



**Agenda for a meeting of the Children's Services  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on  
Wednesday, 27 September 2023 at 4.30 pm in Council  
Chamber - City Hall, Bradford**

**Members of the Committee – Councillors**

<b>LABOUR</b>	<b>CONSERVATIVE</b>	<b>LIBERAL DEMOCRAT</b>	<b>BRADFORD INDEPENDENT GROUP</b>
<b>Fricker Mohammed Regan Thirkill Zaman</b>	<b>Davies Pollard</b>	<b>Sunderland</b>	<b>Sajawal</b>

**Alternates:**

<b>LABOUR</b>	<b>CONSERVATIVE</b>	<b>LIBERAL DEMOCRAT</b>	<b>BRADFORD INDEPENDENT GROUP</b>
<b>Alipoor Berry Humphreys I Hussain Walsh</b>	<b>Birch Felstead</b>	<b>Naylor</b>	<b>Elahi</b>

**Voting Co-opted Members:**

**Church Representative – Joyce Simpson  
Parent Governor Representative – Fauzia Raza  
Parent Governor Representative – Shifa Simab**

**Non-Voting Co-opted Members:**

**Teachers Secondary School Representative - Tom Bright  
Children's Social Care - Dr Samina Karim**

**Notes:**

- This agenda can be made available in Braille, large print or tape format on request by contacting the Agenda contact shown below.
- The taking of photographs, filming and sound recording of the meeting is allowed except if Councillors vote to exclude the public to discuss confidential matters covered by Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. Recording activity should be respectful to the conduct of the meeting and behaviour that disrupts the meeting (such as oral commentary) will not be permitted. Anyone attending the meeting who wishes to record or film the meeting's proceedings is advised to liaise with the Agenda Contact who will provide guidance and ensure that any necessary arrangements are in place. Those present who are invited to make spoken contributions to the meeting should be aware that they may be filmed or sound recorded.
- If any further information is required about any item on this agenda, please contact the officer named at the foot of that agenda item.

Asif Ibrahim

Director of Legal and Governance

Agenda Contact: Kav Amrez / Louis Kingdom

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E-Mail: [kanwal.Amrez2@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:kanwal.Amrez2@bradford.gov.uk)/[louis.kingdom@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:louis.kingdom@bradford.gov.uk)

## A. PROCEDURAL ITEMS

### 1. ALTERNATE MEMBERS (Standing Order 34)

The Director of Legal and Governance will report the names of alternate Members who are attending the meeting in place of appointed Members.

### 2. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

(Members Code of Conduct – Part 4A of the Constitution)

To receive disclosures of interests from members and co-opted members on matters to be considered at the meeting. The disclosure must include the nature of the interest.

An interest must also be disclosed in the meeting when it becomes apparent to the member during the meeting.

#### **Notes:**

- (1) *Members must consider their interests, and act according to the following:*

<b>Type of Interest</b>	<b>You must:</b>
<i>Disclosable Pecuniary Interests</i>	<i>Disclose the interest; not participate in the discussion or vote; and leave the meeting <u>unless</u> you have a dispensation.</i>
<i>Other Registrable Interests (Directly Related)</i> <b>OR</b> <i>Non-Registrable Interests (Directly Related)</i>	<i>Disclose the interest; speak on the item <u>only if</u> the public are also allowed to speak but otherwise not participate in the discussion or vote; and leave the meeting <u>unless</u> you have a dispensation.</i>
<i>Other Registrable Interests (Affects)</i> <b>OR</b> <i>Non-Registrable Interests (Affects)</i>	<i>Disclose the interest; remain in the meeting, participate and vote <u>unless</u> the matter affects the financial interest or well-being</i>

*(a) to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of a majority of inhabitants of the affected ward, and*

*(b) a reasonable member of the public*

*knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest; in which case speak on the item only if the public are also allowed to speak but otherwise not do not participate in the discussion or vote; and leave the meeting unless you have a dispensation.*

- (2) *Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to the Member concerned or their spouse/partner.*
- (3) *Members in arrears of Council Tax by more than two months must not vote in decisions on, or which might affect, budget calculations, and must disclose at the meeting that this restriction applies to them. A failure to comply with these requirements is a criminal offence under section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.*
- (4) *Officers must disclose interests in accordance with Council Standing Order 44.*

### **3. MINUTES**

**Recommended –**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2023 and 15 February 2023 be signed as a correct record (previously circulated).**

(Kav Amrez / Louis Kingdom – 07929 070228 / 07890 416570)

### **4. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS**

(Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 3B of the Constitution)

Reports and background papers for agenda items may be inspected by contacting the person shown after each agenda item. Certain reports and background papers may be restricted.

Any request to remove the restriction on a report or background paper should be made to the relevant Strategic Director or Assistant Director whose name is shown on the front page of the report.

If that request is refused, there is a right of appeal to this meeting.

Please contact the officer shown below in advance of the meeting if you wish to appeal.

(Kav Amrez / Louis Kingdom – 07929 070228 / 07890 416570)

## 5. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Any referrals that have been made to this Committee up to and including the date of publication of this agenda will be reported at the meeting.

## B. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ACTIVITIES

### 6. BRADFORD CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PLAN 1 - 58

The CEO of Bradford Children and Families Trust will submit a report (**Document "B"**) that presents a progress update to Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the first 4 months of the Bradford Children and Families Trust which includes quarter 1 of 23/24 reporting.

**Recommended –**

**That the Committee is invited to note this report, the new Improvement Plan and the Quarter 4 Progress Report (see appendices).**

(Ruth Terry - [ruth.terry@bradfordcft.org.uk](mailto:ruth.terry@bradfordcft.org.uk))

### 7. CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24 59 - 68

The report of the Chair of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee (**Document "C"**) includes the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2023/24.

**Recommended –**

- (1) That members consider and comment on the areas of work included in the work programme.**
- (2) That members consider any detailed scrutiny reviews that they may wish to conduct.**

(Mustansir Butt – (01274 432574))





## **Report of the Strategic Director Children's Services to the meeting of Children Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be held on – 27<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

**B**

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### **Subject:**

### **Bradford Children's Services Improvement Plan**

### **Summary Statement:**

The Bradford Children's Services Improvement Plan has strong leadership and assurance mechanisms in place. Support from the Chief Executive, elected members, Bradford Children and Families Trust, Bradford Local Authority Children's Services, partners and senior leaders, ensures focus, drive and pace.

The new plan commenced in April 2022 and was commissioned and is governed by the refreshed Bradford Children's Improvement Board, which is chaired by the Bradford Commissioner.

The Improvement Plan Progress Report is presented and discussed at the Improvement Board on a quarterly basis, with Quarter 4 Report being presented on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2023. Quarter 1 for 2023-2024 was not presented at the Improvement Board on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2023 in line with the quarterly cycle due to the improvement plan prioritisation work that is going on within the Trust. The aim is to develop an Improvement Implementation Plan which will section the improvement work into phases with identified leads and timescales, this will then inform the reporting mechanism and cycle that are required for various forums.

The response to the areas for improvement identified in the Ofsted inspection (ILACS) which commenced in November 2023, have been set out in the Ofsted Action Plan and this has been incorporated into the Improvement Plan. Furthermore, areas of improvement identified from the Ofsted Monitoring Visit in July 2023 have been cross referenced and added or updated as required.

This report is to present a Progress Report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the first 4 months of the Bradford Children and Families Trust which includes quarter 1 of 23/24 reporting.

## **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY:**

There is not a dedicated strand for equality and diversity consideration, they are considered and addressed throughout the strands, objectives and the success measures in the Improvement Plan.

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Charlotte Ramsden  
CEO Bradford Children and Families Trust

Report Contact: Ruth Terry  
E-mail: [ruth.terry@bradfordcft.org.uk](mailto:ruth.terry@bradfordcft.org.uk)

### **Portfolio:**

**Children & Families**

### **Overview & Scrutiny Area:**

**Children's Services**



## 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Bradford Children's Services Improvement Plan has strong leadership and assurance mechanisms in place. Support from the Chief Executive, elected members, Bradford Children and Families Trust, Bradford Local Authority Children's Services, partners and senior leaders, ensures focus, drive and pace.
- 1.2 The new plan commenced in April 2022 and was commissioned and is governed by the refreshed Bradford Children's Improvement Board, which is chaired by the Bradford Children's Commissioner.
- 1.3 The Improvement Plan Progress Report is presented and discussed at the Improvement Board on a quarterly basis, with Quarter 4 Report being presented on 22nd June 2023. Quarter 1 for 2023-2024 was not presented at the Improvement Board on 3rd August 2023 in line with the quarterly cycle due to the improvement plan prioritisation work that is going on within the Trust. The aim is to develop an Improvement Implementation Plan which will section the improvement work into phases with identified leads and timescales, this will then inform the reporting mechanism and cycle that are required for various forums.
- 1.4 The response to the areas for improvement identified in the Ofsted inspection (ILACS) which commenced in November 2023, have been set out in the Ofsted Action Plan and this has been incorporated into the Improvement Plan. Furthermore, areas of improvement identified from the Ofsted Monitoring Visit in July 2023 have been cross referenced and added or updated as required.
- 1.5 This report is to present a Progress Report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the first 4 months of the Bradford Children and Families Trust which includes quarter 1 of 23/24 reporting.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Improvement Plan is in two halves and enables a relentless focus on improving outcomes for children and young people and ensuring that those supporting them and their families have the right conditions in place to provide quality services and for success.

### *A - Improving the lives of children and young people:*

1. Who are referred to our Front Door
2. Who need early help
- 3a. Who are in need of help and protection
- 3b. With disabilities
4. Who are on the edge of care (to include a Turning the Curve plan to safely reduce the number of children needing to be looked after)
5. Who are in care and who have left care

### *B - Creating the conditions for success:*

6. Ensuring children, young people and families have voice and influence
7. Strategic leadership ensuring the conditions for success are created
8. A sufficient and stable workforce
9. A constant focus on practice improvement and an agreed practice model

10. A strong and collaborative partnership
  11. Buildings, IT, finance, admin. HR support and equipment that support quality practice
  12. Data and Insight (Learning and improving through performance management and quality assurance)
- 2.2 The Improvement Plan has identified measures for success; these success measures (data and milestones) are reported on quarterly and presented to the Improvement Board in the form of the Progress Report.
- 2.3 The plan is iterative and dynamic and will develop and adapt in line with improvement priorities. The next piece of work is to develop a phased approach to these priorities.
- 2.4 Examples in addition to what was provided in the February 2023 report on the Improvement Plan to Children's Overview & Scrutiny panel include:
- Overall
    - Secured DfE funding and mapped our continued support from Leeds Relational Practice Centre across 13 areas of targeted improvement areas.
  - Integrated Front Door (IFD)
    - Public free telephone number and Children's Portal went live.
    - Established weekly referral review and monthly multi-agency lessons learnt forum.
    - Domestic Abuse Hub has been re-established within the Integrated Front Door.
    - Children's Emergency Duty Team established (separating from adults) and the team are now working out of Trafalgar House to work jointly with Police colleagues.
  - Early Help
    - 'Relationships Matter', our Reducing Parental Conflict project has been launched.
    - Increased access points have been made available for families to access Early Help, including free contact number to the IFD, via the Children's Portal, direct access through the Family Hubs and through FYI (Family and Young People's Information Service) website.
  - Help and Protection
    - Co-developed with partners and implemented the Strategy Meeting guidance.
  - Edge of Care (Turning the Curve)
    - Established an Edge of Care Service to include 2 Edge of Care Teams, Family Group Conferencing and Family Time.
    - Established a high-cost external placement panel and placement review panel.
  - Workforce Stability
    - A number of developments and activities are underway to secure a permanent workforce including updating the Bring Heart website, setting up of webinars, direct and focused recruitment campaigns.
    - We have successfully recruited to 42 international social workers, 28 of these are now in post, remaining colleagues will join us by the end of the

year.

- Practice Improvement
  - A number of faculties have been launched to support the workforce around practice, including Team Managers, Business Support and Students – further faculties will launch October 23 to January 24.
- Partnership
  - Established a Multi-Agency Improvement Development Group chaired by the Chair of the Safeguarding Partnership to co-work on practice improvement.
- Strategic Leadership ensuring the conditions for success are created.
  - Established engagement forums for the workforce within the Trust as well as jointly with the Local Authority Children's Services.
- Business Support
  - Review of all "as is" Business Support tasks, responsibilities and processes has been completed to establish a successful operating model

### **3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1 Capacity to implement the Improvement Plan has been reviewed for both the Bradford Children and Families Trust and Local Authority.

Within the Trust, an improvement and inspection service has been established, with the majority of the posts recruited to, some pending start dates. The team currently sits under the Executive Director, however, once the Assistant Director posts are recruited to, the team will sit under the Early Help and Transformation Assistant Director. Within the Local Authority, inspection and improvement functions in addition to the ICF function, sit under the Assistant Director for Improvement and Partnerships (AD I&P).

- 3.2 In addition, Bradford is supported by Leeds Relational Practice Centre in the role of improvement partner through funding by the DfE, this is outlined within this Progress Report.

### **4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL**

- 4.1 Budgetary, workforce, internal and media communication considerations are all high priorities within this improvement plan and are monitored in addition to the reporting requirements of the Children and Families Trust through the Intelligent Client Function.

### **5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

- 5.1 The risks relate to not implementing the improvement plan as the majority of the priorities are those which have been identified as being essential to the ongoing improvement requirements for social care, and areas for improvement identified in the ILACS, that will enable a move from an Inadequate Ofsted judgement.
- 5.2 By not making the required improvements, the risks are that children, young people and their families are not helped and safeguarded as they should be in the Bradford district, and that future Ofsted inspection activities continue to identify and judge the Trust/Local Authority to be Inadequate.

## **6. LEGAL APPRAISAL**

- 6.1 There are no specific legal issues arising from this report but many of the priorities in the plan relate to the local authority's responsibilities to the Children Act 1989.

## **7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

### **7.1 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable.

### **7.2 TACKLING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable.

### **7.3 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable.

### **7.4 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

No specific issues related to the Act.

