

# **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**

---

## **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.

---

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.