multi-Systemic Therapy, Signpost Family Intervention Programme and Family Intervention Service	Jim Hopkinson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete commissioning and expansion plans relating to Family Group Conferencing, Multi Systemic Therapy, Signpost Family Intervention Program, Under 10's Family Intervention Services and Over 10's Family Intervention Service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2013
9.4	Undertake a programme of work to strengthen cluster working, area committees and wider local services using exemplars of effective cluster working	Jim Hopkinson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with cluster elected members and local authority partners to develop best practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2013 - ongoing
9.5	Ensure that all clusters operate a quality top 100 methodology, complemented by support and guidance procedures	Jim Hopkinson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support clusters and targeted services leaders to operate to developed best practice models and regularly audit quality. • Measure impact and track progression and reasons for re-referrals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2013
9.6	Complete integration of Children's Centres and Health Visitors teams in 25 clusters.	Andrea Richardson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 cluster teams have undergone induction training around information sharing and team building. • Have set up allocation meetings to share case 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed October 2012

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> loads and identify families in need. Dashboard devised and beginning to collate cluster and CUI data. Early start handbook produced and circulated 	
9.7	Identify lead social worker linked to each Early Start team	Andrea Richardson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify lead social workers identified in South and East. West is? Pathway from social work teams to early start teams for pre birth referrals in place. Support package for families in development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed September 2012 Referral pathway in place October 2012.
9.8	Develop methodology for identification, pre-birth of those who are vulnerable and implement parenting support	Andrea Richardson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised the pre-birth pathway across a range of agencies. Discussions with services including substance abuse, mental health a number of strands in development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> October 2012 multi agency group identified key issues for development, earlier referral for midwives to early start teams and review substance abuse protocol.
9.9	Ensure that support staff working in clusters receive high quality supervision and appraisals	Jim Hopkinson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete audit of need with clusters commenced through Leeds Education Challenge. Roll out training on programme on supervision and training to all clusters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> January 2013 March 2013
9.10	Strengthen awareness and understanding of short breaks for children with complex needs offered at cluster level and how to access them	Barbara Newton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate details of short breaks leads in the three areas Communicate information on the cluster / NE SILC coordination of short breaks Raise awareness of short breaks via local cluster meetings etc 	