### **7.5 TRADE UNION**

Trade Unions have been and will be consulted on relevant aspects of the plan, for example, the changes to the Integrated Front Door.

### **7.6 WARD IMPLICATIONS**

There are no specific ward implications.

### **7.7 IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

The whole of the Improvement Plan is concerned with improving outcomes for children and young people including through Corporate Parenting.

### **7.8 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT**

No issues identified.

## **8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS**

- 8.1 None.

## **9. OPTIONS**

- 9.1 Not applicable.

**10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 The Committee is invited to note this report, the new Improvement Plan and the Quarter 4 Progress Report (see appendices).

**11. APPENDICES**

11.1 Appendix 1 – Improvement Plan.

11.2 Appendix 2 – Quarter 4 2023/24 Progress Report.

**12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Not applicable.

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## Bradford Children's Services Improvement Plan

**2022 – 2024**

Improving the lives of children and young people and  
creating the conditions for success

## Introduction and context

In 2018, Bradford's Children's Services were judged to be 'inadequate'. Since then Children's Services, the wider council and partners have been on a journey of improvement. A number of subsequent Ofsted monitoring visits have identified whilst there have been improvements within the service, overall more improvements are necessary. In September 2021, the Secretary of State for Education appointed a Children's Services Commissioner to assess the Council's capacity and capability to improve itself in a reasonable time frame and recommend whether or long term sustainable improvement to children's social care functions could be achieved, whether operational service control should remain within the Council and to advise on alternative delivery and governance arrangements for children's social care functions. The outcome was that Department for Education concluded that Children's Services in Bradford would be provided through a Children's Trust arrangement. The Children and Families Trust went live date on 1st April 2023.

A refreshed and refocused improvement board has been established and is chaired by the Bradford Commissioner. The board have commissioned a dynamic and iterative improvement plan, the Bradford Children's Services Improvement Plan, to provide a focused approach to making the improvements necessary to improve the lives of children and young people and to establish the conditions for success. There is not a dedicated strand for equality and diversity consideration – this should be considered and addressed throughout the strands, objectives and the success measures.

The inspection of services for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) resulted in a number of areas in which we must improve, and partners have resolved to make these improvements and more. The Bradford Children's Services Improvement Plan should be read alongside the Bradford Local Area SEND Action plan where partners across the District will provide the drive and ownership to improve the areas Ofsted have identified as requiring a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) for driving forward the requirements we need to make.

## Foreword

On behalf of the Bradford Children's Services Improvement Board we are delighted to present this improvement plan. This is a great opportunity for Bradford and District to make the crucial changes we need to ensure services for children, young people and their families in Bradford are fit for purpose and subject to continuous improvement so that children and young people are safe, healthy, learning and achieving.

As a board we have committed to making sure that improvements are delivered across all agencies across the district that support and deliver services for families to achieve our aim that all children and young people have the opportunity to reach their potential and enjoy good outcomes.

Our improvement plan is underpinned by restorative, strength-based and family-led approaches which seek to address the impacts of poverty, and promote equality and diversity, and the voice and influence of children, young people, and their families. We will continue to work in partnership at both strategic and operational levels to realise our aims and objectives.



Charlotte Ramsden  
CEO of the Bradford Children and Families Trust



Marium Haque  
Strategic Director Children's Services



## Governance and ensuring success

### Governance - 'Working with'

Governance of the improvement plan has strong leadership and assurance mechanisms in place. Support from the chief executive, elected members, partners and senior leaders ensures focus, drive and pace. The programme also has strong cross-party support, with clear commitment from all group leaders to support the improvement process.

#### *Bradford Children's Improvement Board*

The Bradford Children's Improvement Board is the key partnership body with ownership of the Improvement Plan and responsibility for its delivery. It is made up of strategic representation from partner agencies, working to agreed terms of reference. The Improvement Board is chaired by the Bradford Commissioner.

#### *Bradford Safeguarding Partnership*

The Improvement Board will ensure that decisions and activities dovetail with those of the Bradford Safeguarding Partnership which co-ordinates safeguarding across different agencies and promotes the welfare of children in Bradford

### Monitoring Performance and Quality – how much we do and how we do it

Using data and intelligence to monitor and improve performance and quality of practice will be key to the success of our improvement journey, and is a vital part of new ways of working across the council in the future. Progress against the Improvement Plan will be reported to the Children's Improvement Board. Reporting will include but not be limited to:

- A performance report including progress against key indicators linked to the Improvement Plan
- Discrete scorecards linked to the various strands

### Making a difference to children, young people and families

Our approach is firmly focused on improving outcomes for children, young people and families. In addition to data and intelligence which shows how we are performing against key indicators, we are using Outcome Based Accountability to demonstrate the difference our improvements make to the lives of children and their families. Our updates to the Improvement Board, will show through case studies and feedback from children, their families and partners the positive impact of changes.

### Glossary of terms

Below is a list which provides short explanations of acronyms and professional terms in this plan.

- Integrated Front Door (IFD) is a team of professionals including Children's Services social workers, police, early help, health and education which responds to initial enquiries regarding children and young people in Bradford.
- Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) - a programme that gives newly qualified social workers extra support during their first year of employment. The programme aims to help them develop their skills, knowledge and professional confidence. The ASYE programme for social workers who work with children and families is based on the statement of knowledge and skills for child and family social work.
- Corporate Parenting Panel - co-ordinates and oversees the work undertaken with children in care in Bradford to make sure that they are in appropriate placements and receive the same opportunities as their peers.
- LCS (Liquid Logic Children's Services) Children's Social Care System has been specifically developed by and for practitioners to allow case management and record keeping for children in need, looked after children, adoption and child protection cases, as quickly and simply as possible.

## About our Improvement Plan

In two halves, the plan enables a relentless focus on improving outcomes for children and young people and ensuring that those supporting them and their families have the right conditions in place to provide quality services.

*A - Improving the lives of children and young people*

*B - Creating the conditions for success*

### ***A - Improving the lives of children and young people:***

1. Who are referred to our Front Door
2. Who need early help
3. Who are in need of help and protection and who have disabilities
4. Who are on the edge of care (to include a Turning the Curve plan to safely reduce the number of children needing to be looked after)
5. Who are in care and who have left care

### ***B – Creating the conditions for success***

6. Ensuring children, young people and families have voice and influence
7. Strategic leadership ensuring the conditions for success are created
8. A sufficient and stable workforce
9. A constant focus on practice improvement and an agreed practice model
10. A strong and collaborative partnership
11. Buildings, IT, finance, admin. HR support and equipment that support quality practice
12. Data and Insight (Learning and improving through performance management and quality assurance)

## Annexe A

# 1 - Improving the lives of children and young people - who are referred to our Integrated Front Door

The 'Front Door' for social work services plays a crucial role in the safeguarding system in Bradford – as the place where local people and services can access robust and well-informed advice, support and decision-making from social work professionals. Getting this right is vital for ensuring that every child gets the right support and protection at the right time, and getting this wrong can lead to both delayed help for children and unsustainable pressures for local agencies and the social work service, leading to a cycle of growing pressure and weakening practice. An effective Front Door benefits from key partners working closely and collaboratively together to achieve improved outcomes.

In Bradford, too many contacts are being made to the front door that do not require a social work response and the proportion that result in No Further Action (NFA) is too high. This places an unnecessary burden on the front door and means many families are not helped early enough and face avoidable contact, referral, and social work assessment.

### What we are aiming for:

- Greater collective ownership, consistency and accountability of the Front Door; strengthening and embedding partnership working, processes and governance.
- An environment that encourages a culture of challenge across the partnership, where appropriate, and healthy dialogue is welcomed.
- Response to risk is appropriate and consistent at all times.
- Partner agencies consistently make appropriate contacts.
- Rebalance of the proportion of referrals and assessments leading to no further action.
- Children and young people safeguarded out of hours by children's specialist emergency duty team (EDT).
- Joint, shared decisions about the right service, right time for children and families.

### How we will do this:

- Introducing and embedding an approach based for the IFD based on conversation-based contacts and referrals – based on Professor David Thorpe research.
- As part of new approach, establishing a weekly partnership review of decision-making.
- Establishing a dedicated Emergency Duty Team (EDT) for children and young people.

### How we will know we are succeeding:

- Families receive the right support and the right time.
- Partners are confident in shared decision-making.
- Children's EDT is operational.
- We will monitor the number and outcomes of contacts and referrals on a quarterly basis.

## 2 - Improving the lives of children and young people - who need early help

Early Help for children and families is more effective and less expensive than intervening when problems become entrenched. Families should be enabled and supported to have the right conversations, with the right people and at the right time about their needs or concerns, so that statutory interventions can be avoided where this is appropriate. Intervening as early as possible, regardless of the age of the child or young person, can positively improve their outcomes. Being helped earlier is better for children and families and also ensures that the local safeguarding system is sustainable. In Bradford, historic disinvestment in early help and prevention has resulted in children, young people and their families not being helped early enough and as such there is a need for an improved offer across the district.

### **What we are aiming for:**

- Families being helped by those that know them best, as early as possible in the life of the problem, in the communities in which they live, and for access to help made simpler.
- A rebalancing and strengthening of the safeguarding system through developing better Early Help and preventative services.
- A reduction of the pressures on statutory social work services through improved early help and community support.
- An effective partnership approach to early help across the district based on shared: ownership, understanding, principles and values.

### **How we will do this:**

- Implementing the Start for Life the programme across the district and enhancing support to children in their first 1,001 days.
- Making early help 'Simpler, Nearer and Earlier' – by further developing our Family Hubs arrangements and ensuring they are well known, welcoming and accessible; and building area based Family Hubs networks involving family members and Third Sector and Education partners.
- Implementing robust arrangements for evaluation and co-production and expanding work with peer supporters and volunteers building on supporting the District to be a safe, green and active place to live, work and play.
- Harnessing opportunities from the City of Culture to create an inclusive, creative environment for babies, children and young people which celebrates the vibrant diversity of our district.

### **How we will know we are succeeding:**

- Feedback from families about if they feel they have been helped.
- Number of multi-agency early help assessments (tier 2 and tier 3).
- % of repeat referrals to the Front Door.
- % of early help audits carried out where the outcome is 'Good or Outstanding Practice'.
- Number of multi-agency practitioners trained in early help related workforce opportunities who become lead practitioners.
- Proportion of local partners reporting high levels of confidence and satisfaction with locality early help services.
- We will monitor data on a quarterly basis.

## 3a - Improving the lives of children and young people - who are in need of help and protection

For those children and young people whose needs cannot be met by universal or early help approaches, they may become subject to child in need or child protection plans depending on the presenting issues and circumstances. Children and young people should be protected through effective multi-agency arrangements with key participants attending multi-agency meetings (for example, child in need meetings, strategy meetings, core groups, initial or review child protection conferences, child exploitation risk management meetings). These meetings need to be effective forums for timely information-sharing, planning, decision-making and monitoring and actions should happen within agreed timescales and the help and protection provided reduce risk and meet need.

Bradford is continuing to improve despite the challenges faced by the national shortage of qualified social workers and an over-reliance on agency workers. This instability of workforce continues to impact on the quality of practice and is highlighted in a number of Ofsted Monitoring visit letters. There is also much work to do to improve multi-agency relationships at all levels to ensure that the needs of vulnerable children and young people are met:

*'The need for improved partnership working is recognised by the senior leaders of all agencies and partners are committed to working together to improve relationships, services and outcomes for children and families in Bradford (Commissioners Report 2022).*

### What we are aiming for:

- Partnership approach to compliance for strategy discussions in line with national good practice guidelines.
- Social work teams focusing on the right children, at the right support at the right time.
- Timeliness and quality of all Child in Need and Child Protection statutory processes.
- Increased attendance for children and young people in their education settings.
- Good quality and timely assessments of risk and need in all their forms, including the response to domestic violence.
- Timely completion of statutory safeguarding checks and compliance with regulation regarding private fostering and connected carers.
- Current and accurate children's records.
- Good quality and timely decisions in respect of section 47 enquiries.
- Effective multi-agency meetings that influence in driving children's plans.

### How we will do this:

- Partnership commitment to ensure resources are deployed in a timely manner to enable strategy meetings take place in time with full statutory attendance and review and amend, as necessary, current process and procedures when convening a strategy discussion, in line with Working Together 2018 guidance.
- Using a focused improvement approach to improving key areas of safeguarding practice.
- District wide approach to improving educational attendance including those not on a school roll.
- Promoting the identification of Privately Fostered children and notifications made to the Local Authority.
- Reviewing and updating practice standards, policy and guidance for assessments including a good practice checklist and exemplars and fully utilising systems to drive timeliness and allowing analysis by senior leaders for continued improvement.
- Implementing a refreshed programme of awareness with Children and Families Trust and across the partnership to support around Private Fostering with a revised approach to quality assurance to improve compliance and timeliness.
- Re-emphasising the management responsibility to monitor currency and accuracy of records and improving the quality of management oversight through dip sample and/or thematic audit and developing and sharing exemplars of good practice.
- Improving how conferences are run to be more restorative and accessible to families.
- Improving appropriate health representation in relation to health information for child protection conferences, this will include the reviewing of admin process and addressing gaps, working with Child Protection (CP) chairs to confirm the importance of appropriate health representation and addressing consent needs to access information from health records.
- Improving the effectiveness of core groups by developing skills in social workers in chairing the meetings.

**How we will know we are succeeding:**

- Review and audit show strong and improving decision-making practice.
- Compliance data on strategy discussions – timeliness and attendance.
- Attendance data of key partners at ICPCs and RCPCs.
- Educational attendance data.
- Proportion of initial Child Protection Conferences within 15 working days.
- All relevant agencies have processes in place to support identification of Privately Fostered children.

## 3b - Improving the lives of children and young people with disabilities

This strand of our improvement plan is based on the recommendations made by the Council for Disabled Children identified in their review of services and systems for disabled children and their families in Bradford, with the report published August 2022. The activity in this strand is closely connected to the work to take forward the SEND Written Statement of Action.

