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City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Agenda for a meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on Wednesday, 12 December 2018 at 4.30 pm in Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford

Members of the Committee – Councillors

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	BRADFORD INDEPENDENT GROUP
Gibbons **M Pollard**	**Engel** **Arshad Hussain** **S Khan** **Mullaney** **Peart**	**Ward**	**Sajawal**

Alternates:

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
Hargreaves **Senior**	**Bacon** **Firth** **Mir** **Thirkill** **Wood**	**Humphreys**

VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

Shain Wells	Parent Governor Representative
Sidiq Ali	Parent Governor Representative
Claire Parr	Church Representative (RC)
Joyce Simpson	Church Representative (CE)

NON VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Kerr Kennedy	Voluntary Sector Representative
Tom Bright	Teachers Secondary School Representative
Irene Docherty	Teachers Special School Representative

Notes:

- This agenda can be made available in Braille, large print or tape format on request by contacting the Agenda contact shown below.
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- If any further information is required about any item on this agenda, please contact the officer named at the foot of that agenda item.

From:
Parveen Akhtar
City Solicitor
Agenda Contact: Fatima Butt
Phone: 01274 432227
E-Mail: fatima.butt@bradford.gov.uk

To:

A. PROCEDURAL ITEMS

1. ALTERNATE MEMBERS (Standing Order 34)

The City Solicitor 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 may remain in the meeting and take part fully in discussion and voting unless the interest is a disclosable pecuniary interest or an interest which the Member feels would call into question their compliance with the wider principles set out in the Code of Conduct. Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to the Member concerned or their spouse/partner.

(2) 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.

(3) Members are also welcome to disclose interests which are not disclosable pecuniary interests but which they consider should be made in the interest of clarity.

(4) Officers must disclose interests in accordance with Council Standing Order 44.

3. 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.

(Fatima Butt - 01274 432227)

4. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

To consider referrals that have been made to this Committee following publication of this agenda.

The Committee is asked to note the referrals and decide how it wishes to proceed, for example by incorporating the item into the work programme, requesting that it be subject to more detailed examination, or refer it to an appropriate Working Group/Committee.

B. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ACTIVITIES

5. UPDATED INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS ON THE WORKLOADS OF CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 1 - 18

The report of the Interim Strategic Director of Children's Services (**Document "P"**) presents the most recent information on the workload of Children's Social Work Teams and updates Members on key pressures on the service. The workload analysis is based on activity up to 30th September 2018.

Recommended -

That the Committee consider further reports in the 2018-19 work programme to ensure the continuation of safe workloads and practice into the future given the current financial climate.

(Di Drury – 01274 437077)

6. OFSTED INSPECTION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY CHILDREN'S SERVICES (ILACS) 19 - 42

The report of the Interim Strategic Director of Children's Services (**Document "Q"**) provides updated information about the Council's response to the OFSTED ILACS judgement published.

Recommended -

(1) That the actions taken in response to OFSTED inspection findings be noted.

(2) That the plans to establish the Improvement Board be noted and comments be provided.

(3) That the Committee monitors the Improvement Plan at regular intervals.

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(Jim Hopkinson – 01274 432904)

7. CHILDREN MISSING FROM HOME AND CARE 43 - 44

The report of the Interim Strategic Director of Children's Services (**Document "R"**) highlights the work being undertaken in Bradford to prevent children being missing from home or care the actions taken to protect young people when they do go missing and the provision that is in place to meet their needs.

The report covers the period April 2017 to October 2018.

Recommended -

That the work being undertaken to safeguard looked after children who go missing in Bradford be received.

(David Byron – 01274 432986)

8. CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION

Under Section 436A of the Education and Inspections Act 1996 all local authorities have a statutory responsibility to *"make arrangements to enable them to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children residing in their area who are not receiving a suitable education. In relation to children, by 'suitable education' we mean efficient full-time education suitable to her/his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have."*

The Deputy Director of Children's Services will present a report (**Document "S"**) on Children Missing from Education including information on Unregistered Schools and Elective Home Education.

Recommended -

That Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive and note this report on matters relating to Children Missing Education, Elective Home Education and Unregistered Schooling.

(Marium Haque – 01274 431078)

9. CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2018-19

This report of the Chair of the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee (**Document "T"**) presents the Committee's Work Programme 2018-19.

Recommended -

That the Work programme 2018-19 continues to be regularly reviewed during the year.

(Licia Woodhead – 01274 432119)

THIS AGENDA AND ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER

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City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of the Interim Strategic Director Children's Services to the meeting of the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be held on 12th December 2018

Subject: **P**

Updated Information for Members on the Workloads of Children's Social Care Services

Summary statement:

The report presents the most recent information on the workload of Children's Social Work Teams and updates Members on key pressures on the service. The workload analysis is based on activity up to 30th September 2018.

Report Contact: Di Drury,
Head of Service
Social Work
E-mail: di.drury@bradford.gov.uk
Cat Moss, Data Analytics & Intelligence Officer, OCX

Portfolio:
Children & Families

Overview & Scrutiny Area:
Children's Services

1. SUMMARY

This report presents information on the workload of Children's Social Work Teams and updates Members on key pressures on the service. The workload analysis is based on activity up to 30th September 2018. This report examines any changes in workload and demand on resources since the last report to the end of July 2018.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Since Lord Laming's Report in 2003 into the death of Victoria Climbié there has been a clear expectation from Government for Elected Members to be routinely and regularly informed of the workloads for Children's Social Care Services. The Government requires that information as set out in this report be regularly presented to Members to ensure that the Council is fulfilling its statutory duties.

2.2 The Laming Report acknowledged that across the country there were serious pressures and demands on social workers, with some case loads being unmanageable and thus potentially putting the safety and welfare of children at risk.

2.3 Lord Laming also made clear that practitioners, teams and individuals should all have a mixed case-load of both child protection and children in need work. No social worker should handle only the more complex and emotionally demanding child protection cases. This report provides information to elected members that this recommendation has been put into practice in Bradford.

2.4 In September 2018, Ofsted held an unannounced inspection under the new "ILACS" (Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services) framework. This inspection judged that: *the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection was inadequate; the experience and progress of children in care and care leavers requires improvement to be good and the impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families also requires improvement. The grading for overall effectiveness was also inadequate* (and has to be because the judgement for children in need of help and protection was inadequate). This outcome was deeply disappointing and concerning to everyone involved, the whole staff team throughout Bradford children services are committed to improving the quality of social work, care and protection afforded to our most vulnerable children and young people. An Improvement Board has been established and a detailed Improvement Plan has been implemented to start this work.

2.5 Ofsted found that the quality of social work services had deteriorated rapidly since the JTAI in April 2017 and that the major contributory factor was "the increase in demand for services at the same time as the loss of a significant number of experienced social workers and managers, who left to work for other authorities".

2.6 Information provided in this report is produced from information held on the Social Care Records System (LCS). Internal and external audits confirm that elected members can have a high level of confidence in the accuracy of information produced for this report. There are minor adjustments to historical values presented

to Committee in previous reports, as a result of delayed data entry within LCS; where there are significant variations, these are noted within the body of the report.

Workforce/Workload Issues

2.7 The first section of this report presents workforce and workload information for care management services. This includes Social Workers and Community Resource Workers in the Multi Agency Screening Team (MASH), assessment teams, children young people and family teams, specialist teams working with children with complex health and disabilities, teams working with looked after young people and the statutory work of the Through Care Team. The workload analysis does not include agency staff except where stated. Additionally the workload report does non include non case holding social workers which include some social workers within the MASH, Early Help Gateway, placement support, fostering, court consultancy and our Emergency Duty Team.

2.8 There are 290 Social Workers employed by children's services of which 143 Social Workers (132 full time equivalents) are located in Locality Child and Family or Assessment Teams (including agency workers). In addition there are 32 Community Resource Workers (CRWs) (27 full time equivalents) across the service (mainly in Through Care service)

2.9 At 30th September 2018 there were 33 agency Social Workers and 1 agency CRW being utilised within the social work services. The length of time agency Social Workers have been in post is as follows:

10 - under 3 months
20 - 3 to 5 months
2 - 6 to 11 months
1 - 12 months or more

44% of Bradford's Social Workers (including agency workers) are experienced social workers with high levels of experience and training. This percentage is the same as it was in September 2017. There is a concern that our turnover rate in children's social care has increased over the last year and that we have lost more of our experienced staff. These staff have left for various reasons but exit interviews show that some neighbouring authorities pay more than Bradford and this has been a factor for Social Workers. We currently have 71 newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs or ASYE in their first year of practice) across the MASH, assessment teams and children, young people and family teams. This is 53.78% of the workforce. A further 11 are due to start following the last recruitment taking the total to 82 (62.12%). All agency workers are experienced Social Workers and when replaced are likely to be replaced predominately by NQSWs. Some of the Child and Family teams are significantly made up of NQSWs with 1 or 2 experienced social workers; this is a challenge in terms of allocating cases, as these workers cannot hold child protection cases until they have been in post for 6 months plus. This increases the pressure on the experienced social workers in these teams.

