

Thurrock Council Children's Services Single Inspection Framework Improvement Action Plan

APPENDIX 1

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| Rory Patterson | Name of Reviewer |
| 29.12.16 | Date of Review |

Introduction

The Ofsted inspection of services for children in need of help and protection and for looked after children in February 2016 gave an overall judgement that children's services require improvement to be good. Although services to children, young people and families in Thurrock require improvement, children and young people were found to be safe in Thurrock during this inspection, with none identified who were at immediate risk of significant harm without plans and services being in place to reduce these risks and to meet their needs.

We welcome the recommendations and areas of improvement highlighted by Ofsted. As a result we have incorporated these into our regular performance monitoring but also want to be explicit about how we are responding to these recommendations. This plan sets out how we will do this.

The improvement plan will be overseen by the corporate parenting committee. In addition a further level of scrutiny has been created by the children's portfolio holders who will be meeting regularly with officers to review progress against plans.

| No. | Recommendation | Assigned Lead - Job Title/Name | Score - please select | Update November 16 | Direction of Travel compared to last review - please select | Description of Action(s) - How | Owner(s) - Who | By When (date) |
|-----|--|--|--------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Ensure that accurate performance data is analysed and that this leads to specific actions for improvement | Iqbal Vaza, Strategic Lead I Performance, Quality & Business Support I HR,OD & Transformation | 3 | 1 | Improving | A) Increase capacity to develop and implement new performance digest, with clear metrics & analytics. B) Implement new 'Improvements Board' to be chaired by the DCS and underpinned by metrics & analytics within new digest . C)Review structure of Data and Performance Team to maximise effectiveness. | Director of Children's Services | Actions a,b & C completed. |
| 2 | Strengthen oversight, coordination and quality assurance of early help services to ensure that children and families are receiving the right support at the right time | Clare Moore, Acting Strategic Lead- Disabled Children, Family Group Conferencing, Emergency Duty Team and Early Offer of Help. | 2 | 2 | Improving | A) Complete demand management service review B) Implement improvement plan and service restructure to maximise effectiveness of the Early Offer of Help. C) Re-engage partners in the provision of help to the right families at the right time. D) Ensure quality assurance framework is reviewed and extended to include EOH services. E) To increase the amount of Early Help assessments for 0-5 by targeting Childrens Centres, Health Visitors and Early Years settings to promote the need for early intervention. | Head of Children's Social Care | Phase 1 in relation to points A-E have been completed and iMPOWER are finalising their reports. A further 6 months timescale is required to transform the service and embed the iMPOWER recommendations by June '17 |

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| 3 | Ensure that assessments and plans for children are of a consistently high quality | Teresa Gallagher, Service Manager, FST & Joe Tynan, Service Manager, MASH & CFAT | 3 | 4 | Maintained | A) Complete implementation of Signs of Safety and monitor through audit programme. B) Introduce regular quality workshops with social workers to review quality of practice. C) Scope the introduction of volunteers within the assessment service to strengthen direct intervention with families during assessments. D) Implement demand management plan to reduce the number of assessments undertaken (specifically those that lead to NFA), to reduce quantity and increase quality. | Head of Children's Social Care | June - Dec 16 - Action is overdue re: point 'A' pending outcome of Signs of Safety national bid. A revised timeline is required until August 17 |
| 4 | Improve the offer of return home interviews to children and young people who have been missing from home or care to increase take-up of these interviews | Paul Coke, Service Manager, Children Looked After & Neale Laurie, Service Manager, Safeguarding and Child Protection | 1 | 1 | Improving | A) Weekly monitoring of children who go missing from home and care, and the referral and take up rate of return home interviews. B) Monthly monitoring of referral rates for looked after children to ensure that this increases from 80% - 100%. C) Improved contract monitoring to require pro-active engagement of young people by provider. | Head of Children's Social Care | Actions completed but needs to be monitored and maintained. |
| 5 | Ensure that more children are supported to participate in, and contribute to, their meetings, conferences and reviews, that they and their parents have access to reports beforehand, and that meeting minutes are circulated promptly | Neale Laurie, Service Manager, Safeguarding and Child Protection | 3 | 1 | Improving | A) Monitoring systems in place for all Child Protection Conference and Review minutes. B) Scoping exercise to be undertaken re: how best to increase participation drawing on good practice models. C) Advocacy and support services to be reviewed to ensure that these are promoting activity engagement and participation / challenging poor practice. | Head of Children's Social Care | All actions have been completed but plan needs to be monitored for a further 6 months re: impact - June '17. |
| 6 | Ensure that robust arrangements are in place to reduce the need for children and young people to become looked after in an emergency | Joe Tynan, Service Manager, MASH & CFAT and Teresa Gallagher, Service Manager, Family Support. | 3 | 2 | Improving | A) Review the patterns and numbers of children coming into care B) Strengthen preventative and support services to avoid accommodation or delay accommodation, so that this is planned. C) Strengthen role of Threshold Panel in managing accommodations | Head of Children's Social Care | Sept 16 / ongoing. Actions A & C completed. Action B linked to iMPower timescales. |
| 7 | Ensure targeted recruitment of foster carers to better meet the current and future demand for foster placements and reduce the number of children looked after who have to be placed out of the borough | Andrews Osei, Service Manager, Fostering, Adoption and Placements | 3 | 1 | Improving | A) Targets are now in place for the recruitment of foster carers in line with current and predicted demand. Performance against these targets will be monitored at monthly performance surgeries. B) Monitor impact of refreshed recruitment campaign. | Head of Children's Social Care | Actions completed and now ongoing re: iMPower work and evaluations. |