The CDC summaries the situation for families, 'despite the hard work and commitment of practitioners across the system, the combination of these three areas of challenge [pathways to support, the workforce, and sufficiency of provision] children, young people and families currently experience a fragmented system with multiple confusing pathways and significant gaps in access to support.'

### What we are aiming for:

- Improved access to accurate and clear information and advice for families, including simplified legal language (jargon free).
- Co-developed proportionate pathways of support via an increased access points.
- A needs led eligibility and decision-making approach.
- Co-developed an Assessment approach for disabled children and families that will identify the right support and service, at the right time decreasing the need for repeated Assessments.
- Sufficient provision for children with disabilities.
- Skilled workforce to deliver a good and outstanding service to families and children with a disability and/or complex needs.
- Multi-disciplinary Team to deliver support to families with children whom have a disability and/or complex needs.

### How we will do this:

- Work with parents and carers to co-produce accurate and simplified documentation and information platforms (Local Offer and FYI) for families seeking advice and support services.
- Increase access points for parents and carers who have a child(ren) with a disability to access support services with a consistent approach for all families with multi-disciplinary support.
- Develop a needs led service.
- Put in place an Assessment process that can be built on rather than the need to start and finish Assessments within different parts of the Service.
- Link into the overall sufficiency strategy to put in place provisions to meet the needs of disabled children.
- Develop a joint workforce Development Strategy and joint training offer with Partner agencies.

### How we will know we are succeeding:

- Increase in contacts via the various routes (free number, practitioners line, Children's Portal – both self-referral and from Practitioners and face to face at the Children's Hubs).
- Increase in number of families accessing early help whether this be new contacts or step-down from statutory services.
- Consistent service to all families who have a child(ren) with a disability will be seen through Audits as a result of a skilled workforce.
- Improved timeliness of EHCP's.
- Improved timeliness of services such as behaviour support, CAMHS.

## 4 - Improving the lives of children and young people - who are on the edge of care – including a Turning the Curve plan

Many children and young people are considered to be on the 'Edge of Care' in that they are at risk of becoming looked after. There are many reasons for this including parental capacity and parent's needs and / or the child's needs including non-engagement with education or anti-social behaviour, and may include that the child has been subject to a child in need or a child protection plan. Without the right support to the child and the family, the situation may worsen and the outcome may be that the child becomes looked after. Edge of care interventions are essential in supporting children to be able to remain with their families. In addition, in Bradford, there are too many children in care and this can often result in them experiencing poorer outcomes than their peers, and there is considerable expenditure on external placements. A turning the curve plan for the district will aim to: reduce the number of children who need to become looked after; where it is in the best interests of children, carry out targeted work with the family so children can go home; and reduce expenditure on costly external placements.

### What we are aiming for:

- Improve long term outcomes for children and young people.
- Effective support to families so that children are able to live with their families.
- Safe reduction in the numbers of children who need to be looked after.
- Reduction in expenditure on external placements.
- Timely escalation to public law outline (PLO).
- Timely progression of permanence in all its forms.

### How we will do this:

- Development of an Edge of Care service to safely support children to avoid coming into care and for children to go home where it is safe to do so - – a new model and approach.
- Introduction of evidence based approaches to support children to return home (reunification).
- Identification of actions from a Turning the Curve Event focusing on the factors why large % of children have statutory interventions such as being in care.
- TtC - Collaboration with Born in Bradford to research and analyse key issues why Bradford children need statutory interventions such as being in care.
- TtC - Agreeing and trialling / piloting new approaches that bridge Early Help and Social Work.
- TtC - Reviewing existing approaches and services to safely reduce the number of children in care that work and expand as per findings.
- TtC – Develop and implement evidence based approach to reunification.
- Identification of those children whose care orders can be discharged, e.g. those who are placed with parents, those who can live under Special Guardianship with family and friends and whose adoption orders can be more swiftly progressed.
- Offering a family group conference or family decision making meeting to all families entering the pre-proceedings process, or to assist in exploring all permanence options for children.
- Establishment of a Placements Review Panel to ensure placements are meeting the children's needs whilst ensuring best value for money.
- Strengthening arrangements for Legal Gateway Panel (LGP) with continuous monitoring and tracking.
- Increasing alignment to child protection planning where possible and enabling increased CP chair involvement in referral to LGP.

### How we will know we are succeeding:

- Number and RPTT of children in care and number and RPTT new entrants to care.
- Number of those who have left care due to adoption and Special Guardianship Orders.
- Number of children who have benefitted from evidence based approach and have avoided care or have gone home.
- Number of children and young people in external residential placements.
- Outreach edge of care service - % who did not enter care after being supported.
- Residential edge of care service - % who did not enter care after being supported.



## 5 - Improving the lives of children and young people in care and who have left care

As 'Corporate Parents' we need to make sure that children and young people who are looked after and who have left care benefit from the highest quality support possible to ensure they have healthy, happy, purposeful lives and achieve their full potential. Most young people are supported by their parents well into their twenties, so we need to consider how together as a partnership we can provide the same or better support for Care Leavers who face more challenges than many young people in their transition to adulthood. In addition, we need to make sure there is better help in place for those who need extra support with their mental health, and to support all care leavers into learning and work and housing that meet their needs.

### What we are aiming for:

- Corporate Parenting Strategy governed by an effective Corporate Parenting Panel aiming for the highest standards of care, support and outcomes for children in care and care leavers.
- The right type of placements and housing, in the right places to meet the needs of children and young people in care and care leavers.
- Improved outcomes for children in care and care leavers through a dedicated single service.
- Bradford district recognises and celebrates the achievements of children in care and care leavers.
- Smooth transition to adult services where they are required.
- Wellbeing and mental health needs are recognised and support to access services is improved.
- All Care Leavers (except those with exceptional circumstances) are in learning or work, or have a clear, well-resourced plan to help them into learning or employment.
- Life stories can 'travel' with children and young people and can be accessed digitally.
- Effective and impactful independent reviewing officers.
- Foster carer morale, training, recruitment and retention, including the support offered to special guardians.
- Good quality and safe in-house residential provision, including safer recruitment.
- Offer of safe, appropriate and sustainable homes for care leavers and their preparation for leaving care.
- Process of completing personal education plans (PEPs) so that they are consistently completed by all relevant professionals.

### How we will do this:

- Corporate Parenting Strategy, setting strategic direction and Corporate Parenting Panel provides robust governance for the Corporate Parenting Strategy.
- Agreement and implementation of Sufficiency Strategy ensuring the right type of placements available locally at the right time for the right children and young people.
- Establishing dedicated Children in Care and Care Leaver service.
- Ensuring transition work to adult services for those who need them is timely and managed jointly by adults and children's services.
- Putting the Joint Housing Protocol for care leavers into operation.
- District approach to increasing work related opportunities for Care Leavers to ensure they are engaged in meaningful work in their community and are in education, employment or training.
- Improving access to mental health support.
- Digital approach to Life Story work is established and operational.
- Children in care and care leavers' achievements are celebrated by the district.
- Reviewing the timeliness of escalations (informal and formal) to ensure that there is no drift and delay in care planning for children and measuring the impact of IRO escalations to improve outcomes for children.
- Ensuring IRO's have capacity to be effective in their role as set out in the handbook.
- Implementing the 12.4% increase in fostering allowances and implementing the refreshed recruitment and retention plan.
- Opening two further new Mocking Bird constellations in next six months.
- Restructuring the fostering support teams to incorporate short breaks with a locality approach.
- Reviewing staffing level and adapting our model to enable smaller group home provision making full use of the new regulatory permissions to cluster a number of homes under one registered manager.
- Further develop our Sufficiency Strategy to strengthen our Staying Close approach and our small group home plan by reviewing the current residential estate to ensure it meets the needs of our children.

- Continuing to work closely with locality hubs to safeguard our children in residential homes including to continue success in reducing episodes of children going missing.
- Engaging with health partners to put in place clinical wrap around support for those homes providing care to children and young people with high end emotional health needs or needs arising from behaviours linked to autism and learning disability.
- Improving the Local Housing Offer by working in partnership with Bradford Homes to make a series of improvements and ensure a range of suitable housing options including the reviewing and updating the Joint Housing Protocol.
- Increasing the number of Care Leavers and Foster Carers taking up the offer of Staying Put.
- Providing more preparation for adulthood learning opportunities.
- Improving the quality of PEPs to promote aspiration, ambition and achievement for children including the implementing of the Delegation Portal to provide clarity and consistency in completing PEPs.

**How we will know we are succeeding:**

- Data: on % placement stability, (SDQs) where scores indicate need; care leavers in suitable accommodation, care leavers who are EET; and Children in care and care leavers who have a digital life story.
- Corporate Parenting Panel includes elected members, and key partners.
- Children in Care and Care Leavers service is established.
- % Transition plans at age 17.
- Housing protocol is agreed, approved and operational.
- Number of employment experience opportunities by agency and employer.
- Establishment of celebration events; feedback from children and young people.

## Annexe A

# 6 - Improving the lives of children and young people – by ensuring they have voice and influence

Children and young people have a right to be involved in decisions that affect their lives. Having a voice and influence means they feel that their voices are listened to, valued and can influence decisions and actions. The term 'voice and influence' encompasses consultation, feedback, participation, empowerment; and active engagement.

There is strong evidence that working with children and young people wherever possible, instead of doing things to them or for them produces better outcomes and helps to build confidence and resilience. Giving voice and influence to children and young people in decision making demonstrates our commitment to them and acknowledges their right to shape their own future. It increases trust and can enable positive change even in complex situations.

Agencies need to feel confident that decisions are informed by what children and young people say they want and need, which should lead to better quality services, saving money and using resources more effectively. In this improvement plan, Bradford Children's Services are focusing primarily on voice and influence for children in care and for care leavers. Future developments would include all children open to social care and working with parents.

### What we are aiming for:

- Children in care and care leavers are routinely able to have voice and influence using a variety of approaches.
- Care leavers routinely have access to exit interviews to understand their experience.
- Learning from voice and influence activity is triangulated, analysed, shared, and changes made are communicated back to children and young people and staff.

### How we will do this:

- Strengthening and consolidating the three established voice and influence forums – younger children in care, older children in care and care leavers.
- Establishing a consistent approach to exit interviews with those who are leaving care.
- Introducing a digital mechanism for providing information, seeking feedback and providing a feedback loop to all children in care and care leavers.
- Analysing a range of sources of feedback from children in care and care leavers to inform service development and improvement.
- Identification of opportunities to collaborate with the work for Bradford to become a Child Friendly City.
- Developing quarterly report on triangulated feedback from a range of sources to provide thematic findings and recommendations for improvement and service development.

### How we will know we are succeeding:

- Number of children and young people participating in each of the three groups (younger children in care (CiC), older children CiC and care leavers).
- Number of children and young people attending Corporate Parenting Panel.
- Establishment of digital mechanism and number of children and young people being informed, consulted and providing feedback.
- Number and proportion of Exit Interviews carried out with care leavers.
- Number of children and young people taking part in Chat Back sessions.
- Number of children and young people involved in recruitment interviews.
- Quarterly report is implemented.

## 7 – Strategic leadership ensuring the conditions for success are created

Research and inspection in Children’s Services has shown the importance and impact of high quality leadership. Ofsted (2016) highlight the key role of leadership in driving change and improvement ‘Ofsted has seen effective leadership transform the quality of work with children: leaders with a firm grip on practice at every level, who make sure vulnerable children don’t have to wait for help and that frontline professionals have enough time to work with every family on their caseload’.

Strategic partnership leaders across the district need to focus on ‘creating the conditions for success’ – ensuring there is a strong culture of child focus, line of sight on practice, learning and improvement, clear direction and support for staff with strong visibility and access, and the right partnerships and resources in place to support services.

Bradford has had too many changes in leadership and Ofsted continue to focus on this. The approach to leadership used in authorities like Leeds, West Berkshire and Stockport – a focus on relationships and whole system change - has been shown to have a big impact leading to rapid improvement. This approach will be adopted in Bradford leading up to and beyond the introduction of the new children’s trust arrangements.

### What we are aiming for:

- Improved outcomes for children, young people and families in line with the Children and Young People’s Strategic Plan priorities.
- Working *with* families to enable positive change and approach to co-production.
- Workforce who feel supported.
- Stability, visibility and accessibility of leadership.
- Positive external validation from Ofsted.
- Effective line of sight on practice with children, young people and families across agencies.
- Delivering financial sustainability.
- Council and Corporate Senior Leaders fully and effectively discharge their role as corporate parents.
- Timely resourced and supported Children’s Social Care Service to expedite sustainable improvement.

### How we will do this:

- Establishing the Children and Families Trust, and senior leadership team with an ongoing commitment by Council Leaders to ensure that Children’s Services and Bradford Children and Families Trust is adequately resourced, responding timely and effectively when issues arise.
- Development and implementation of the Intelligent Client Function to support Trust success and monitor finance and performance.
- Completion and implementation of the Service Level Agreements for the delivery of key Council corporate services which will then be monitored via the Intelligent Client Function, this will ensure continuity of support.
- Implementation of a training and development programme for Elected Members to bolster strategic support and challenge role incorporating Corporate Parenting (Total Respect).
- Delivery of the shared and individual Corporate Parenting Objectives agreed by the Council Senior Leadership Team, and all services to have a Corporate Parenting Goal in their service plans.
- Strategic Directors to report on Corporate Parenting activities in their departments to the Corporate Parenting Panel.
- Implementation of a Care Leavers Apprenticeship Programme.
- A child-friendly, co-produced, partnership led Children and Young People’s Strategy for Bradford District.
- Collective commitment and implementation of the Foster Friendly Bradford, and Child Friendly Bradford approaches.
- Developing an improvement team to ensure inspection readiness and relentless focus on improvement.
- Developing a district wide and multi-agency approach to co-production voice and influence for children, young people and parent carers.
- Maximising staff engagement through a range of approaches including: continue programme of staff briefings and consultation; Staff Reference Group and Pulse surveys.
- Agreeing and implementing a financial sustainability strategy.