2.10 The average caseload per full time equivalent (FTE) Social Worker is 19.0 cases,

an increase from 17.9 in September 2017. Social Workers take on a mixed caseload of child protection and children in need work. The average caseload per full time equivalent Community Resource Worker is 14.2 (compared to 12.2 in September 2017). The most recent published figures from the DfE (2016-17) showed a national average of 17.8 cases per FTE social worker and a regional average of 18.1 cases.

2.11 However, it is important to note that the pressure is currently not evenly spread across the service and this is being addressed within our Improvement Plan. Caseloads are still too high in the child and family teams in localities, who hold the complex child in need, child protection and court work. Some caseloads are over 25 (children) despite best efforts to reduce them down to a more manageable 18 children. This is partly due to well documented retention issues in these teams and the necessity to re-allocate cases having to be allocated to more experienced staff when newly qualified social workers join the team. Less experienced social workers on the ASYE programme (12 months Assessed Year in Practice) have protected caseloads of 16 children or less and should not be asked to carry complex cases in their own right.

2.12 The workload has also increased in these teams due to demand rising from more children being referred into the service for social work assessments and more children progressing to child protection plans and care proceedings. The workloads have continued to increase, whilst we have experienced a churn of social workers, which makes reducing caseloads very difficult. In Bradford we have continued to ensure that every case is allocated and children are not left without a social worker. It would not be good practice to move Social Workers from teams with more manageable case loads to teams where case loads are not at the levels that they should be. This is because it would mean that more children experience a change of Social Worker. Instead, Agency workers have been recruited to these teams whilst further permanent Social Workers are recruited.

2.13 49% of cases where a child has a child protection plan are allocated to an experienced social worker, a figure which has risen from 38% in September 2017.

2.14 41% of Public Law proceedings cases are allocated to an experienced social worker, a reduction from 55% in September 2017. The average number of Public Law cases per FTE Social Worker is 2.9, the same number as in September 2017.

2.15 In respect of Looked After Children held in our Through care Teams, 47% are held by an experienced social worker. The average number of LAC cases held Through care Social workers is 18.1

2.16 In summary, there has been increasing demand across much of Social Care over the past 12 months. This includes an increase in referrals, assessments and an increase in the number of care proceedings. An analysis of the first 100 children becoming Looked After in 2018 demonstrated that 15% were of CEE backgrounds and 38% half were not born in Bradford (either newly arrived communities or families that had relocated to Bradford for a variety of reasons). We are working hard with our partners to better manage demand and try, wherever possible, to support children and families without the need for statutory services.

(Refer to Appendix 1 – a) Workforce and b) Case Load analysis)

Child Protection

2.17 The overall trend in the numbers of children who are the subject of a child protection plan has increased over the last year. There were 654 at 30th September 2018 compared to 561 in September 2017. The numbers of children who became the subject of a plan has risen, with 724 plans starting in the year to September 2018 compared to 642 in the year to September 2017. The numbers of children's plans ending has increased although less sharply, with 610 plans closed in the year to September 2018 compared to 588 in the year to September 2017.

2.18 The proportions of children subject to plans under each category at 30th September 2018 are: Physical abuse 17%; sexual abuse 8%; emotional abuse 48%; neglect 27%. The proportions subject to physical or abuse have risen in the last year while the proportion subject to neglect has fallen. Quality assurance through 'challenge panels' indicates that reasons for a child requiring a child protection plan are accurately and consistently recorded.

2.19 The numbers of children subject to child protection plans within Bradford is slightly higher than regional and national averages. The current rate of children subject to a child protection plan is 46.2 per 10,000 child population (at 30th September 2018) whereas the most recent published national rate is 45.3 per 10,000 and the regional average is 46.1 per 10,000 (at 31st March 2018

2.20 During the year to 30th September 2018, 8.0% of children had become subject to a plan for a second time within 2 years, a deterioration compared to the previous year when it was 7.5%. Ofsted considers the percentage of children becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time to be an important indication of the appropriateness of earlier interventions. A high rate is viewed as indicative of unsatisfactory outcomes to earlier plans.

2.21 The percentage of Child Protection Plans lasting for 2 years has increased slightly over the last year, with 3.6% in the year to 30th September 2018; this compares to 3.0% in the year to September 2017. This low figure is positive and is evidence that the vast majority of children subject to Child Protection plans have their cases progressed and either stepped down to Child in Need or stepped up to legal processes as appropriate, without drift and delay.

2.22 All children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan have an allocated Social Worker.

(Refer to Appendices 2.1 – 2.4)

2.23 As at 30th September 2018 there were 377 children and young people identified as being at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE). This includes children assessed as low, medium and high risk. These children and young people are reviewed through our multi agency CSE Hub team and their risk assessments are regularly reviewed. All high and medium risk cases have a qualified allocated social worker and input from the CSE Hub which includes reviews at a daily meeting.

Looked After Children

2.24 The number of looked after children has seen a sharp rise in the last 18 months. The number of children being looked after is 1018 at 30th September 2018 – significantly higher than the figure of 952 in September 2017. This equates to 71.9 children being looked after per 10,000 child population; this is higher than the national rate of 62 per 10,000 but lower than our statistical neighbour average of 82 per 10,000 (at 31st March 2017).
(Appendix – 2.5).

2.25 Strong permanence arrangements are a contributing factor towards reducing the upward trend of LAC, alongside closely monitored care proceedings cases and discharges of care order. There were 26 adoptions and 12 Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) in the year to September 2018, compared to 38 adoptions and 25 SGOs in the year to September 2017. 294 Looked After Children are in Family & Friends foster placements, more than the 235 in September 2017; there are on-going Allowances being paid to families for 327 children on an SGO who were previously Looked After.

2.26 The long term stability of Looked After Children has fallen in the last year. 61.7% of children who had been looked after for two and a half years or more had been in the same placement for at least 2 years (compared to 70.5% the previous year). This is slightly lower than the most recently published national average of 70% (March 2017).

2.27 All Looked After Children have an allocated qualified social worker.

2.28 The number of children subject to Public Law Care Proceedings cases has risen over the past 12 months. At 30th September 2018 there were 181 cases in Public Law Care Proceedings (there were 166 at September 2017). The speed of PLO decision making has also improved significantly.

2.29 The Through Care After Care service has restructured to 8 teams. Each team will carry an area of specialism for example health, housing, education, participation and unaccompanied asylum seekers. The intention is that each team will carry a caseload of young people from first becoming CLA through to young people of leaving care age and post care. This team and hub approach to working strengthens the support to young people and broadens the team's knowledge as a whole.

2.30 The arrangements to respond to missing children in Bradford is seen as best practice. There is a dedicated Missing Co-ordinator who works alongside a Police Officer to ensure that appropriate reporting strategies are in place and there are strong links with the multi agency safeguarding hub. Return to home interviews are followed up for all young people and regular meetings take place with the managers of both internal and external children's homes to ensure that the local procedures are being followed.

2.31 The local restorative protocol between Children's Specialist Service / Youth

Offending Team and West Yorkshire Police has been reviewed and will be rolled out across the service during November. This has been changed to reflect the B Positive Pathways model and the Police officers that have been recruited to this role. A ten point plan is included to ensure that all cases of a child looked after being involved with the Police has been followed before Police are contacted. The protocol gives clear advice to carers as to what they need to do should a child's behaviour warrant a call to the Police.

Referrals and Assessments

2.32 The number of referrals received by Social Care Services has increased to approximately 710 per month over the last year, compared to about 560 per month for the year before.

2.33 The number of assessments being undertaken by Social Workers is also high. About 950 assessments are carried out each month (this includes regular review assessments in the long term teams), indicating a continuing high volume of in depth assessment work being undertaken.

2.34 The breakdown of Factors of Need associated with assessments carried out in 2016-17 and 2017-18 can be found in Appendix 2.7.

Children in Need

2.35 The total number of children being included within the CIN Census in 2017-18 was 10,191, compared to 9,338 for the previous 12 months, indicating that an increased number of children are in contact with social care services compared to the previous year. There were 4,078 children's cases open as at 30th September 2018.

Workforce Development

2.36 Our social work recruitment takes place bi monthly; The Principal Social Worker (PSW) is leading on this and has established a more streamlined process in order to prevent a delay in candidates starting with the authority. Between January 2018 and November 2018 we have had 41 qualified social workers leave the service with 58 social workers starting in post. The majority of the leavers were experienced social workers (level 3 with at least 2.5 years experience). Of the new starters, 4 were experienced social workers (level 3 with at least 2.5 years experience), 4 were social workers (level 2 with at least a year plus experience); the remaining 33 new starters were Newly Qualified Social Workers (in their first year of practice). We currently have a further 13 qualified social workers due to start from the 3rd December 2018 onwards; of these 1 is an experienced social worker (2.5 years plus experience), 2 are social workers (at least a year plus experience and the remaining 10 are Newly Qualified Social Workers. Once in post the total of new starters from January 2018 is 71. The next recruitment is in December and there are currently 3.5 vacancies with some maternity leaves to cover also. However, Social workers continue to leave the service; the PSW is undertaking exit interviews in order to understand this.