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| 8 | Ensure that personal education plans are of a consistently high standard & that the virtual school effectively monitors and analyses the progress of all children looked after, including those who attend schools outside of Thurrock | Keeley Pullen, Head of the Virtual School | 3 | 1 | Improving | A) Establish a governing body to monitor, drive and improve all aspects of the work of the virtual school. B) Corporate Parenting Committee and Children's Overview and Scrutiny to continue to monitor and challenge the academic progress and outcomes for looked after children. C) Regularly undertake quality audits to monitor improvements in plans | Roger Edwardson, Interim Strategic Lead, School Improvement, Learning and Skills | 01/09/2016- actions a,b and c now complete. Ongoing monitoring of outcomes / impact |
| 9 | Ensure that managers oversee and effectively drive forward permanence plans for children | Paul Coke, Service Manager, Children Looked After & Andrews Osei, Service Manager, Fostering, Adoption and Placements | 2 | 2 | Improving | A) Embed partnership working with Coram and strengthen early permanency with a pro-active offer of concurrency and foster to adopt. B) Maintain and increase reduction in number of days between court authorisation to place for adoption and placement for adoption. C) Continue to target with Coram, through effective permanency planning, a significant reduction in the number of days between a child becoming looked after and placement for adoption - to bring this below the England average. | Head of Children's Social Care | May 16 - March 17 |
| 10 | Develop post-adoption support arrangements to ensure that all children and families who are eligible have access to an appropriate service | Andrews Osei, Service Manager, Fostering, Adoption and Placements | 3 | 1 | Improving | Develop a new delivery model for post adoption support with Coram. Seek feedback from adopters on the quality of provision. | Head of Children's Social Care | Completed and being further developed with Coram |
| 11 | Ensure that an effective Staying Put policy makes it possible for more young people to live with their former foster carers beyond the age of 18 years | Paul Coke, Service Manager, Children Looked After & Andrews Osei, Service Manager, Fostering, Adoption and Placements | 3 | 2 | Improving | A) Update and improve current Staying Put policy in consultation with Thurrock Foster Carers and IFA providers. B) Promote Staying Put as an option for all fostered young people. C) Monitor and review the number of young people who are Staying Put to identify blocks and address these. D) Work in partnership with Eastern Region partners to better improve the local and regional offer. | Head of Children's Social Care | June - Sept 16 - Actions A;B C completed. Further work needed re: Eastern Region. Impact to be monitored re: increase in young people staying put. Continue to monitor alongside staying close re: establishing rising trend in young people staying put or close. |

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| 12 | Ensure that pathway assessments and plans are developed to engage care leavers effectively and that care leavers benefit from regular reviews | Paul Coke, Service Manager, Children Looked After | 3 | 2 | Improving | A) Redesign the current Pathway Plan with care leavers and the CICC (update on previous re-design), to make it as simple and user friendly as possible. B) Establish Senior Practitioner post currently within the Aftercare Team to continue to lead on the review of pathway plans and track timeliness within revised performance digest. C) Undertake regular quality audits of plans. | Head of Children's Social Care | Sept 16 & June 17 |
| 13 | Ensure that care leavers are effectively supported to gain independence skills, including through the setting of aspirational targets to help them to achieve educational and employment goals. | Paul Coke, Service Manager, Children Looked After | 2 | 2 | Improving | A) Develop a group work model of independence training / support for carer leavers and complement current 1:1 work. B) Continue to increase the number of care leavers who are EET (62%) and exceed aspirational target of 70% EET. Strengthen integrated working with Employability and Skills service to drive improvements. | Head of Children's Social Care | August 16 & March 2017 |
| 14 | Secure a more stable workforce to ensure that children are able to build enduring relationships with social workers and to enable the local authority to drive through improvement to services, such as increasing early planning for permanence for children that starts at the front door | Andrew Carter, Head of Children's Social Care | 3 | 2 | Improving | A) Continue to drive effective retention and recruitment through the Retention and Recruitment Board, chaired by the DCS. B) Expand on programme to 'grow our own' staff through the ASYE Academy and the Aspiring Managers programme. C) Reduce the use of agency staff within the Eastern Region, MoC & work with iMPower on demand management. | Director of Children's Services | Ongoing |
| 15 | Ensure and demonstrate that children's and families' views and feedback are used to demonstrably shape service developments | Cherrylyn Senior, Principal Social Worker | 3 | 2 | Improving | A) Strengthen participation work stream to ensure that this is producing clear outcomes that are monitored and evaluated at the 'Improvements Board'. B) Corporate Parenting Board and Children's Overview and Scrutiny to be encouraged to set clear targets for evidence of improvements / service developments that have been based on user feedback, consultation and or co-production. | Head of Children's Social Care | Nov' 2016 - improved but not yet fully embedded, action is therefore overdue re: Nov' 16 target and needs to be extended to April '17 |
| 16 | Regularly audit supervision files to ensure that frequency and quality are resulting in improved practice | Neale Laurie, Service Manager, Safeguarding and Child Protection | 3 | 1 | Improving | Establish a new quality assurance framework and put in place a regular cycle of auditing. Review and disseminate supervision policy and monitor compliance. Progress to be monitored at Improvements Board and proposed annual report to Children's Overview and Scrutiny on the quality of practice. | Head of Children's Social Care | Actions completed and ongoing monitoring required. |

Once you have completed this sheet, please review scoresheet - next 'Tab'

Sheet Complete