**How we will know we are succeeding:**

- External validation from Ofsted (Monitoring Visits, JTAI, Focused Visits, Annual Conversation).
- Feedback from staff e.g. through staff briefings and consultation, Staff Reference group, Pulse Surveys, and Social Work Health Check Survey.
- Feedback from children, young people and families.
- Vital Signs reports.
- Financial Reports.
- Improvement plan strands progress and achieve objectives in timescales.

## 8 – A sufficient and stable workforce

When working to improve outcomes for all children and young people, success depends in large part on the capacity and quality of those people who plan, manage and deliver social care services at the front line. We need a skilled and more stable workforce, in sufficient numbers, led and deployed effectively around the needs of children and young people in Bradford. Currently there is an over-reliance on the use of agency workers and a number of vacancies. This leads to instability of service, inconsistency of support to children and their families and an unsustainable budgetary pressure.

### What we are aiming for:

- A clear understanding of what a sufficient workforce looks like.
- Sufficient and stable workforce, including senior leaders and managers which provides good quality, consistent care to children, young people and their families.
- Reduced overspend on agency so that budgets come back in line with plans.
- Bradford to become a 'destination employer' for social workers at all levels.
- Clear career pathways linked to succession plans that mitigate the risk of under resource and skills gaps.

### How we will do this:

- Completing a modelling exercise to understand the optimum structure required to meet demand whilst maintaining a healthy case load; and implement optimum service structure and maintain budget stability.
- Continuing our high quality recruitment campaign that builds on the Bring Heart brand and provides an excellent on-boarding experience including identifying Ambassadors to share recruitment activities and promote on social media and increasing our social media and sector media profile.
- Targeting agency staff to move to permanent recruitment.
- Implement overseas recruitment.
- Attract more newly qualified social workers (NQSW) from out of the district to take their Assessed and Supported Year of Employment (ASYE) in Bradford.
- Develop proposals to improve staff engagement and retention.
- Partnership with local universities to provide additional social work student places for Bradford.
- Holding a series of quality recruitment events.
- Recruiting social workers from overseas.
- Increasing staff retention through our high quality Retention Offer which includes ASYE Programme, and enhanced workforce development opportunities and progression pathways.
- Increase the number of senior leaders across children's services in permanent positions. Success since inspection has been the recruitment of a permanent DCS in the Council and a permanent Chief Executive and Executive Director for Social Care and Practice in the Trust.
- Encouraging and supporting agency staff to move to permanent recruitment.
- Offering a competitive and robust on boarding experience for all new starters.
- Working with local universities to increase the number of social work places and develop and implement proposals to attract those students to work in Bradford.
- Establishing a 'grow your own approach' including introducing a new Bradford MA social work course.
- Increasing service engagement to drive recruitment, training and promoting a learning environment and positive culture.
- Promote career development and support for social workers to encourage more to stay and develop their careers in Bradford.

### How we will know we are succeeding:

- Increase in number of permanent staff and reduction in turnover.
- Decrease in the number of agency staff.
- Evidence of strong staff engagement.
- Impact on budgetary pressures.
- Positive external validation e.g. Ofsted.

## 9 - A constant focus on practice improvement and an agreed practice model

The quality of front line practice is key to improving the lives of children and families in Bradford district. It is the way that our staff work with children, young people and families that will, in the end, make the difference and build the relationships, skills and confidence to make change. Effective practice needs shared values, a good theoretical practice model, good skills and knowledge from staff and the right training, support and supervision from managers. We are implementing our Restorative Based Practice Model which focuses on empowering our children, young people and families to find solutions to their problems, and recognises them as experts of their own lives.

### What we are aiming for:

- Shared values and restorative based model of practice in place across Bradford Children's Services.
- Shared understanding of good practice across the district.
- Highlighted and shared good or outstanding practice.
- High quality, comprehensive, and responsive Continuous Professional Development offer to social work staff with voice of young people.
- Social work students better prepared for post qualification.
- Systematic approach to ensuring workforce development opportunities offered and taken up as a learning outcome for audit and external validation.
- Quality and effective supervisions to staff at all levels by managers and leaders.

### How we will do this:

- Implementing Restorative Practice training and development programme and capacity to embed restorative practices such as maximising family decision making opportunities; restorative approach to complaints; restorative leadership sets. Working with neighbouring local authorities to support implementation.
- Increased multi-agency and multi-disciplinary joint workforce development opportunities.
- Carrying out Appreciative Enquiries through the Safeguarding Partnership.
- Developing additional ASYE Academy Faculties for specific social care roles.
- Continued focus on intelligence to design required workforce development programmes.
- Increased presence of social work specialists on social work courses and young people in workforce development opportunities.
- Implementing an approach to ensuring workforce development opportunities taken up where required and identified.
- Continuing to roll out the delivery of commissioned external auditors Ingson to deliver a Practice Improvement and Management Development Programme to Team Managers.
- Reviewing current supervision policy and training and update accordingly to ensure best fit with our Restorative Practice Model and include timeliness of supervision by focusing in service areas on performance data, and harnessing skills and experience of high performing managers to support others in their improvement.
- Improving the quality and effectiveness of supervision by: implementing enhanced quality assurance approaches which may include routine or thematic audits, peer or leader shadowing, or 360f evaluation.
- Establishing a high quality and consistent approach to group supervision.
- Using new or existing management forums for discussion to arrive at a shared understanding of good quality.
- Continuing to monitor progress through performance and quality assurance information, including compliance of casework and personal supervision, and practice observations, adapting our plans as required based on learning.

### How we will know we are succeeding:

- Proportion of (a) Bradford staff and (b) partner staff trained in Restorative Based Practice Model.
- Proportion of those who have received training who report high quality and impact of training on improved practice.
- Audit shows increasing quality of practice.
- Analysis of workforce development opportunities offered, taken up and followed up when not attended.
- Number of young people involved in workforce development opportunities.
- Number of Appreciative Enquiries carried out.



## 10. A strong and collaborative partnership

Success and change in Children's Services relies on strong and effective partnership working – children, young people and families need joined up working between all local services and these services need to be shaped and funded collectively if they are to succeed. Many of the issues raised by Ofsted and the problems identified in Bradford have related to the effectiveness of partnership working in recent years. There is a strong commitment by partners and a key aim of the Improvement Plan must be to make best use of this to improve outcomes for children and young people and their families. Quotes from the Bradford Commissioner's Report, 2021

*'Whilst there is evidence that the Bradford Safeguarding Partnership is working well, overall partnership working in Bradford is not strong. There is no clear vision for children that is shared and owned by agencies working with children and young people in Bradford.'*

*'Relationships between the local authority and some partners have been strained. There is a desire and commitment to reset these relationships and this needs to be a priority going forward.'*

### What we are aiming for:

- Robust Improvement Plan and high functioning Improvement Board with a relentless focus on improving outcomes for children and young people across the Bradford District.
- Governance arrangement to lead development and implementation of high quality, refreshed Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) and programme ensuring district wide focus and effort on improving outcomes for children and young people.
- Good progress for strengthening the role of Bradford Children's Safeguarding Partnership and district wide response to National Panel Recommendations.
- Collective investment across services in shared priorities, commissioning and plans.
- Collective efforts across Bradford towards realising a Child Friendly City.
- Collective connection to the children and young people's voice and experience.

### How we will do this:

- Establishing Bradford Children's Improvement Board and develop a quality Improvement Plan.
- Holding a series of Turning the Curve events through the Improvement Board to identify shared actions to make improvements in key areas of work with children and young people.
- Holding conversations to explore the establishment of a Children's Partnership.
- Developing a refreshed Children and Young People's Plan and identify who will implement it.
- Working jointly with the Safeguarding Children's Partnership to review and refresh if appropriate the BDSCP Business Plan, ensuring correlation with the Improvement Plan and the CYPP.
- Addressing the local recommendations from the National Panel review report into the death of Star Hobson and Arthur Labinjo-Hughes.
- Utilising Strategic Joint Commissioning and refreshing approach to funding for high cost placements, children and young people with Continuing Health Care Needs and CAMHs.
- Identify opportunities to Child Friendly City – business and community partnership.
- Ensuring that the work of the board is informed by the voice and experience of children and young people in line with the terms of reference agreed by the Improvement Board.

### How we will know we are succeeding:

- Partners report improved satisfaction and confidence in partnership arrangements and joint working.
- Partners report improved confidence and knowledge of key local safeguarding policies and services including 'thresholds' and local hubs.
- Audit and data show improvements to practice in key areas of joint working including CP processes, and domestic violence.
- Feedback from children, young people and families.



## 11 – Buildings, IT, HR, Finance, Business Support and equipment that support quality practice

The physical and support function aspects of the conditions for success are critical in ensuring that services working directly with children, young people and their families can focus the majority of their efforts on improving lives and outcomes. These aspects include the places where people work and the IT kit they use that help remove barriers and support high quality practice. Equally, enabling Human Resources (HR), Finance, Information Governance (IG), Commissioning, and Business Support services play an essential role in improving services, lives and outcomes – and improving the daily worked lives of frontline managers and their teams.

### What we are aiming for:

- Greater integration of services where possibilities exist.
- High quality office accommodation in locations that promote multi-agency and multi-disciplinary working and are family friendly.
- Social work teams feel they have the conditions in place to do a good job including HR, IG, Commissioning, Finance and Business Support.
- IT and digital solutions that reduce bureaucracy and time spent in front of computers and allow more time spent with families.
- Staff wellbeing is promoted.

### How we will do this:

- Agreeing and implementing refreshed and tailored support arrangements for HR, IT, Finance, Business Support, IG, and Commissioning for Children's Services.
- Implementing a workforce development approach for managers for HR, IT, Finance, Information Governance etc.
- Identifying opportunities for co-location of multi-agency services for families e.g. early help with social work and other partners where possible.
- Ensuring that Children's social care office bases are child and family friendly and in locations that promote multi-disciplinary working; longer term plan for co-location around family hubs and schools.
- Securing suitable Business Support capacity to ensure key processes are met, particularly those that are statutory.
- Engaging staff in reviewing and reducing bureaucratic burdens that get in the way of social work with families.
- Promoting staff wellbeing and emotional support, drawing on the offer available through the council, for example, Mindfulness training, staff networks and using regular bulletins for updated information; and encouraging engagement with regular Pulse Surveys for additional insight.

### How we will know we are succeeding:

- Staff satisfaction survey.
- Feedback from managers on time spent on HR, IG and finance activities.
- Number of co-located services.
- Impact on statutory timescales.
- Number of staff engaged in wellbeing offers.
- Reduction in time spent on recruitment and other HR activities by social work managers.

## 12 – Insight - learning and improving through performance management and quality assurance

When providing services to children, young people and their families, and focusing on how to improve, we need to be able to ask ourselves some key questions:

- What did we do?
- How much did we do and did we do it in the right timeframe?
- How well did we do it?
- Did we do the things we should be doing, or set out to do, to achieve overall outcomes for children, young people and families?
- Is anyone any better off?

To be able to answer these questions, our performance management (PM) and quality assurance (QA) arrangements need to be robust and allow us to move from data to insight. There are strong arrangements in Bradford but we are continuously improving what we do.

### What we are aiming for:

- Using insight from PM and QA for greater focus on essential improvement activities that promote improved outcomes.
- Strengthened PM and QA arrangements.
- Strengthened leadership role, understanding, engagement and expertise in QA, improvement and learning.
- Identification of opportunities for further collaboration and partnerships across the district for insight and learning.
- Improved data sharing at the Improvement Board.

### How we will do this:

- Embedding a dispersed leadership approach to performance management and quality assurance, with local areas collaboratively reviewing performance with staff, and performance management/ quality assurance reflected in individual service plans.
- Ensuring the quality of audits through consistent follow up on recommendations and sharing learning in teams.
- Developing a Performance Framework including review of existing suite of performance reports.
- Developing a Quality Assurance report which analyses all QA activity (audits, external validation, inspection, feedback from children and families etc.) and identifies areas and actions for improvement.
- Reviewing and developing the QA role of IRO and CP service.
- Reviewing and developing the QA role of the Safeguarding Partnership.
- Developing partnerships with Born in Bradford and Data Accelerator – initial projects to support Turning the Curve (see strand 4 - Edge of Care).
- Agreeing development programme for middle managers and Team Managers to strengthen their role, understanding, engagement and expertise in PM, QA, improvement, and learning.
- Identifying and sharing partner data sets at the Improvement Board.
- Ensure quality assurance processes do not merely focus on compliance, and provide senior leaders with an accurate understanding of children's experiences of practice quality.
- Increase Social Worker collaboration when conducting audits.