2.37 It remains a challenge to recruit more experienced social work staff; there is currently an imbalance in the Assessment and Child and Family Teams between

experienced social workers and Newly Qualified Social Workers which impacts on case loads. We are working on initiatives to improve staff retention, which include ensuring manageable caseloads, regular good supervision, a strong ASYE programme (Assessed and Supported Year in Education – the programme for our Newly Qualified Social Workers) and a review of the continual professional development opportunities and career prospects for our Social Workers.

2.38 A retention allowance (reviewable annually) has been brought in for the Multi-Agency Service Hub (MASH), Assessment and Child and Family Teams. This brings Bradford's pay scales in line with Calderdale but they remain below most other Local Authority Neighbours.

2.39 The Principal Social Worker (PSW) has also improved the induction process for newly appointed social workers who all now receive a comprehensive induction pack and induction programme. This has been well received by new starters. We also have good attendance at practitioner led forums to share knowledge across the service.

2.40 An issue arising from the Health Check for Social Workers was lack of IT equipment. The initial pilot of tablet computers for social workers has gone well and we are now rolling out further 250 devices. Social workers are very excited about this as they believe it supports increased engagement with children and young people and also enables social workers to work more flexibly and saves time for other tasks.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

None.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

None.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE ISSUES

None.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

None.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

None.

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None.

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

None.

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None.

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

None.

7.6 TRADE UNION

None.

7.7 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

A stable and experienced Children's Workforce is needed to ensure that our Corporate Parenting responsibilities are met. Currently, caseloads and experience amongst our Through Care Teams are reasonable.

7.8 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY ASSESSMENT

None.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

9. OPTIONS

There are no options for consideration.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee consider further reports in the 2018-19 work programme to ensure the continuation of safe workloads and practice into the future given the current financial climate.

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Workload & Caseload Analysis
Appendix 2 – Workload Pressures
Appendix 3 – Departmental Sickness Monitoring

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.

Appendix 1:

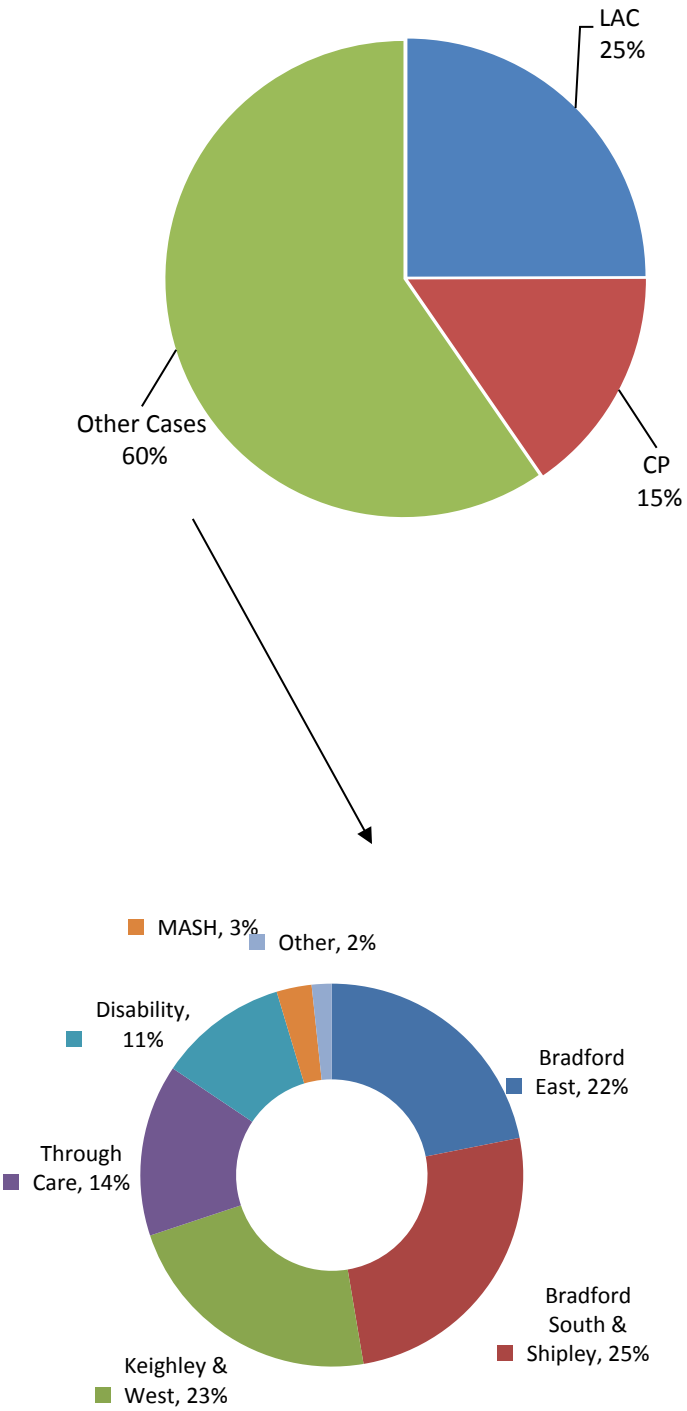
a) Workforce/Workload Analysis

		30th Sept 2017	31st Dec 2017	31st Mar 2018	30th June 2018	30th Sept 2018
Workforce Profile	Total number of directly employed Social Workers in post	182 170 FTEs	180 169 FTEs	182 171 FTEs	159 148 FTEs	142 132 FTEs
	Total number of directly employed Experienced (Level 3) Social Workers	76 71 FTEs	69 65 FTEs	62 58 FTEs	51 46 FTEs	43 39 FTEs
	Agency Social Workers	9 (5.0% of all SWs)	12 (6.6% of all SWs)	19 (10.0% of all SWs)	32 (17.8% of all SWs)	33 (20.0% of all SWs)
	Percentage of SWs who are at Experienced level (including agency)	44%	42%	40%	44%	44%
	Total number of directly employed Community Resource Workers (CRWs) in post	40 36 FTEs	38 34 FTEs	34 29 FTEs	29 25 FTEs	32 27 FTEs
	Agency CRWs	1 (2.7% of all CRWs)	1 (2.9% of all CRWs)	1 (3.3% of all CRWs)	1 (3.9% of all CRWs)	1 (3.5% of all CRWs)
Workload	Average number of cases per FTE Social Worker	17.9 (19.5 in Long Term Teams)	18.8 (19.3 in Long Term Teams)	19.6	19.3	19.0
	Average number of cases per FTE CRW	12.2	11.3	12.3	16.2	14.2
	Average number of LAC cases (including cases in proceedings) per FTE LAC case holding worker	8.6 (15.3 in Through Care teams)	7.7 (14.5 in Through Care teams)	8.0 (14.5 in Through Care teams)	8.9 (16.4 in Through Care teams)	10.1 (18.1 in Through Care teams)
	Average number of CP cases per FTE CP case holding worker	7.3	6.5	6.9	7.3	8.1
	Average number of cases in Public Law Care Proceedings per FTE PLCP case holding worker	2.9	3.0	2.6	2.6	2.9
Utilisation of Resources	Percentage of LAC cases allocated to an Experienced level Social Worker	53% (479 cases)	53% (478 cases)	49% (484 cases)	47% (487 cases)	47% (480 cases)
	Percentage of cases where a child has a Child Protection Plan allocated to an Experienced level Social Worker	38% (186 cases)	37% (158 cases)	42% (241 cases)	43% (253 cases)	49% (315 cases)
	Percentage of Public Law Proceedings Cases allocated to an Experienced level Social Worker	55% (82 cases)	48% (65 cases)	55% (93 cases)	45% (85 cases)	41% (75 cases)