### How we will know we are succeeding:

- New PM and QA framework is implemented
- Quality Assurance report is implemented
- Partners share relevant data reports at the Improvement Board
- % of audits recommendations are followed up

## Improvement Plan on a Page – Key Priority Milestones – *subject to further population as work streams progress*

### Improving the lives of children and young people

Strand of the plan	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sept 23	Oct 23
<b>1 – Front door</b>	Phase 1 + launch of practitioner line	Weekly referral review meeting	Phase 2 + Launch of public line; DT review		Discrete CYP EDT; DT review			DT review			DT review	
<b>2 – Early Help</b>	Start for Life programme leads in post; Co-production workshop	Simpler, Nearer, Earlier (SNE) & Family Help (FH) Theories of Change;	Early Help Strategy published; SNE Plan; Start for life (SfL) delivery plan; FH impl. plan	New processes for simpler access to early help; Impl. SNE; SfL delivery begins	SfL + FH delivery plans will inform future key milestones							
<b>3 – Help &amp; Protection</b>		Private fostering plan										
<b>4 – Edge of Care &amp; Turning the Curve to safely reduce no.s of children in care</b>	All IT equipment upgraded; DfE Funding decision on new home purchases	Increase in SGO and adoption; Born in Bradford collaboration	Children's Homes Procedures Manual update; Induction & training programme		Homes Regulatory Compliance review	Statements of Purpose & Function Review; Refurbishment of the Willows and purchase off The Birches	Staffing structure for the Birches and Ofsted registration				Homes Regulatory Compliance review	Statements of Purpose & Function Review
<b>5 – Children in Care &amp; Care Leavers</b>	Joint Housing Protocol	Children in care + Care Leavers service		Corporate Parenting Strategy	Plan for celebration events						Digital life stories implemented	

## Creating the conditions for success

Strand of the plan	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sept 23	Oct 23
<b>6 – Voice &amp; Influence</b>	Corporate Parenting training; Young voice forum is operational	Checkpoint review of Exit Interviews for care leavers	Quarterly report initiated									
<b>7 – Strategic Leadership</b>												
<b>8 – Workforce</b>	Optimum structure & budget agreed; On-boarding starts of international recruits	New DfE funded Practice Educators commence	40 international recruits started; 15 NQSW in ASYE	New Bradford sponsored MA SW course commences	2 <sup>nd</sup> Staff retention payment							
<b>9 – Practice Improvement &amp; Practice Model</b>												
<b>10 – Partnership</b>												
<b>11 – Buildings, IT, HR, Finance etc.</b>	Business Support capacity review completed	Identifying opportunities for area teams & co-location	Agreeing & implementing refreshed & tailored support arrangements for staff as they move into the Trust		Remaining area teams to move into their perspective localities							
<b>12 – Data &amp; Insight</b>												

## Summary of Ofsted areas for improvement – ILACS Report Published 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023

#	Area for Improvement – to be aligned to existing strand of the plan following consultation	Suggested Strand
1	Council and corporate senior leaders should ensure that they fully and effectively discharge their role as corporate parents, and ensure that children’s social care is provided with the resources and support required in a timely way to expedite sustainable improvements.	7 – Strategic leadership ensuring the conditions for success
2	The sufficiency and stability of the workforce, including senior leaders and managers.	8 – A sufficient and stable workforce
3	The quality and timeliness of assessments of risk and need in all their forms, including the response to domestic violence.	3 – Improving the lives of children and young people who are in need of help and protection
4	The timely completion of statutory safeguarding checks and compliance with regulation regarding private fostering and connected carers.	3 – Improving the lives of children and young people who are in need of help and protection
5	The timeliness and quality of decisions in respect of section 47 enquiries.	3 – Improving the lives of children and young people who are in need of help and protection
6	The currency and accuracy of children’s records.	3 – Improving the lives of children and young people who are in need of help and protection
7	The effectiveness of all multi-agency meetings and their influence in driving children’s plans.	3 – Improving the lives of children and young people who are in need of help and protection
8	The timely escalation to public law outline (PLO) and timely progression of permanence in all its forms.	4 – Improving the lives of children and young people who are on the edge of care – including a Turning the Curve plan
9	The effectiveness and impact of independent reviewing officers (IROs).	5 – Improving the lives of children and young people in care and who have left care
10	Foster carer morale, training, recruitment and retention, including the support offered to special guardians.	5 – Improving the lives of children and young people in care and who have left care
11	The quality and safety of in-house residential provision, including safer recruitment.	5 – Improving the lives of children and young people in care and who have left care
12	The offer of safe, appropriate and sustainable homes for care leavers and their preparation for leaving care	5 – Improving the lives of children and young people in care and who have left care
13	Clarity regarding the process of completing personal education plans (PEPs) so that they are consistently completed by all relevant professionals.	5 – Improving the lives of children and young people in care and who have left care
14	The quality and effectiveness of supervision to staff at all levels by managers and leaders.	9 – A constant focus on practice improvement and an agreed practice model

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# IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

## April to July 2023

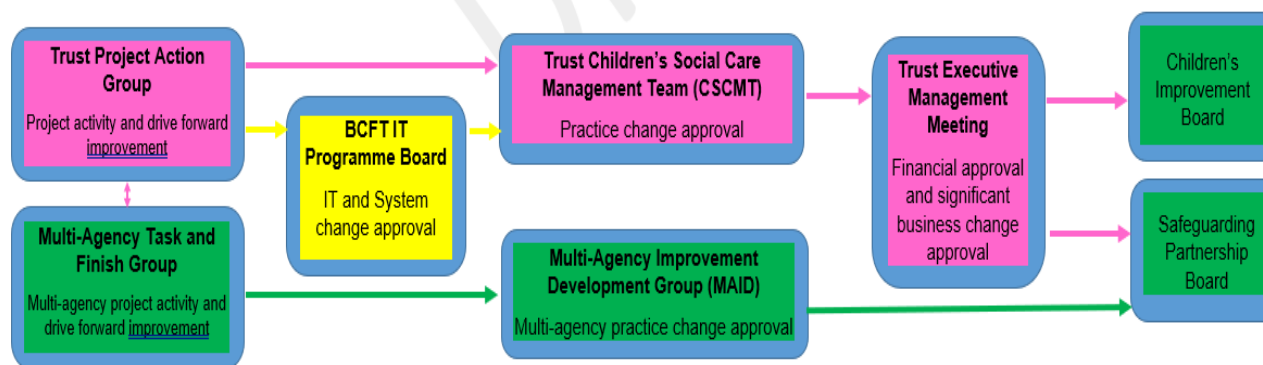


The Bradford Children and Families Trust have continued to deliver on the Improvement Plan approved by the Improvement Board in 2022, which was further adapted in May 2023 in response to the outcome of the Ofsted ILACS Inspection in November/December 2023. The 12 strands remain as below: -

- |                          |                                     |                               |                          |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Integrated Front Door | 4. Edge of Care / Turning the Curve | 7. Strategic Leadership       | 10. Partnership          |
| 2. Early Help            | 5. Children in Care                 | 8. Workforce                  | 11. Buildings and IT     |
| 3. Help and Protection   | 6. Voice and Influence              | 9. Practice Improvement Model | 12. Data and Performance |

The Trust will soon launch their Business Plan covering the next 4 years and the Improvement Plan will be reviewed to align with the Business Plan. The review will map out the priorities with timelines and will also outline areas of responsibilities in relation to practice, business, and Council improvement.

The Trust has put in place governance for practice improvement which includes close working relationships with partner agencies: -



Ingsons Independent Improvement Consultants continue to support the service through their Practice Improvement Programme (PIP) which is additional and/or complimentary to the work Leeds Relational Practice Centre are undertaking (see below). The workforce involved in the previous Practice Improvement Programme gave very positive feedback on the work that was undertaken.

The programme of works is currently being fully planned out but will include: -

- Evaluation of key areas of practice within locality social work teams by randomly selecting pieces of work for each Social Worker within the team on: -
  1. Assessments
  2. Child in Need and Child Protection Planning
  3. Visits to children
  4. Child Protection Enquiries
  5. Supervision
- Train 4 auditors to undertake the Practice Improvement Programme so this work can continue the framework internally.



We have secured continued support from Leeds Relational Practice Centre in the following areas with timescales set for each area of work: -

- Reducing the need for children to become looked after – decision making at legal gateway (September-October 23)
- Turning the Curve (September-December 23)
- Leadership Team – Relational Leadership and Management programme: three sessions focusing on leadership theory, team building, practice and change leadership (September-December 23)
- Separate cohorts for HoS, Service Managers and Team Managers – five sessions exploring leadership theory and how that relates to restorative and relational practice (September 23-March 24)
- Management Oversight and Supervision (September 23-March 24)
- Practice – action learning sets for all Team Managers (January 24 onwards)
- Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Chairs – work around CP systems and processes and decision making (July 23 onwards)
- Quality Assurance (September 23-March 24)
- Workforce – continued support and challenge and work with PSW and HOS on retention of staff and clear CPD and development plan and commitments (September 23-January 24)
- Integrated Front Door – peer review on conversations-based approach 10-12 months post implementation (September-December 23)
- Early Help to family help – support and challenge consultancy (September 23-March 24)
- Improvement Capacity in response to Ofsted (September 23 onwards)
- Restorative Practice Awareness and Restorative Practice Train the Trainer / Champions (December 23-March 24)

This report highlights the progresses and rating of process both pre and post 4 months of the Trust as well as the next steps for the next period.

# 1 Improving the lives of children and young people referred to our Front Door

## 1.1 Embed conversations-based approach to receiving referrals **COMPLETE November 22**

Continues to be monitored through the weekly referral review meeting with continued support from Professor Thorpe and his team (till December 23). Leeds Relational Practice Centre are also undertaking a review in September/October 23.

## 1.2 Establish a weekly referral review meeting and monthly partnership lessons learnt forum **COMPLETE June 23**

The weekly referral review meeting has been established as an internal platform to review contacts and decision making. Themes covered to date include the below with immediate actions undertaken, learning elements and good practice shared with the workforce as well and senior management: - strategies, assessments, NFA and/or advice, early help, domestic abuse, child exploitation, children with disabilities, Health, CAFCASS, Youth Homeless, Education, Probation and EDT contacts. A monthly partnership lessons learnt forum was established in June 23.

## 1.3 Establish a dedicated Emergency Duty Team (EDT) for children and young people.

### Progress

- Children and adults Emergency Duty Team has now separated.
- All staff members relocating to Trafalgar House have completed their Police checks.
- All IT elements have been implemented for the workforce to work out of Trafalgar House
- Workforce commenced working from Trafalgar House on weekends from Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> August, with some midweek working integrated.

### Next Steps

- Secure a Trust contract with Safe and Sound for call handling elements for EDT.
- Review progress at the end of November 23 on relocation with a view for EDT workforce to relocate fully to Trafalgar House 7 days a week.

## 1.4 Domestic Abuse

### Progress

- Domestic Abuse Hub re-established in June 23 with dedicated practice supervisor, two social workers and continued Police resources.
- New pathway developed with inclusion of Police, Health and Education input.

### Next Steps

- Implement new pathways at the end of September 23
- Review Police notifications and the Daily Risk Assessment Meeting in relation to feedback from the Ofsted Monitoring Visit July 23.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23
Increased % of contacts to IFD completed within 1 working day	High	57%	50%	73%	79%
Reduced % of referrals which were opened within 12 months of a previous referral opening	15%-25%	21%	20%	24%	19%
Reduction % of Police Notifications (PNNs)	Low	56%	60%	42%	40%

Other areas within the Integrated Front Door are to be scoped out in 2024:

[1.5 Child Exploitation Hub](#) and [1.6 Missing Service](#)

## 2 Improving the lives of children and young people who need Early Help

### 2.1 Implement the Start for Life programme across the district and enhance support to children in their first 1,001 days.

Programme of works is currently within the Council with close working relationships between the Trust Early Help and the Council.

### 2.2 Early help to be 'Simpler, Nearer and Earlier' – by further developing our Family Hubs arrangements and ensuring they are well known across the district.

#### Progress

- Supportive questions developed as part of the revision of the Early Help Assessment and agreed through Project Action Group with representation from Early Help, Integrated Front Door, Social Work Localities and Children with Disabilities as well as input from families through questionnaires.
- Recruited to Improvement Co-ordinator to focus on this area of work.
- Updates to Early Help Module undertaken to include the supportive role of the Early Help Navigator
- Commenced to roll out Start for Life activities.

#### Next Steps

- Simplify the element of consent to ensure that this does not become a barrier for families accessing support.
- Map out the pathways and family journey and develop an Early Help Model.
- Develop promotional, awareness and communication campaign to include access to Early Help (Free Telephone number and Children's Portal)
- Develop specific training and guidance to be provided to Children's Advisors around accessing Early Help Services and pathways.

### 2.3 Implementing robust arrangements for evaluation and co-production and expanding work with peer supporters and volunteers building on supporting the District to be a safe, green and active place to live, work and play.

Part of 2.1 has remained within the Council.

### 2.4 Harnessing opportunities from the City of Culture to create an inclusive, creative environment for babies, children and young people which celebrates the vibrant diversity of our district.

#### Progress

- The Priority Plan has been drafted in partnership with stakeholders.

#### Next Steps

- Final draft to be available by the end of September 23.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23
Increased number of Early Help Assessments – Tier 2 (universal)	High	45	87	96	89
Increased number of Early Help Assessments – Tier 3 (What good looks like)	High	68	111	110	93
Reduced % of repeat Early Help episodes.	Low	17.9%	15.1%	8.6%	9.8%
Increased rate per 10,000 open to Early Help, closed due to progress made	High	3.5	7.6	6.7	7.2

## 3a Improving the lives of children and young people who need of Help and Protection

### 3a.1 Multi-agency approach of information sharing and decision making within Strategy Meetings and Section 47 Investigations

#### Progress

- Strategy Meeting request form reviewed, simplified and being trialled.
- Strategy Meeting Guidance developed with partner input and widely shared both internally and with partner agencies.
- Strategy Meeting minutes template drafted ready to be trialled with a select number of meetings.
- Communication with workforce and partners highlighting the changes to process to improve timeliness and reduce drift and delay.
- Developed training for Managers on the chairing and recording of Strategy Meetings.

#### Next Steps

- Complete the delivery of training with Managers on the chairing and recording of Strategy Meetings.
- Embed the Strategy Meeting request form and the agreed minutes template into LCS with pull through fields to decrease repetition.
- Develop and deliver training to Specialist Minutes Takers on the recording of Strategy Meetings.
- Develop programme of auditing to ensure scrutiny and progress.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23
Improvement % in timeliness of strategy meetings	High	91%	90%	90%	94%
% of strategy meetings resulting in S47 enquiries	High	72%	78%	74%	76^

### 3a.2 Good quality, consistent and timely Child and Family Assessments with a 'pass the baton' to other services approach.

#### Progress

- Engagement undertaken with families following assessments to inform improvements.
- Supportive questions developed and Early Help Assessment template signed off ready for trial as part of EH 2.2
- Developed assessment, analysis and planning training which has been rolled out to the workforce.

#### Next Steps

- Finalise Child and Family Assessment template.
- Gain results of EH Assessment trial with a select number of families October and November.
- Engage with System Support Team to update Assessment templates within LCS.
- Ingsons to deliver on their Practice Improvement Programme with Social Workers, the initial element being on Assessments.
- Ensure suitable training for all social work practitioners and managers.
- Include in annual schedule of thematic audit.
- Share best practice of the 10-day Assessment Review currently being undertaken in 1 locality area to consider rolling out across the service.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23
Increased % of Assessments completed within 45 days	High	79%	78%	69%	72%

### 3a.5 Increased timeliness of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC) held within 15 working days of the Strategy Meeting

#### Progress

- Implemented early notification approach to inform request for ICPC via email to reduce drift and delay.
- Updated the S47 template to include invitees to ICPC, an area identified as a significant delay in setting up ICPC.
- Attended Team Meetings within Social Work Teams to outline the processes in setting up and ICPC.
- Where there are delays with ICPC, all children have a safety plan in place.