b) Caseload Analysis

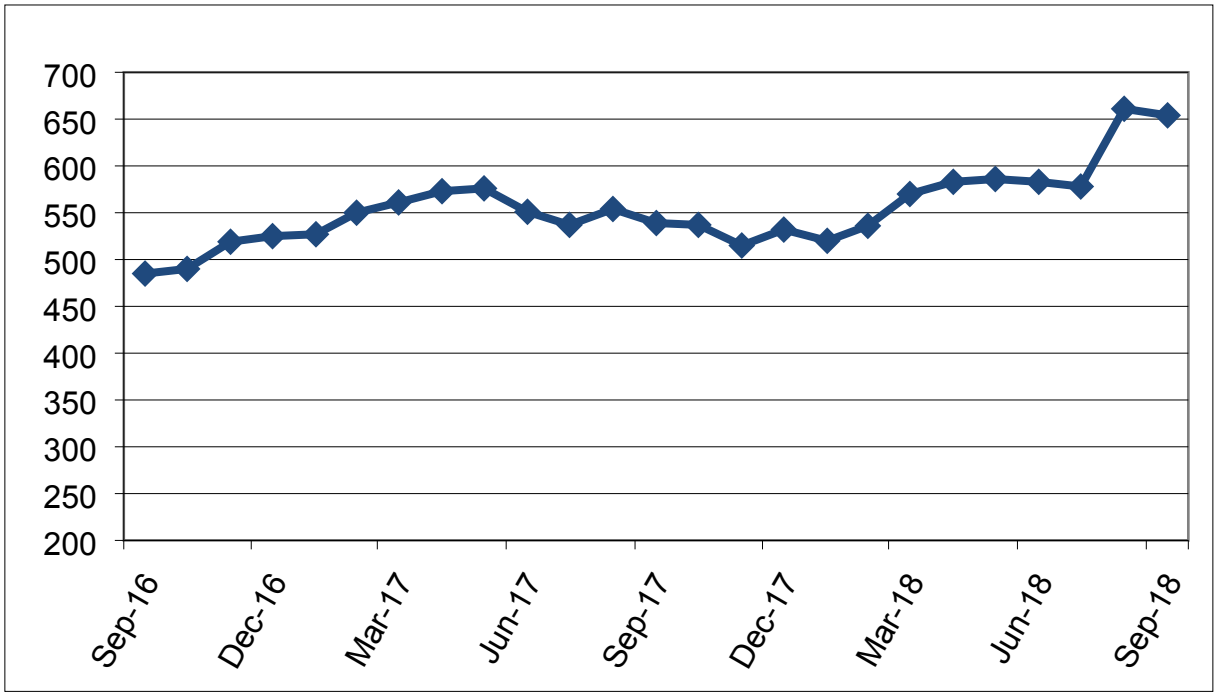
Active cases held by Social Workers and Community Resource Workers working in Care Management Teams at 30th September 2018.

Of the 4078 active cases held by Children's Social Care: 25% were looked after children (1018), 15% were children who were the subject of a Child Protection Plan and not also LAC (629) and 60% were other Children in Need, including cases still undergoing assessment.



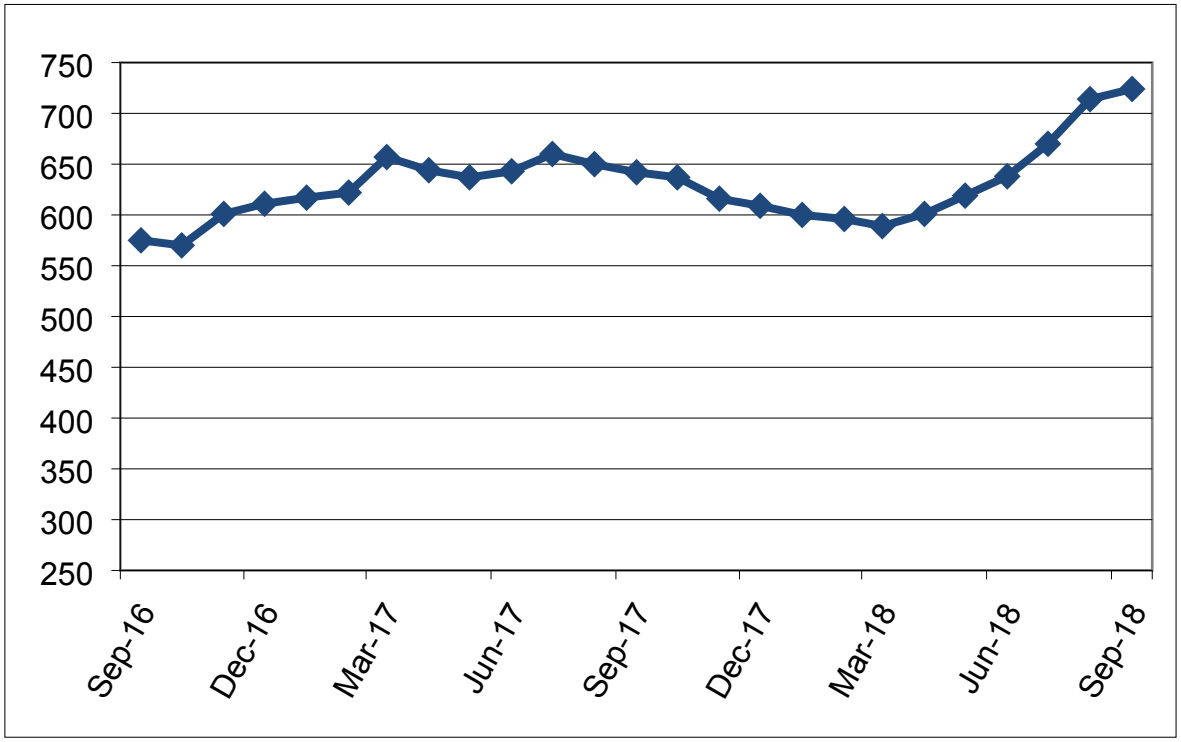
Appendix 2: Workload Pressures

2.1 - Total number of children who are the subject of a Child Protection Plan (September 2016 to September 2018)



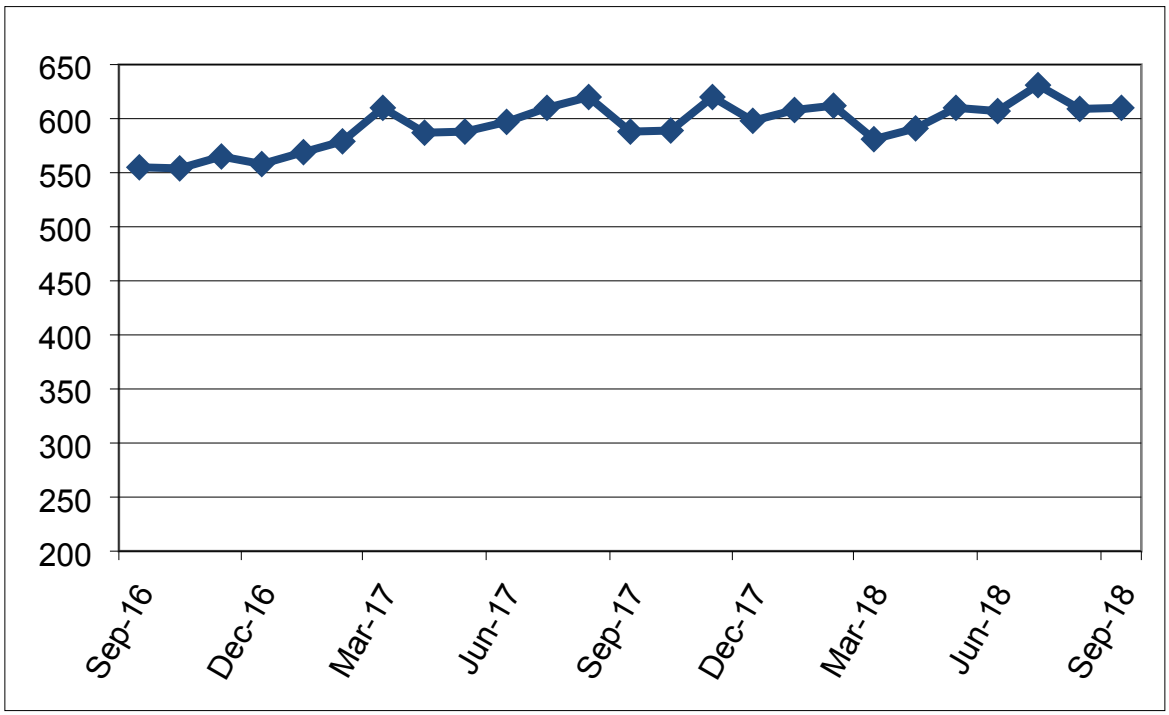
2.1 Total Children subject to a Child Protection Plan

2.2 – Children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan (September 2016 to September 2018)