#### Next Steps

- Continuously review progress and identify other areas of drift and delay to drive improvement.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23
Improved % timeliness of ICPC	High	14%	50%	64%	58%
Increase % of Initial Child Protection Conferences resulting in a Child Protection Plan	High	94%	94%	97%	85%

### 3a.6 Effective multi-agency meetings such as Child in Need, Child Protection and Core Group Meetings

#### Progress

- Developed questionnaire to undertake with children and families around their experiences at ICPC and Child Protection Review meetings to include how they are run and the environments of which they take place.
- Developed training around the chairing of meetings within the ASYE and International Social Worker academies, this will be further rolled out as part of this focused area of work.

#### Next Steps

- Carry out the questionnaire with children and families through October and November 23 and produce analysis report and recommendations.
- Repeat process for Child in Need meetings and Core Groups meetings.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23
Improved % timeliness of Child in Need meetings	High	57%	65%	58%	65%
Improved % timeliness of Core Group meetings	High	86%	88%	87%	90%
Improved % timeliness of Child Protection Reviews	High	89%	88%	87%	90%

### 3a.8 Timely completion of statutory safeguarding checks and compliance with regulation regarding private fostering and connected carers.

#### Progress

- Audit review undertaken on all children who are privately fostered, and all assessments are updated with review process in place

#### Next Steps

- Develop awareness campaign across the service and with partners in identifying Private Fostering arrangements.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23
Increase in identified Private Fostering Arrangements	High	11	6	5	5

### 3a.9 Timely escalation to public law outline (PLO) and timely progression of permanence in all its forms

#### Progress

- Case review completed by Ingsons with recommendations on areas of improvement.
- Terms of Reference for Legal Gateway Panel (LGP) have been reviewed and updated.
- Social workers, managers, court consultants and LA solicitors are now working to the newly developed flowchart which sets out the timescales of assessment work needed for all pre-proceedings cases to avoid delay for children has been implemented.
- Discussions have commenced with Child Protection chairs around their input into the referral to LGP and the reviewing of children's PLO plans.
- The Assessment Plan is now within LCS so that Child Protection chairs can ensure that the PLO plan dovetails with the CP plan.
- The Letter Before Proceedings template has been reviewed and updated to ensure it uses simple and clear language to explain what the Trust is worried about and the impact on the children. This is now integrated and completed on LCS and are quality assured by the allocated Court Consultants in the service areas.
- Monthly tracker meetings have now been established.
- Court consultants are now completing monthly audits of a pre-proceedings case files which has then benchmarked for consistency.

#### Next Steps,

- Leeds Relational Practice Centre to undertake a review of the LGP and decision making through observations and put forward recommendations of areas of improvement complementary and/or in addition to those made by the case review undertaken by Ingsons.
- Develop PLO tracking process onto LCS with performance dashboard.
- Legal Gateway Panel agenda and minutes pro-forma to be reviewed and updated to ensure full discussion is held and reflected in minutes consistently across all chairs.
- Training Package to be updated to reflect Child Protection chairs input to the referral to LGP and the reviewing of children's PLO plans.
- Collate data on the number of children subject to Child Protection Plans/Pre-proceedings that had a Family Group Conference and or Family meeting to identify whether families are involving wider family members and support networks to help them make changes as well as to identify alternative carers for children.
- Develop a mandatory pre-proceedings training package to include writing of the Letter Before Proceedings.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23
average time in, working days, between decision to progress to Legal Gateway Panel and the Panel taking place	Data platform currently being developed				

3a.10 [Improve the response to young people aged 16 and 17 are risk or whom find themselves homeless](#)

*Progress*

- Agreed areas of strengthening process such as Duty to Refer (DTR) to be completed by IFD (shift from localities responsibility) and referral to Children’s Society to be made at point young person deemed homeless – both to be integrated into the Protocol.
- Linked in with Rochdale to view their Quality Assurance Framework (work in Bradford to commence in the New Year)

*Next Steps*

- Review and update the Youth Homeless Protocol
- Undertake Audits on all young people that have presented as homeless since 1<sup>st</sup> April.
- Explore options of there being a dedicated Housing Options Officer for young people who are homeless.
- Link in with Systems Support on adding recording elements for DTR and Advocacy and data performance options.
- Develop and deliver training on roles and responsibilities and awareness of children who are homeless.
- Meet with DfE in October to give update on progress and seek advice on updated Protocol.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23
Increase in number of children offered support from Children’s Society (advocacy)	High		50		

3b.1 [Improving the lives of children and young people with a disability](#)

*Progress*

- Elements of Project Action Plan has been incorporated into other workstreams such as Early Help Pathways and Assessment.

*Next Steps*

- Redevelop the plan via a multi-disciplinary Project Action Group.

The below elements for Help and Protection are to be scoped out mid-late 2023 / early 2024: -

3a.4 [Improved response to Domestic Abuse \(linked to 1.4\)](#)

3a.7 [Good quality, SMART and child focused Safety Planning \(CiN and CP\) in a timely manner with plans reviewed and progressed throughout the journey of the child](#)

3a.11 [Education Attendance and Elective Home Education](#)

## 4 Improving the lives of children and young people who are on the edge of care – including. Turning the Curve

### 4.1 Establish an Edge of Care Service to safely support children to avoid coming into care and for children to go home where safe to do so.

#### Progress

- Edge of Care Service is now live consisting of 2 Edge of Care Teams, Family Group Conferencing and Family Time
- Recruitment process has successfully completed for the Edge of Care Teams, including the Service Manager role.
- Training and development plan has been drafted together with the team.
- Funding secured for respite home for the children on the edge of care.

#### Next Steps,

- Develop Family Time Project Action Plan to deliver on ensuring there are sufficient resources and appropriate child friendly venues.
- Develop and Edge of Care Project Action Plan to ensure the edge of care model is embedded.
- Purchase the respite home with the funding secured for the use of respite for children on the edge of care.
- Hold workforce and partner sessions to raise awareness of Edge of Care Service responsibilities and routes into support for children on the edge of care or identified needing wrap around support to return home.

### 4.2 Partnership Turning the Curve platform that identifies actions to address numbers of children who need statutory interventions including being in care

#### Progress

- Interim Assistant Director in post to focus on Turning the Curve with additional support from Leeds Relational Practice Centre
- Collated previous forum information and draft action plan to aid future workings on Turning the Curve

#### Next Steps,

- Hold initial meeting chair by Interim Assistant Director with representation from internal managers and partner agencies to identify priorities.
- Link in with Born in Bradford to identify data linked to priority areas.

### 4.3 Establish a Placements Review Panel

#### Progress

- The terms of refence of the placement review panel has been reviewed and updated.
- In addition, a high-cost external placement panel commenced in August 23 with 54 reviews being completed to date.

#### Next Steps,

- Newly formed panel will commence in September 23.
- Continue the review of high-cost external placements through September and October.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23
Decrease in number of children entering care	Low	35	60	66	32
Increase in the number of children returning safely home	High	13	12	19	5



## 5 Improving the lives of children and young people who are in care and leaving care

5.0a Children in care and care leavers Corporate Parenting Strategy and Action plan is developed and implemented; and

5.0b Corporate Parenting Panel provides robust governance for the Corporate Parenting Strategy and Plan

5.0c Develop and implement Training and development programme for Elected Members to bolster strategic support and challenge role incorporating Corporate Parenting (Total Respect) – is this something we are doing

### *Next Steps*

- The development of the Corporate Parenting Strategy to be discussed as part of the overall Corporate Parenting Agenda at the Strategic Leadership away day on 10<sup>th</sup> October 23. This will include strengthening the Board membership as well as developing the additional strands such as a 'Champion Model Approach' and introduce themed Boards.
- Continue to deliver on the areas identified as part of the National Adviser Feedback.

5.0c Sufficiency Strategy is fit for purpose, iterative and responsive to change

### *Progress*

- The Sufficiency Board has now been established and met on 3 occasions
- Capital funding has been approved to refurbish the homes.

### *Next Steps,*

- Program board to be set up to progress the refurbishment of our homes.
- Sufficiency workshop will take place in September/October 23 to agree the sufficiency strands that will deliver the outcomes as set out in the strategy.
- Joint placement panel has been reviewed, updated terms of reference to be agreed and implemented.

5.0d Establish dedicated children in care and leaving care service – **COMPLETE June 22**

Leaving Care Service have moved across to sit with Children in Care and now sitting together under one Head of Service

5.0e Life Story platform to store all children and young people's memories and memorabilia whilst throughout the journey in our care

### *Progress*

- Platform developed by IT services and system support.
- Business Case produced and submitted to secure staffing resources to complete development, manage the system and train the workforce.

### *Next Steps*

- Develop the Project Action Plan to launch the Life Story platform.

## 5.1 Systematically identify those children whose care orders can be discharged and take action to discharge where appropriate (ongoing)

### Progress

- Continue to track long term Children in Care to identify those requiring discharge of their Care Orders to remain home and those progressing to Special Guardianship Orders with their connected or mainstream carer.
- Following tracking as of end July 2023:
  - There has been a total of 42 Care Orders Discharged in this period, as follows:
    - 26 children who were placed with their parent's subject of Placement with Parent Regulations
    - 16 children who are now subject of an SGO to foster carers/connected carers.
  - There are a further 27 children before the court awaiting Discharge of Care Order, as follows:
    - 7 children who are placed with their parent's subject of Placement with Parent Regulations
    - 20 children who are placed with foster carers/connected carers pursuing SGO's.
  - There are a further 57 children in the process of assessment with a view to discharge of Care Order, as follows:
    - 22 children who are placed with the parent's subject of Placement with Parent Regulations
    - 35 children who are placed with foster carers/connected carers pursuing SGO's.
- There have been no applications made to remove children who are subject of Placement with Parent Regulations in this period.
- There have been 11 children who have ceased to be looked after, following the making of their Adoption Order. There are a further 7 children who are awaiting the court making of their Adoption Order, with a further 20 with plans of adoption at various stages.

### Next steps

- Continue to track permanence plans including to review children whose orders can be discharged.
- Complete work to enable remainder of children to safely leave care.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23
Improved stability – decrease in % of children with 3 or more placements in year	Low	10%	9%	8%	7%
Increase % of children who have all their visits carried out according to timescale (month)	High	83%	79%	82%	82%
Increase % of reviews carried out on time in the month	High	94%	99%	97%	99%

## 5.2a Transition work to adult services for those who need them is timely and managed jointly by adults and children's services

### Progress

- Eco-Map Assessment Tool has been implemented across the service as part of an overall programme.
- Skills have been identified within the Personal Advisor establishment with a few to utilise these to support care leavers through direct work.

### Next Steps,

- Continue to embed Eco-Map Assessment Tool across the service to ensure consistency.
- Develop template and deliver training and support on the development of sustainability plans.

5.2b Joint Housing Protocol for care leavers is agreed, approved and operational

*Progress*

- Discussions have commenced with Housing around quality of housing and the housing offer as well as to review the Joint Housing Protocol.
- Buildings have been identified for Care Leavers which will equate to 8 self-containing flats for our care leavers. Gap analysis has been completed and draft bid has been put together.

*Next Steps,*

- Produce a presentation around housing issues which will include issues such as waiting times and current insufficiency of housing for Care Leavers with an aim to increase housing stock.
- Submit the bid for the identified properties.

5.2c Improved access to mental health support

*Progress*

- Representation from Leaving Care on Pillar 3 of the health improvement strand which has focus on mental health services, including for our Care Leavers.

*Next Steps,*

- System Support to build into LCS the last 3 SDQ scores within the Pathway Plan tool (prompting Social Worker analysis and Team Manager quality assurance)
- Leaving Care Service Manager and Principle Social Worker to work through well-being tools (including mindfulness and social prescribing) to best use with care leavers.

5.2d District wide approach to increasing work-related opportunities for Care Leavers to ensure they are in education, employment, or training

*Progress*

- Plan of support is being developing with Employment and Skills to support care leavers.

*Next Steps,*

- Further develop areas of improvement to increase opportunities for care leavers.

5.2e Children in care and care leavers' achievements and celebrated by the district

*Next Steps*

- Identify cohort of young people to plan and set up an away day which will identify further next steps and priorities for improving the service.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23
Increase % of young people in education, employment, or training	High	67%	67%	66%	66%
Increase % of young people in suitable accommodation	High	93%	93%	93%	93%
Increase % of young people in touch	High	71%	70%	67%	58%

5.3 Independent Fostering Agency and preparation for inspection framework due 7 to 10 months post establishment

*Progress*

- Appointed to interim Head of Service
- Developed Fostering Service plan to ensure inspection ready

*Next Steps*

- Appoint to permanent Head of Service
- Set priorities and order of works for service improvement and inspection readiness

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23
Increase % of Foster Carers with up-to-date review	High	33%	31%	27%	23%
Increase % of up-to-date supervision with Foster Carers	High	55%	52%	50%	51%
Increase in the number of applications to become a Foster Carer	High	87	91	66	63

## 6 Improving the lives of children and young people by ensuring they have a voice and influence

### 6.1 Strengthen and consolidate the three forums for children in care and care leavers including more structured approach to working with the Corporate Parenting Panel

#### *Progress*

- A select group of young people supported the Knife Angel Project with the Youth Justice Project
- Consultation undertaken children in care and care leavers by Virtual School to develop their children and young people offer and to develop the Virtual School Awards.
- Chat Back session held with the theme on Recreational and Cultural Opportunities for Care Experienced Young People which generated lots of positivity.
- Discussions commenced with health professionals for young people to support in the development of the Health Passport for Care Leavers.
- Successfully recruited to Engagement Officer.