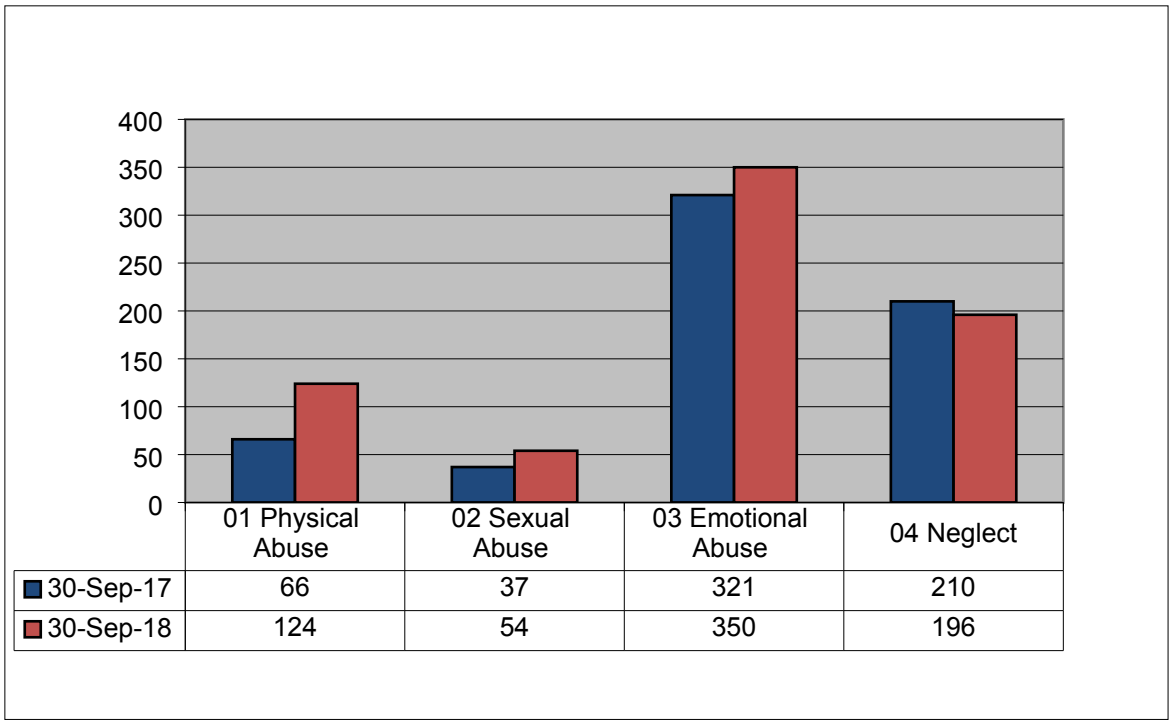
2.2 Children who became the subject of a Child Protection Plan

2.3 – Children ceasing to be the subject of a Child Protection Plan (September 2016 to September 2018)



2.3 Children ceasing to be subject to a Child Protection Plan

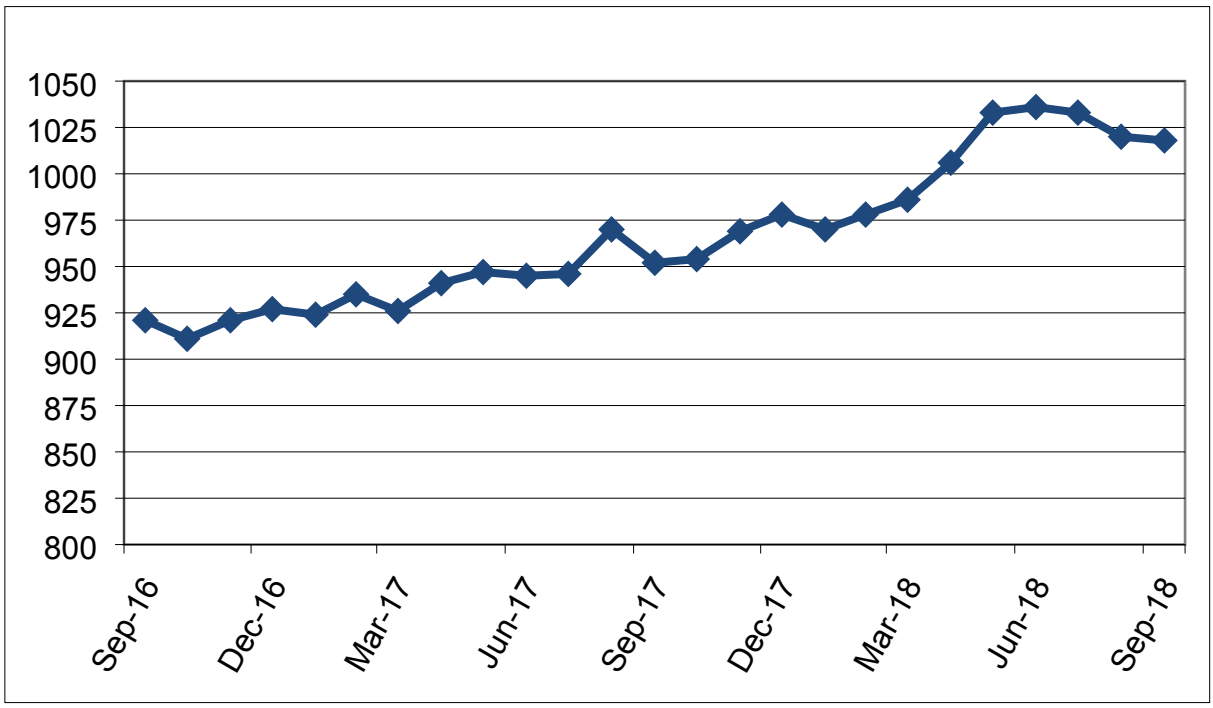
2.4 – Number of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan in the years ending 30th September 2017 and 2018 by category of abuse



	01 Physical Abuse	02 Sexual Abuse	03 Emotional Abuse	04 Neglect
30-Sep-17	66	37	321	210
30-Sep-18	124	54	350	196

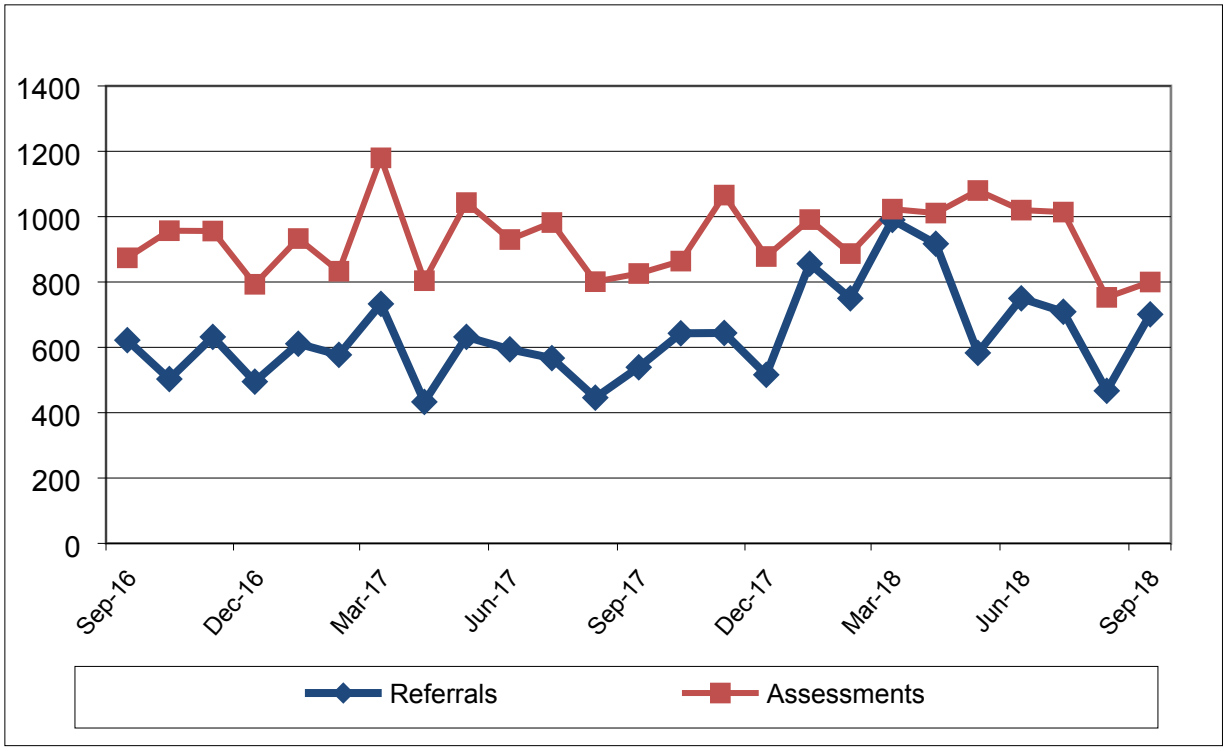
2.4 Children becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan in the year, by category of abuse

2.5 – Number of Looked after Children (September 2016 to September 2018)