#### *Next Steps*

- Re-establish programme and themes for young people to attend and/or be involved with Corporate Parenting Panel.
- Hold next Chat Back session in September 23 which is around Personal Safety, Youth Justice Service and community Police.

### 6.2 Establish a digital mechanism to routinely communicate with, seek feedback from all children in care and care leavers and provide information on the outcome of voice and influence activities.

#### *Progress*

- Children and young people are engaged and involved in the development of the tools used to obtain their voice as part of the setting up Mind of My Own (MOMO).

#### *Next Steps*

- Utilise the Shout Element of the Mind of My Own App which offers three surveys a year.

### 6.3 Establish consistent and routine approach to Exit Interviews for Care Leavers

#### *Progress*

- Newly appointed co-ordinator continues with the development of the Exit Interviews.

#### *Next Steps*

- Implement the Exit Interview into LCS with links to reporting mechanisms to monitor performance and quality.
- Develop a quarterly report to feedback the findings from care leavers to further inform service improvement and delivery.

### 6.4 Develop quarterly report on triangulated feedback from a range of sources to provide thematic findings and recommendations for improvement and service development.

#### *Progress*

- Agreed quarterly qualitative and quantitative data reporting on, demographics, attendance, and themes of events. Format agreed.

#### *Next Steps*

- Develop and embed mechanism to produce quarterly qualitative and quantitative data reporting (seen through QA Service) – ongoing. Update from the data team is that data will need to be recorded on LCS moving forward. The Participation Service awaits an update regarding this.

6.5 Identify opportunities to collaborate with the work for Bradford to become a Child Friendly City

*Next Steps*

- Newly appointed Co-ordinator to pick up this piece of work.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23
Increase % in participation with children and young people	High	42	18	15	7
Increase % in the number of young people leaving care undertaking an exit interview	High	2	1	1	Not available

Please note that for the months of June and July, the Service has been without a Voice and Participation Co-ordinator, this is the reason for reduced attendance over these months. We have now successfully appointed to the role in August, and they are actively engaging with our children and young people.

The below elements for Edge of Care are to be scoped out mid-late 2023 / early 2024: -

6.6 Expand participation forums and activities for all children provided with a service

## 7 Strategic Leadership ensuring the conditions for success are created

### 7.1 Establish the Bradford Children and Families Trust, and senior leadership team

#### Progress

- Bradford Children and Families Trust went live on 1<sup>st</sup> April 23 and all identified staff transferred with line managed put in place.
- Executive Director in post since June 23
- Leadership structure agreed and will include 4 Assistant Directors under the Executive Director – advert closed.

#### Next Steps

- Complete the recruitment process for the 4 Assistant Directors

### 7.2 Develop an improvement team to ensure inspection readiness and relentless focus on improvement.

#### Progress

- Improvement and Inspection Team has been agreed with Service Manager, 1 x Co-ordinator, 1 x Support Officer and an Assistant in post.
- successful recruited to 2 further Support Officers who will commence in October.

#### Next Steps

- Complete the recruitment process for 1 remaining Co-ordinator.

### 7.3 Develop a district wide and multi-agency approach to co-production, voice and influence for children, young people and parent carers.

#### Next Steps

- Future discussion at the Improvement Board needed to identify existing agency approach and activity, and areas for development to avoid duplication and identify opportunities for joint work and learning. To include - Start for Life, Children's Social Care, Third Sector, SEND, Child Friendly Bradford, Health, Police and other agencies working with children and young people.

### 7.4 Maximise staff engagement through a range of approaches including: continue programme of staff briefings and consultation; Staff Reference Group and Pulse surveys (Apr-Jun 23) – **COMPLETE June 23**

#### Progress

- Weekly Bradford Children and Families Trust All Staff calls, and Monthly joint Local Authority and Trust drop-in session established.
- Weekly newsletter established and distributed to workforce and TrustNet live for the workforce.
- Staff Reference Group continues within the Trust.
- Staff surveys are being built into the workforce workstream that is to be led by HR with input from the Principle Social Worker
- Undertaken engagement sessions with the workforce to set out the values for the Trust.

### 7.5 Stabilising and building leadership capability and capacity.

Recruiting to four Assistant Director posts in children social care with appointments and start dates during the autumn.

### 7.6 Developing a Corporate Hub Team

Recruitment drive to roles in Finance, HR, ICT, Strategy/Policy. These roles will stabilise the corporate roles which provide professional advice and partnering with children services.

## 8 A sufficient and stable workforce

As a new organisation the Trust agreed its name, logo and associated imagery. As a new employer this presented a number of challenges specifically in the attracting and recruitment space where we had no brand presence.

### 8.1 An ongoing high quality recruitment campaign that builds on the Bring Heart brand and provides an excellent on-boarding experience

#### *Progress*

- Establishing the trust as an employer and recruiter
  - Using the Bring Heart micro-site we changed the brand and existing content and developed a new narrative to represent the Trust's style and tone. We are starting to see an increase in traffic to this site. In the last 37 days it has increased by 126%.
  - Re-established and developed new routes to market including social media presence. The social media platforms are known for reaching passive and active candidates.
  - Current advertising on 4 job boards
  - Using a 'campaign' approach for three roles. Social Workers, Team Leaders and Service Managers. This includes webinar events and attending CC Live in October.

#### *Next steps*

- Attraction activities
  - Webinars and CC Live events during the autumn. This will be the first opportunity to gauge the interest in the Trust and more importantly converting the curious to a candidate. Led by a Head of Service they are creating a group of colleagues to support this process.
  - Develop a pro-active approach to talent acquisition via social media intel. We will know who has visited our website and developing a way of auto-messaging to see if they are interested in a chat.
  - To encourage trust colleagues, play an active role on social media by re-posting roles to their networks.
  - To review of the recruitment process
  - Simplifying the adverts and role profiles which will lead to a more efficient time to market.
  - Build recruitment capability and capacity which leads to an overall better value for money resource model.

### 8.2 Implementing International Recruitment

#### *Progress*

- Onboarding and training completed for 28 international social workers with all building their caseloads.
- Agency social workers released or redistributed as international social workers reach their 3 months employment date.

#### *Next Steps*

- Complete the onboarding for the remaining 14 international social workers appointed in 2 cohorts (September and December/January)

### 8.3 Working with local universities to increase number of social work places and develop and implement proposals to attract those students to work in Bradford – **COMPLETE March 23**

Successful workforce members have commenced their MA programme at Bradford University with casual opportunities identified to top up their earnings on top of their bursary.



How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23
Increase number of progression for workforce	High	1	1	3	2
Increase in the number of new starters	High	35 new starters: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Manager x 1</li> <li>• Practice Supervisor x 2</li> <li>• Social Worker Level 3 x 11</li> <li>• Social Worker Level 2 x 8</li> <li>• ASYE x 13</li> </ul>			
Decrease in the number of leavers	Low	21 leavers: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team Manager x 5</li> <li>• Practice Supervisor x 1</li> <li>• Social Worker Level 3 x 2</li> <li>• Social Worker Level 2 x 10</li> <li>• ASYE x 3</li> </ul>			

## 9 A constant focus on practice improvement and agreed practice model

### 9.1 Implement Restorative Practice training and development programme and capacity to embed restorative practices.

#### *Progress*

- Leeds Relational Practice Centre have secured funding to continue their Restorative and Relational Practice programme with senior leaders and the workforce – this has been mapped out.

#### *Next Steps*

- Timetable, diarise and roll out Restorative and Relational Practice training starting with senior leaders and then to the rest of the workforce.

### 9.2 Increase shared multi-agency workforce development opportunities e.g., Trauma Informed Practice, Professional Curiosity etc. with the Safeguarding Partnerships Learning and Development Subgroup

#### *Progress*

- Learning and Development colleagues developed Poverty and Neglect workshops/training aim at multi-agency workforce.
- Professional Curiosity multi-agency tri-board event took place on 22<sup>nd</sup> June and attended by staff across the agencies working with both adults and children's services. There were several guest speakers in the morning and then workshops in the afternoon.
- Continue to co-facilitate the professional practice sessions with involved in the design and content of these sessions.
- Session delivered looking at working with children with disabilities.
- Co-facilitated a session looking at Fabricated and Induced Illness.

#### *Next Steps*

- Learning and Development Officers to collaboratively work with the safeguarding board to co-deliver the Poverty and Neglect training to a wider multi-agency audience.
- Continue to review and develop on opportunities for multi-agency workforce development opportunities.

### 9.3 Carry out Appreciative Enquiries through the Safeguarding Partnership.

This piece of work is being led by the Safeguarding Partnership.

### 9.4 Develop additional Academy Faculties for specific social care roles.

#### *Progress*

- The Business Support Academy has been launched and has been well attended by Business Support Officers who are engaged in the development of the core training and progression opportunities.
- Student Faculty will be launched within the next few weeks to tie in with the next cohort of students. 6 Specialist Practice Educators have been recruited to and in post.

#### *Next Steps*

- Bespoke training to be commissioned around specialist minute taking and touch typing.
- Community Resource Worker faculty to commence in October 23
- Social Worker faculty to commence in December 23
- Practice Supervisors faculty to commence in January 24

## 9.5 Increase presence of social work specialists on social work courses as part of Teaching Partnership; and young people in workforce development opportunities

### *Progress*

- Meetings held with the university around the development of the curriculum where practitioners from the Trust can work jointly with the academics to deliver lectures looking at the social work theory and how these fits with practice. A number of practitioners continue to be involved and more invites have been received to participate.
- Ongoing discussions with the College so that there is an increase in staff involvement in co-delivery.
- Practitioners are part of the social work admission interviews.
- Young people – there is an increased use of our young people in the interview process including the assessment centres. The new audit process has been launched now and so for this month the auditors will be speaking to children and young people as part of the audit. The findings from this will help to shape practice.
- New Participation Co-ordinator recruited to work with the Teaching Partnership

### *Next Steps*

- Participation co-ordinator to link in with the team and meet with Teaching Partnership to look at how we can work together to include our children and young people more in our practice development.

## 9.6 Implement an approach to ensuring workforce development opportunities taken up where required and identified.

These are picked up within all workstreams were a Learning and Development Service is represented on each.

## 9.7 The quality and effectiveness of supervision to staff at all levels by managers and leaders

### *Progress*

- Leeds Relational Practice Centre developed Management Oversight and Reflective Supervision programme which is diarised to commence with Social Work Team Managers from September to November 23.

### *Next Steps*

- Develop timetable to deliver Management Oversight and Reflective Supervision sessions with Early Help, Youth Services, Youth Justice Services, Placements, Fostering and Residential.

## 10 Strong collaborative partnership

### 10.1 Establish Bradford Children's Improvement Board and develop a quality Improvement Plan (Sept 21-May 23) – **COMPLETE May 23**

The Improvement Board is established and operational from April 2022 and Improvement Plan developed. The outcome of the recent ILACS in November 2022 is reflected in the plan with an Ofsted Action Plan in development and will be shared with Ofsted by 15th May 2023.

### 10.2 Establish multi-agency platforms for joint working and practice improvement (May-Aug 23) – **COMPLETE Aug 23**

#### *Progress*

- Multi-agency Improvement Development Group (MAID) established chaired by the Chair of the Bradford Safeguarding Board
- Task and finish group members identified to progress and implement discrete pieces of work, most recently Strategy Meetings
- Three weekly meetings diarised between Children's Social Care and Police colleagues.
- Executive director links with Health colleagues to identify and deliver of required areas of improvement.

### 10.3 Address the local recommendations from the National Panel review report.

The recommendations and actions identified from the Practice Review have been embedded into the improvement plan. The learning has been shared across the service and the impact will be scrutinised and reviewed as part of the Children's Safeguarding Performance subgroup.

### 10.4 Utilise Strategic Joint Commissioning and refreshing approach to funding for high-cost placements, children and young people with Continuing Health Care Needs, and CAMHs.

#### *Progress*

- Review undertaken on all high-cost placements.
- Terms of Reference for the Joint Placement Panel are in final draft and will be signed off by partners on 7 September 2023.

#### *Next Steps*

- Implement the Terms of Reference for the JPP once sign off agreed with all partners.
- Develop an analysis report with learning from the high-cost placements review to present and discuss with partners at the next improvement board.

## 11 Buildings, IT, HR, Finance, Business Support and equipment that support quality practice

- 11.1 Agreeing and implementing refreshed and tailored support arrangements for HR, IT, Finance, Business Support, IG, and Commissioning for Children's Services.
- 11.2 Implementing a workforce development approach for managers for HR, IT, Finance, Information Governance etc. Currently under review, planning and development under the new Trust arrangements.
- 11.3 Identifying opportunities for co-location of multi-agency services for families e.g., early help with social work and other partners where possible.
- 11.4 Ensuring that Children's social care office bases are child and family friendly and in locations that promote multi-disciplinary working; longer term plan for co-location around family hubs and schools.  
Discussions continue with estates around identifying suitable accommodation out in the localities for East and South.
- 11.5 Securing suitable Business Support Services and Support capacity to ensure key processes are met, particularly those that are statutory.

### *Progress*

- Review of all "as is" Business Support tasks, responsibilities and processes has been completed to establish a successful operating model
- Significant investment in all areas across Business Support initiated in April 2023 in line with increased service demand and delivery
- Current active recruitment to all Business Support posts including management positions to drive support that enables Children's Services to operate efficiently and effectively.
- Development and roll out of a Business Support Academy in partnership with Learning and Development giving opportunity for continued personal and professional development, build on expertise, best practice and recent improvements.
- Developed and implemented clear performance metrics and set individual performance goals for the financial year 2023/24.
- Briefing paper progressed to ensure Information Governance is adequately resourced to include sufficient management oversight of additional strategic responsibilities as of 1st April 2023 BCFT go live.
- Streamlined the process for Annex C and E information requests from the Police and Crown Prosecution Service and progressed with an automated process.
- Reduced manual redaction for Subject Access requests ensuring even the most voluminous requests utilise electronic redaction software.
- Provided much needed link between Business Support and Corporate Customer Care team at an operational level to assist with the reminder and escalation process and improve complaint handling response times
- Centralised the specialist minute taking in order to comply with statutory obligations and work with Police and Health, improving resilience and response times

### *Next Steps*

- Continue to review induction process model for all new starters to ensure and increase current compliance with dedicated business support pathway in relation to processes and systems

11.7 Promoting staff wellbeing and emotional support, drawing on the offer available through the council, for example, Mindfulness training, staff networks and using regular bulletins for updated information; and encouraging engagement with regular Pulse Surveys for additional insight.