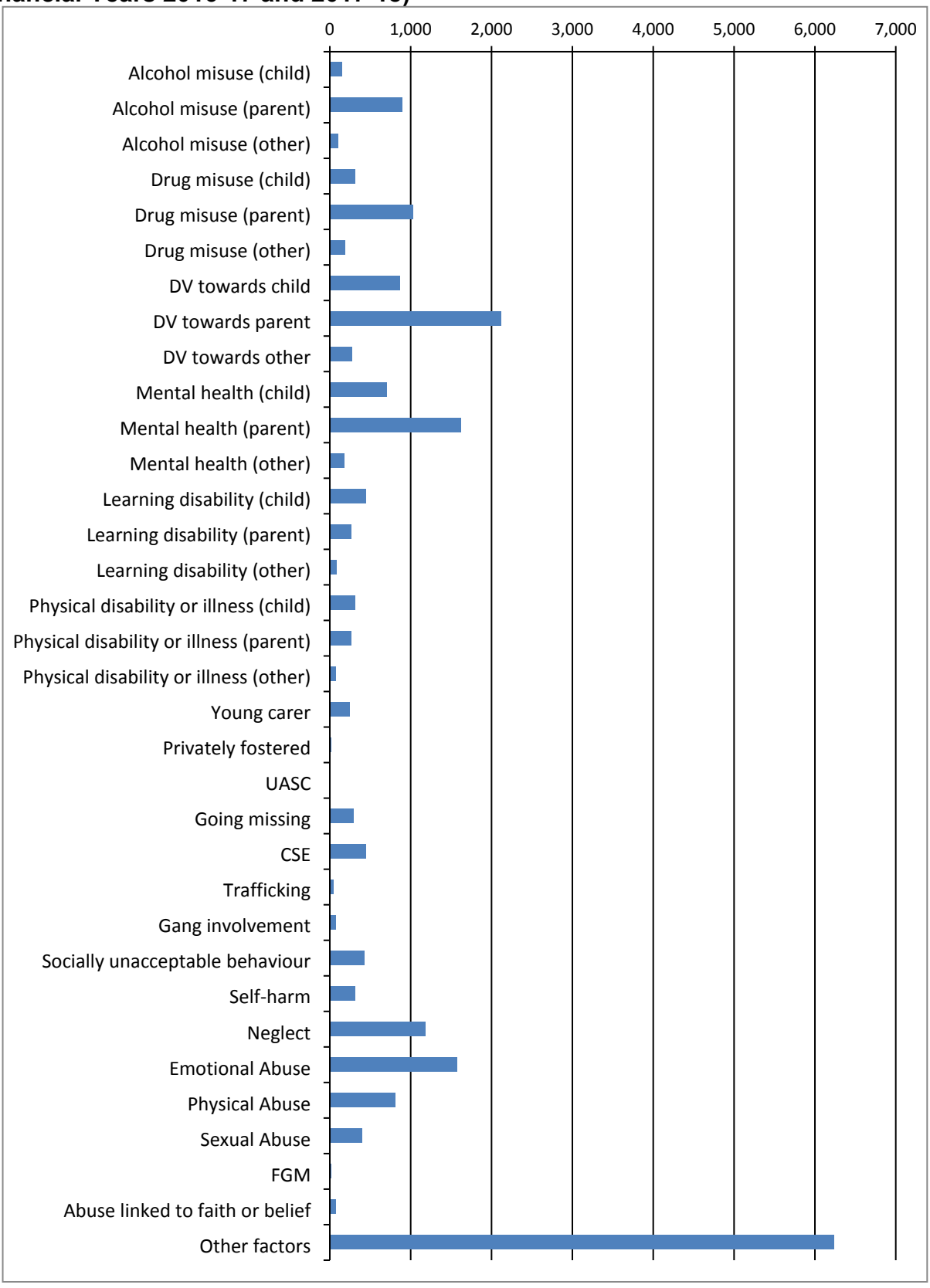
2.5 Number of Looked After Children

2.6 – Referral and Assessment Activity (September 2016 to September 2018)

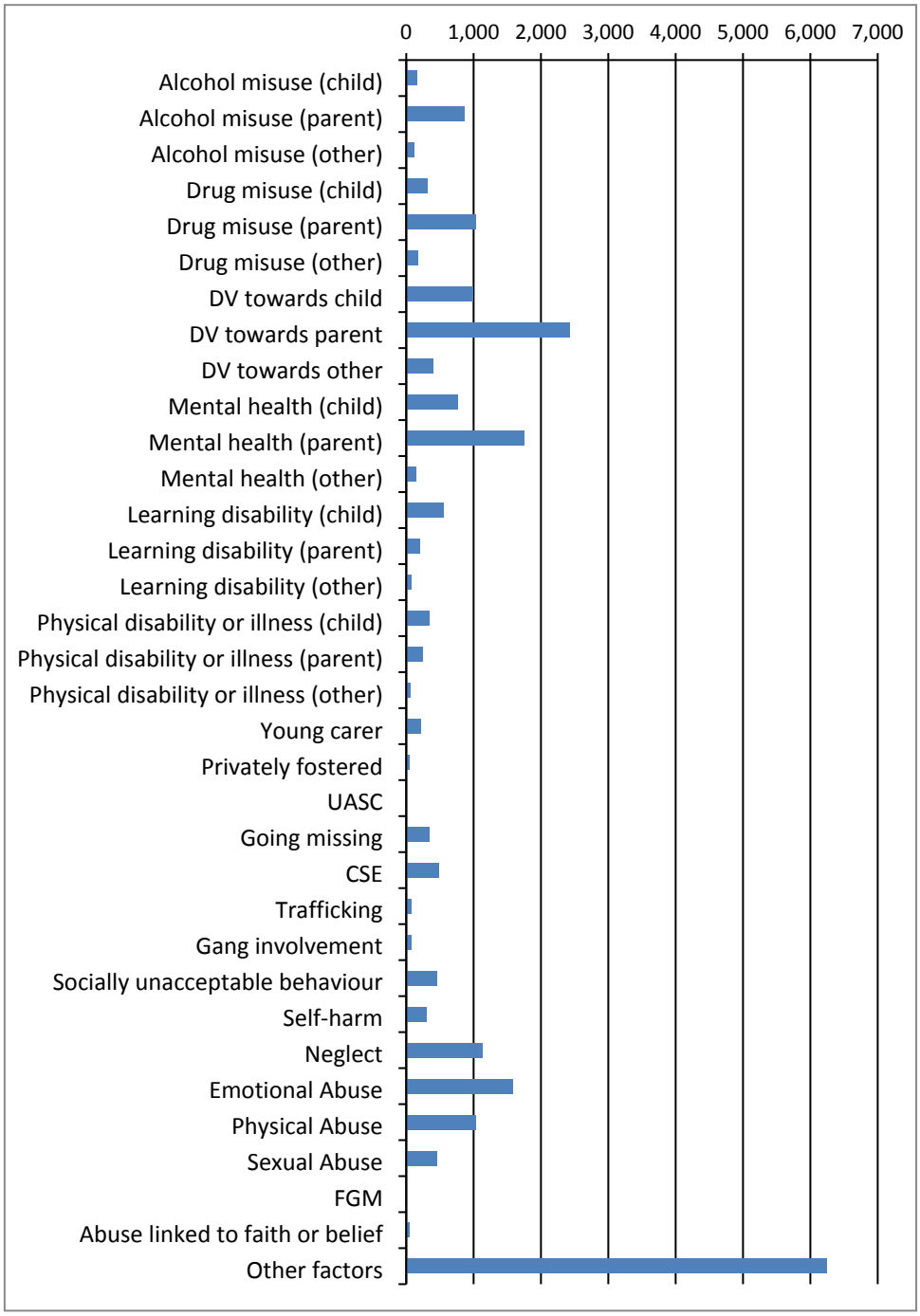


2.6 Numbers of Referrals received and Assessments completed each month

2.7 – Factors of Need Identified by Assessments (Financial Years 2016-17 and 2017-18)



2.7 Factors of Need identified at assessment, 2016-17



2.8 Factors of Need identified at assessment, 2017-18

Appendix 3: Sickness Absence

Dept/ Service	Section	Sub-Section(s)	Number of FTE staff at 30 Sep 2017	Average Number of Working days lost 1 Jul 2017 - 30 Sep 2017		Number of FTE staff at 30 Sep 18	Average Number of Working days lost 1 Jul 2018 - 30 Sep 2018	Performance compared with previous year Arrow up = improvement Arrow down = decline
Children's Specialist Services			722.24	4.33		737.62	3.36	
	Targeted Early Help	-Early Help District -Early Help Clusters -Youth Offending	174.80	5.21		162.43	2.45	
	Prevention & Resources	-Fostering -Children's Homes -Disabilities & Complex Needs -Through Care	353.16	4.46		355.99	4.17	
	Social Work Services	-Front Door -Assessment Teams -Child and Family Teams	193.28	3.33		188.72	2.96	
Performance, Commissioning & Partnerships	**Child Protection**	-Safeguarding Administration -Reviewing Team	32.78	0.65		33.09	3.21	

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City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of the Interim Strategic Director Children's Services to the meeting of the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be held on 12th December 2018

Subject: **Q**

Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS)

Summary statement:

This report provides updated information about the Council's response to the OFSTED ILACS judgement published.

Gladys Rhodes White
Interim Strategic Director
Children's Services

Report Contact: Jim Hopkinson
Phone: (01274) 432904
E-mail: jim.hopkinson@bradford.gov.uk

Portfolio:

Children & Families

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children's Services

1. SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the steps the Council is taking in response to OFSTED's inspection of Bradford's Children's Services.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 OFSTED carried out an inspection of our Children's Services from Monday 17 September 2018 until Friday 28 September 2018 Ofsted make three judgements

- Impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families requires improvement to be good.
- The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection is inadequate
- Experience and progress of children in care and care leaders requires improvement to be good.

Because the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection is classed as a limiting judgement, the overall judgement is inadequate.

The report is attached in Appendix 1, which includes the areas for improvement identified by Ofsted as well as the service strengths

Bradford shares Ofsted's ambition that "only good is good enough for Bradford's children" and therefore the judgement is extremely disappointing and is now focussing on improving at pace the areas identified by Ofsted so we can get to good.

The findings were reported to Executive on 6 November and Executive resolved:

(1) To note the outcome of the OFSTED inspection.

(2) To note the plans to deliver rapid improvement and to offer support.

(3) To refer the report to the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

(4) To request that the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services work with Officers to prepare a robust Improvement Plan with the voice of the child at its heart for the next meeting of the Executive in December 2018.

(5) To invite the Chair of the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee to join the formal Improvement Board.

(6) To request that the Chief Executive identify an appropriate Improvement Advisor to work with the Council and to act as independent chair of the Improvement Board.

(7) To refer the report to the Corporate Parenting Panel.

2.2 The Department for Education (DfE) has written formally to serve the Council with an Improvement Notice (Appendix 2).

2.3 In November, Gladys Rhodes White joined the service as Interim Strategic Director of Children's Services to help drive the improvement journey.

2.4 Under the leadership of the Portfolio Holder for Children & Families, and in consultation with other councillors, DfE, OFSTED and the Local Government Association (LGA), there has been progress in establishing our approach to addressing the key areas for improvement identified by OFSTED and the necessary supporting arrangements as follows:

- **Establishment of the Improvement Board.** An Improvement Advisor should be imminently identified by DfE and will be invited to chair our Improvement Board. Draft Terms of Reference and proposed membership of the Board are attached at Appendix 3. The Chair of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been asked to consider joining the Improvement Board. The work of the Board to secure the improvement of Children's Services identified by OFSTED will be supported by a staff and a children's reference groups, as well as established internal and partner officer working groups. The Board's Terms of Reference will also need to be approved by DfE/OFSTED.

- **Development of our Improvement Plan**. With the voice of the child at its heart, improvement planning has been a key focus of activity, involving staff at all levels in Children's Services, with the support of corporate resources (Finance, HR, Legal and Performance) and in consultation with partners. A Planning workshop is scheduled with Ofsted on 10th December 2018 to help inform our Improvement Plan. A Statement of Action must be submitted to Ofsted by 4th February 2019.

Next Steps

2.5 As set out in the Improvement Notice, the Council is now subject to intervention by the Department for Education (DfE) until services improve. OFSTED will monitor our progress regularly and we will be subject to a full re-inspection within two years. Key actions and milestones include:

- Establishment of the Children's Social Care Improvement Board once membership and Terms of Reference are approved by both DfE/OFSTED and Executive.

- Produce a draft Statement of Action for discussion at the OFSTED planning meeting.

- Submit a full Statement of Action (Deadline for submission: 4 February 2019).

- Support a monitoring visit (which will take place 3 months after our publication of inspection i.e. January)

- Quarterly monitoring will continue until we have an inspection and move into a different pathway (i.e. are requires improvement to be good or above)

2.6 Councillors and senior officers collectively are committed to making sure that we work rapidly and effectively to improve our services to meet our ambitions for Bradford's children.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

None.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

The financial implications of the improvement plan are set out in the Budget proposals to be considered by Executive.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

This report is for information only.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

6.1 The recent inspection was undertaken under the new Framework, Evaluation Criteria and Inspector Guidance for the Inspections of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS). This contains provisions regarding actions to be taken after an inadequate inspection report. These include monitoring by Ofsted including an action planning visit, quarterly monitoring visits and a re-inspection, and also an action plan prepared by the local authority within 70 days of receiving the report.

The Secretary of State has a wide range of powers available following an inadequate judgment, including statutory and non-statutory interventions. The type of intervention is dependent on the severity of the situation, how long the authority has been underperforming, and the perceived capacity for improvement.

S497A Education Act 1996 gives the Secretary of State a wide range of statutory powers if satisfied the local authority is failing to perform its social care functions. These include statutory directions to the local authority aimed at securing adequate performance and also statutory directions requiring the functions to be taken over by others including the Secretary of State or those nominated by him.

In Bradford's case, the Secretary of State intends to take a non-statutory approach, appointing an improvement adviser and issuing a formal improvement notice. The Department for Education 'Putting Children First – Delivering Our Vision for Excellent Children's Social Care (July 2016) indicates that the Secretary of State will only take the non-statutory route if the evidence does not indicate persistent or systemic failure. The local authority will be involved in discussions regarding the content of the notice and it will clearly specify the issues of concern, the

improvement required, how this will be assessed and subsequent steps that may be taken if improvement is not achieved.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

Report is for information only. No specific issues.

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Report is for information only. No specific issues.

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

Report is for information only. No specific issues.

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

Report is for information only. No specific issues.

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Report is for information only. No specific issues.

7.6 TRADE UNION

Report is for information only. No specific issues.

7.7 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

The ILACS inspection provides a comprehensive external assessment of outcomes for Looked After Children. An action plan will be produced to address areas for improvement identified by Ofsted and progress will additionally be reported to the Corporate Parenting Panel.

7.8 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

There are no specific data protection implications.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

N/A

9. OPTIONS

N/A

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the actions taken in response to OFSTED inspection findings be noted.
2. That the plans to establish the Improvement Board be noted and comments be provided.
3. That the Committee monitors the Improvement Plan at regular intervals.

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11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Ofsted ILACS report
Appendix 2 - Improvement Notice
Appendix 3 - Draft Improvement Board Terms of Reference

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.

APPENDIX 1

City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council

Inspection of children's social care services

Inspection dates: 17 September to 28 September 2018

Lead inspector: Neil Penswick HMI

Judgement	**Grade**
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Requires improvement to be good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Inadequate
The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers	Requires improvement to be good
Overall effectiveness	Inadequate

Services for children in Bradford have rapidly deteriorated since the last inspection, the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI), in April 2017. The major contributory factor has been an increased demand for services at the same time as the loss of a significant number of experienced social workers and managers, who left to work for other local authorities. Politicians were made aware of the issues and they committed additional resources to rectify the problems. Improvement plans prioritised the strengthening of the structure of the service, including the recruitment of staff.

Across child protection and children in need services, too many children are not getting the right help they need at the right time. Inspectors found clear evidence of the detrimental impact of changes of social workers and managers, as well as resultant poor practice, leaving children at risk of significant harm.

Senior managers have been addressing the issues and have developed key decision-making panels, have improved quality assurance and have recruited to new teams to better support children in care in particular. Further new key management appointments and social workers have been recruited and are due to start after the completion of this inspection.

This has ensured that most children in care and care leavers are now receiving better support to promote their well-being and improve their outcomes. This has yet to be sufficiently consistent for all children in care. An insufficiency of carers also meant that some children were in placements that did not meet their needs, and this has impacted negatively on them and other children in those placements.

What needs to improve:

- the identification and response to risk, particularly the longer-term impact of domestic abuse and neglect
- clarity about what change is needed by families and by when during pre-proceedings
- the prioritisation and timely, proportionate response to contacts, including gaining parental consent
- social work practice, including the quality of assessments and plans and their implementation
- multi-agency child protection work, including strategy meetings, child protection conferences, core groups and child in need reviews
- the response to children with specific vulnerabilities, including children aged 16 to 17 who present as homeless and children privately fostered, as well as the oversight and monitoring of allegations against professionals working with children
- sufficiency of local placements to meet the needs of children in care
- the provision of life-story work for all children in care
- completion of mandatory training for all foster carers
- supervision of social work staff, which provides direction, to be regular and reflective.

The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection is inadequate

1. Services for children in need of help and protection in Bradford are inadequate because serious failures leave children at risk of significant harm.

2. Children in need of protection are not consistently identified and are not given the right help at the right time to meet their needs. Screening of contacts in the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) is ineffective despite sizeable

commitment from children's services resourcing and partnership investment. Inspectors identified too many children in potentially harmful situations whose cases had been closed by the MASH, or whose cases had been inappropriately stepped down to early help provision, without protective action being taken.

3. Inappropriately, all contacts involve a full duty social work review. Extensive information is obtained and collated from multiple agencies as a matter of routine. Sometimes this is not compliant with national guidance because consent has not been agreed and there are no overriding child protection concerns. This leads to too many children being subject to unnecessary and disproportionate social work processes, while others who need help and protection are not prioritised. Children are inappropriately interviewed by partner agencies, sometimes without parental consent, to gain their views or their versions of events to inform social care decision-making.

4. When risk is identified, strategy meetings, although timely, do not always include representation from all appropriate partners. Multi-agency safety planning is inferred rather than defined while safeguarding enquiries are taking place. Other children do not always have the benefit of timely multi-agency arrangements due to delays progressing to initial child protection conferences.

5. Children do not always receive timely or effective help. The local authority has assumed responsibility for assessing all cases that potentially need early help, and this additional burden delays decision-making when identifying services to help children and their families. All neglect cases are identified as early help, and this does not ensure that children's needs and their safety are at the centre of decision-making. Requests stepped down following MASH screening can take up to three weeks before support services are identified.