*Progress*

- There are 4 more 8-week using 'team mindfulness' approach and module on Mindfulness for Leaders has been mapped out for 2023 and these are being rolled out.
- Feedback around the Breathworks course is very positive, 69% of staff reported higher levels of positive affect following the course, 63% of staff reported lower levels of negative affect following the course.
- Quality of life - 72% of staff experienced an increase in score. 21 out of the 32 respondents began the course with a clinically concerning score for quality of life. By the end of the course, (71%) had moved to a from clinically concerning to a healthy score. "I feel like learning mindfulness has changed me so much, learnt a lot about myself able to manage stress better have techniques to use when I wake up in the night help me settle back to sleep. Felt more in control of things like feeling I have more power to choose how I respond to situations".

*Next Steps*

- Final eval report due early September and will need to be considered and any next steps agreed.

The below areas are to be scoped out and planned into at the end of 2023 / start of 2024

11.6 Engaging staff in reviewing and reducing bureaucratic burdens that get in the way of social work with families.

11.8 Children's Portal utilised to its full potential

11.9 Delegation Portal utilised to its full potential across the partnership

## 12 Insight – learning and improving through performance manage and quality assurance

12.2 Ensure the quality of audits through follow up on recommendations and sharing learning in teams.

*Progress*

- From 1<sup>st</sup> August, Audit forms are built into and to be completed within LCS and includes feedback from children and families.

*Next Steps*

- Continue to deliver training and promote compliance with managers to better inform recommendations and shared learning.

12.4 Develop and implement a Quality Assurance report which analyses all QA activity (audits, external validation, inspection, feedback from children and families etc.) and identifies areas and actions for improvement

New ways of undertaking audits only commenced in August 23; first report will be available mid to end of September.

12.6 Review and develop the QA role of the Safeguarding Partnership

*Progress*

- Assistant Director within the Trust as become the Chair of the Safeguarding Partnership sub-group.
- Discussions have commenced on introducing multi-agency auditing.

*Next Steps*

- Develop multi-agency auditing framework.

The below areas are to be scoped out and planned into at the end of 2023 / start of 2024.

12.1 Embed a dispersed leadership approach to performance management and quality assurance, with local areas collaboratively reviewing performance with staff, and performance management / quality assurance reflected in individual service plans.

12.3 Develop and implement a Performance framework including review of existing suite of performance reports.

12.5 Review and develop the QA role of IRO and CP service.

12.7 Agree development programme for middle managers and Team Managers to strengthen their role, understanding, engagement and expertise in PM, QA, improvement, and learning.

12.8 Identify and sharing partner data sets at the Improvement Board

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23
Increase in the number of audits completed	High	16	40	44	26
Decrease in the number of Inadequate audits	Low	2	2	4	11
Decrease in grade change at moderation	Low	-	40%	46.15%	16.67%

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## **Report of the Chair of the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on Wednesday 27 September 2023**

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### **Subject:**

**Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Work Programme 2023/24**

### **Summary statement:**

**This report includes the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2023/24.**

### **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

**Community Cohesion and Equalities related issues are part of the work remit for this Committee.**

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Cllr Debbie Davies  
Chair – Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Portfolio:**

**Children and Families**

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**Overview & Scrutiny Area:**

**Children’s Services**

## **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report includes the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2023/24, which is attached as appendix 1 to this report.
- 1.2 Also attached as appendix 2 to this report is a list of unscheduled topics for 2023/24.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Council constitution requires all Overview and Scrutiny Committees to produce a work programme.

## **3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1 The Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the responsibility for "the strategies, plans, policies, functions and services directly relevant to the corporate priority about services to children and young people." (Council Constitution, Part 2, 6.3.1).
- 3.2 Best practice published by the Centre for Public Scrutiny suggests that "work programming should be a continuous process". It is important to review work programmes, so that important or urgent issues that arise during the year are able to be scrutinised. Furthermore, at a time of limited resources, it should also be possible to remove areas of work which have become less relevant or timely. For this reason, it is proposed that the Committee's work programme be regularly reviewed by members of the committee throughout the municipal year.
- 3.3 The work programme as agreed by the Committee will form the basis for the Committee's work during the year, but will be amended as issues arise during the year.
- 3.4 This Committee has agreed to undertake a programme of detailed scrutiny reviews, with the Committee undertaking the Elective Home Education Scrutiny Review, in the last municipal year. The other scrutiny reviews include:
  - Looked after Children.
  - Children's Homes.
  - Fostering.
  - Children's Mental Health.
  - Recruitment and retention of Social Workers.
  - SEND, (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities).
  - YOT, (Youth Offending Team).
- 3.5 At its meeting on Tuesday 15 March 2022, the Executive, during their discussions relating to supporting children and their families to thrive post pandemic, recommended that the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee undertake a scrutiny review into Child Poverty across the District.

3.6 The Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on Wednesday 1 February 2023, agreed to undertake a Scrutiny Review into persistent absence across schools in the Bradford District.

#### **4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL**

4.1 None.

#### **5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

5.1 None.

#### **6. LEGAL APPRAISAL**

6.1 None.

#### **7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

##### **7.1 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

None.

##### **7.2 TACKLING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY IMPLICATIONS**

None.

##### **7.3 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

None.

##### **7.4 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

None.

##### **7.5 TRADE UNION**

None.

##### **7.6 WARD IMPLICATIONS**

Work of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee has ward implications, but this depends on that nature of the topic.

##### **7.7 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING**

This will be a key area of work for the Committee.

## **7.8 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT**

None.

## **8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS**

None.

## **9. OPTIONS**

9.1 The Committee may choose to add to or amend the topics included in the 2023-24 work programme for the committee.

9.2 Members may wish to consider any detailed scrutiny reviews that it may wish to conduct.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 That members consider and comment on the areas of work included in the work programme.

10.2 That members consider any detailed scrutiny reviews that they may wish to conduct.

## **11. APPENDICES**

Appendix One – 2023-24 Work Programme for the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Appendix Two – Unscheduled Topics.

## **12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Council Constitution.

2022-23 Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme.

# Democratic Services - Overview and Scrutiny

## Childrens Services O&S Committee

Scrutiny Lead: Mustansir Butt tel - 43 2574

### Work Programme

Agenda Items	Description	Report Author	Comments
<b>Wednesday, 12th July 2023 at City Hall, Bradford.</b> Chair's briefing 22/06/23. Report deadline 29/06/23.			
1) Appointment of Co-opted members.	Voting Co-opted Members - Joyce Simpson, (Church Representative), Paret Governor Representative Fauzai Raza & Shifa Simab. Non Voting C-opted Members - Teacher Secondary School Representative Tom Bright, Children's Social Care - Dr Samina Karim.	Mustansir Butt.	
2) Draft Childrens 2023-24 Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme.	The proposed areas of work to be considered in this muncipal year.	Mustansir Butt.	
<b>Wednesday, 27th September 2023 at City Hall, Bradford.</b> Chair's briefing 06/09/23. Report deadline 14/09/23.			
1) Monitoring the Children's Services Improvement Plan.	Report to also include performance data.	Marium Haque/Picklu Roychoudhary/Charlotte Ramsden.	Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendation from Wednesday 1 March 2023.
2) Work Programme.	There is s a need to regularly review the work programme, in order to priortise and manage the work.	Mustansir Butt.	
<b>Wednesday, 4th October 2023 at Remote Virtual Meeting.</b>			
1) Child Poverty Scrutiny Review.	Remote informal information gathering session with the volumtary sector and and Bradford Council Officers.	Mustansir Butt.	Council resolution.
<b>Wednesday, 18th October 2023 at City Hall, Bradford.</b> Chair's briefing 27/09/23. Report deadline 05/10/23.			
1) Bradford District Children and Young People Plan.	The Plan be presented to the Committee prior to it being finalised. To also include details of priorities and outcomes.	Niall Devlin/Jenny Cryer/Kate Welsh/Helen Johnston.	Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendation from Wednesday 15 March 2023.

# Childrens Services O&S Committee

Scrutiny Lead: Mustansir Butt tel - 43 2574

## Work Programme

Agenda Items	Description	Report Author	Comments
<b>Wednesday, 18th October 2023 at City Hall, Bradford.</b>			
Chair's briefing 27/09/23. Report deadline 05/10/23.			
2) Work Programme.	There is s a need to regularly review the work programme, in order to priotise and manage the work.	Mustansir Butt.	
<b>Wednesday, 29th November 2023 at City Hall, Bradford.</b>			
Chair's briefing 08/11/23. Report deadline 16/11/23.			
1) National Review Action Plan.	Progress against the review recommendations, together with examples of some positive outcomes.	Darren Minton/Marium Haque/Michelle Turner/Ruth Terry/Richard Padwell.	Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendation from Wednesday 30 June 2022. Been deferred on two occassions at the request of Officers.
2) Health Services to looked after Children and care leavers.	The Annual Report to also include: Details of the progress against the Action Plan; Outcomes of the Children's Health Assessments being undertaken; Percentage of Children's Health Assessments being done within St	Michelle Turner/Cath Murray/James Drury.	Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendaion from Wednesday 14 December 2023.
3) Sufficiency Strategy, to also include in-house Fostering Service and Adoptions.	Progress against the strategy and the recommendations contained within it.	Marium Haque/Charlottle Ramsden/Picklu Roychoudhary.	Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendation from Wednesday 15 March 2023.
4) Supporting Families Programme.		Charlotte Ramsden/Cath Dew/Andrew Edwards.	Member Request.
5) Young Carers.	To also include measures of performance and details of outcomes and improvements delivered.	Charlotte Ramsden/Cath Dew.	Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendation from Wednesday 23 March 2022.
6) Work Programme.	There is s a need to regularly review the work programme, in order to priotise and manage the work.	Mustansir Butt.	

# Childrens Services O&S Committee

Scrutiny Lead: Mustansir Butt tel - 43 2574

## Work Programme

Agenda Items	Description	Report Author	Comments
<b>Wednesday, 20th December 2023 at City Hall, Bradford.</b>			
Chair's briefing 30/11/23. Report deadline 07/12/23.			
1) Raising Attainment Strategy.	Demonstate key outcomes.	Marium Haque/Sue Lowndes.	Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommnedation from Wednesday 1 February 2023.
3) Work Porgramme,	There is s a need to regularly review the work programme, in order to priotise and manage the work.	Mustansir Butt	
<b>Wednesday, 24th January 2024 at City Hall, Bradford.</b>			
Chair's briefing 04/01/24. Report deadline 11/01/24.			
1) SEND Services.	This Committee requests that a further progress report be presented in 12 months, which also includes the deatiled Action Plan, RAG rating and the full Written Statement of Action.	Marium Haque/Niall Devlin.	Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendations from Wednesday 18 January 2023.
2) Findings from the review into children's health assessment caseloads.		Michelle Holgate/Dawn Lee.	Deferred from Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on Wednesday 15 February 2023.
3) Work Programme.	There is s a need to regularly review the work programme, in order to priotise and manage the work.	Mustansir Butt.	
<b>Wednesday, 7th February 2024 at City Hall, Bradford.</b>			
Chair's briefing 17/01/24. Report deadline 25/01/24.			
1) Exploitation Annual Report.	To include detailed information of porgress being made.	Darren Minton/Marium Haque/Charlotte Ramsden.	Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendation from Wednesday 15 February 2023.
2) Monitoring the Children's Services Improvement Plan.		Marium Haque/Charlotte Ramsden.	
3) Audit findings relating to the quality of Social Work Practice.		Charlotte Ramsden/Amandip Johal.	Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendation from Wednesday 18 January 2023.

# Childrens Services O&S Committee

Scrutiny Lead: Mustansir Butt tel - 43 2574

## Work Programme

Agenda Items	Description	Report Author	Comments
<b>Wednesday, 7th February 2024 at City Hall, Bradford.</b>			
Chair's briefing 17/01/24. Report deadline 25/01/24.			
4) Bradford District Children and Young People Plan.	Progress to include relevant data in respect of the various elements listed under the following four key themes: Education; and Mental Health; Places & Communities; Development.	Marium Haque/Charlottle Ramsden/Niall Devlin/Jenny Cryer/Jenny Physical Cryer/Helen Johnston.	Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendation from Wednesday 15 March 2023.
5) Work Programme.	There is s a need to regularly review the work programme, in order to priortise and manage the work.	Mustansir Butt.	
<b>Wednesday, 13th March 2024 at City Hall, Bradford.</b>			
Chair's briefing 21/02/24. Report deadline 29/02/24.			
1) Mental Health issues relating to Children's Social Care.	Report to focus on the Written Statement of Action and the Action Plan to support the delivery of this and outcomes delivered. Findings and recommendations from the Deep Dive Review, to also be included.	Ali Jan Haider/David Sims/Christina Hollaway/Kristain Farnell.	Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee from Wednesday 15 February 2023.
2) Educational Standards - Early Years to Key Stage 4.	To scope the report with the Chair, Deputy Chair and Overview & Scrutiny Lead.	Marium Haque/Sue Lowndes.	Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendation from Wednesday 15 February 2024.
3) Work Programme,	There is s a need to regularly review the work programme, in order to priortise and manage the work.		



# Democratic Services - Overview and Scrutiny

## Scrutiny Committees Forward Plan

### Unscheduled Items

#### Childrens Services O&S Committee

Agenda item	Item description	Author	Comments
1 Child Poverty Scrutiny Review.		Mustansir Butt.	Council resolution from Tuesday 15 March 2022.
2 Scrutiny Review into persistent absence across schools in the Bradford District.		Mustansir Butt.	Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendation from Wednesday 1 February 2023.
3 Draft Scrutiny Review Report - Elective Home Education.	Key findings and recommendations from the scrutiny review.	Mustansir Butt.	

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