6. Social work practice across locality teams varies in both quality and impact. The local authority has heavily invested in an established social work model. However, this is not always enriching social work practice. For example, assessments are not consistently good. Weaker assessments are not always up to date to reflect children's current needs or to appropriately scale risk. Some are too detailed or repetitive without showing understanding of what the world looks like for the child. Resultant plans are not good enough. Most plans have lengthy descriptions of concerns without identifying what needs to happen and by when. Actions are not always linked to the specific risks and needs, and contingency plans are too general.

7. Core groups and child in need meetings share updates on children's current circumstances. However, meetings are not always sufficiently regular. Progress against plans is not always reviewed or changed in order to identify further actions. Children are not always seen by social workers in line with their plans, and this limits their ability to form stable and trusting relationships. This impacts on the timeliness of direct work and actions being

completed. Consequently, some children remain on child protection plans for long periods without their situations improving, or child protection plans are removed too early without their needs being adequately addressed or the impact being tested. The effect of regular changes in social workers, due to staff leaving the authority, further contributes to delays in progressing planning. Mostly, when children are seen regularly by the same social worker, positive changes are made, and children's lives improve.

8. When children's circumstances do not improve, timely alternative decisive action is not always taken. The local authority recognises that the use of the public law outline (PLO) is not robust. Letters identify and list areas of concern. However, actions are not specific enough for families to understand what needs to change and by when to prevent escalation. Some children are in PLO too long without regular review to decide whether alternative action needs to be taken to keep them safe. Some children suffering ongoing neglect do not enter care soon enough. Consequently, some children are left in harmful situations for too long.

9. Vulnerability of some specific groups of children is not always recognised or appropriately responded to. The impact of ongoing neglect or domestic abuse is not always recognised. Homeless 16- and 17-year-olds are evaluated by homeless services, but are not assessed by social workers to ensure that their full needs are identified or that they are appropriately supported, or to ensure that protective action is taken. There is little evidence that these highly vulnerable young people understand their right to become looked after or the longer-term benefits that this would bring. The response to children privately fostered is poor. Their needs are not assessed, and a lack of planning does not ensure that they are appropriately protected and supported. Increased investment in the local authority's designated officer coverage has not yet resulted in consistently effective monitoring of allegations against professionals.

10. Other vulnerable children receive good support. For example, the response to children at risk of child sexual exploitation is a strength. A dedicated multi-agency child sexual exploitation hub ensures a thorough analysis of risk through daily meetings. Work is underpinned by solid information-sharing, detailed research and thorough exploration of all the potential risks. Actions are clear and mitigate risks. Return home interviews are routinely offered and taken up. However, these are not as detailed as those for children who go missing from care. Well-embedded systems ensure that children missing education and those who are electively home educated are safeguarded. Children who are identified as being at risk of radicalisation receive good, tailored support.

The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers requires improvement to be good

11. Children in care and care leavers are not yet receiving consistently good help to promote their well-being and to improve their outcomes. There had been a decline in the overall quality of services since the last Ofsted inspection. However, actions by managers are addressing the issues and there are evident recent improvements in the support being offered.

12. Senior managers have recognised that there is an increasing complexity in children's needs when they come into care. They have invested in edge of care services to ensure that, wherever possible, children are able to remain with their birth families or are rehabilitated with their families at the earliest opportunity. These initiatives are still in the early stages, but are showing some initial signs of success. Despite overall children in care numbers rising, the Be Positive Pathway aimed at 10- to 17-year-olds, together with the intensive intervention from a specialist children's home, is reducing the numbers of children of this age range needing to be in care.

13. The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service and the local Designated Family Judge told inspectors that applications to court are appropriate and accepted. However, the quality of evidence in the reports can vary, resulting in the need for further assessment work to be conducted and delays in a small number of cases. Senior managers have invested in a dedicated court team to support social workers and this is delivering improvements to the quality and timeliness of this work.

14. Most children in care benefit well from the support of social workers. In the locality teams, where children in care receive a service prior to a permanency decision being made, social work contact is not always from the same social worker, and a small number of children experience delays. In the throughcare teams, in the main, inspectors saw high-quality support and regular contact consistent with the needs of the child, resulting in good progress being made in the delivery of plans. In these throughcare teams, social workers know their children well and are focused on achieving positive outcomes for children.

15. Specialist multi-agency teams robustly address concerns about child sexual exploitation and respond well to incidents when children go missing. Due to the high-quality focused work, the numbers of children in care who have gone missing, and the frequency of episodes of going missing, have greatly reduced over the last year.

16. Children's views are always obtained, although they are not always well reflected in their records or plans. Written plans are not always sufficiently specific in identifying the child's needs and the support necessary. However, social workers are, in the main, better able to articulate the focus of the support. Most reviews happen in a timely manner. Inspectors saw excellent formal challenge by Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) auditing cases

between reviews, as well as during the review, ensuring that where practice is not of a good standard, it is urgently addressed.

17. Bradford local authority is committed to ensuring that, wherever possible, children remain close to their families. This has resulted in some children who had been previously placed a distance from Bradford being returned to live closer to their families. While some children have benefited from this, others have experienced placement breakdown due to poor assessments and decision-making. There have been strenuous efforts made to increase the number of foster carers, and inspectors saw an introduction to foster care event very well attended by interested people from across the communities of Bradford. Commissioning looks at a range of potential placements, including from the private sector. However, there is an insufficient range of local carers, and too many children are being placed in placements that don't meet their needs. This results in them experiencing further instability in their lives. Feedback from foster carers was variable, with some reporting a good level of support, while others who requested to speak to inspectors, described support as being poor. Not all foster carers are provided with mandatory training, including on safeguarding issues.

18. Inspectors saw much good work to ensure that children remain in contact with family and friends. For some children, though, the arrangements are not sufficient to enable continued contact with important people in their lives. Many children do not have the opportunity to undertake life-story work that would enhance their understanding of their histories and about why key decisions had been made about their lives.

19. Children in care are encouraged to keep themselves healthy, and their health needs are appropriately and regularly assessed. However, local child and mental health support is not available in a timely way. Aware of the complexities of children's needs, and to better support placements, senior managers have recently recruited to a new set of posts for children in care – therapeutic social workers – to provide assistance and guidance to social workers and carers to better meet the emotional needs of the most vulnerable children.

20. The virtual school has focused on improving the attendance and outcomes of children in care in partnership with schools and social work colleagues. As a result, attendance has steadily risen over the past five years, and in 2017–2018, attendance was at 96.2% for children in care. No children in care have been permanently excluded and fixed-term exclusions are reducing. This has yet to ensure that children's outcomes by the end of key stages 2 and 4 are good enough, in particular in progress measures. Personal education plans are too variable, with some lacking clear targets for improvement. A strength of the virtual school team is the guidance and advice programme they offer to young people and the different opportunities that are in place through the team to ensure that the most vulnerable young people get personalised

support and advice. This is particularly evident for those in education, employment and training (EET); 84% of 16- and 17-year-old children in care are EET, which is a strong performance and higher than the national average. Children's achievement events celebrate and acknowledge successes and raise aspirations. Inspectors also saw good examples of children being supported to pursue their own hobbies, interests and sports.

21. Permanence is considered, and permanence planning has been improving to ensure that children are living with adoptive carers promptly and under special guardianship orders when these meet their needs. Bradford council is a partner of One Adoption West Yorkshire, a regional adoption agency (RAA). Adoption recruitment, training and support is effective. This ensures that adopters have the right information, knowledge and support to secure permanence for children. Careful matching is supported through life appreciation days which provide adopters with first-hand knowledge of the people who have been significant in the child's life. Adopters receive suitable support and training while they are waiting for an appropriate match. Post-adoption support is carefully considered at the matching stage through individualised support packages coordinated by the adoption team.

22. There is an active child in care council which is proud of its involvement in improving some aspects of service delivery, staff training and recruitment. The members of the council are active in both regional and national children in care council events. The local authority does consult on their views. However, some of the children spoken to by inspectors felt that the consultation was 'tokenistic' rather than meaningful engagement.

23. Children leaving care receive inconsistent support as they move towards independence. All care leavers have allocated social workers until they are 18, with community resource workers (CRW) providing regular support between 18 to 25 years old. However, there was mixed feedback from care leavers who met inspectors. Some reported good relationships with their workers, while others were critical of a lack of support. There are a range of housing options available, including staying put, and the vast majority of young people are in suitable accommodation. Not all care leavers have access to key documents such as their health passports, national insurance numbers and passports, which they will need as they start their life as young adults. Pathway plans are not user friendly and the recording of the young person's voice and engagement in the computer-based planning record is minimal.

The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families is requires improvement to be good

24. Leaders have been aware of the extent of serious failures in social work practice in Bradford. They have been responding to those issues, some of which, but not all, have been effectively prioritised and challenged, and improvements have been made.

25. In April 2017, the JTAI on the multi-agency response to abuse and neglect in Bradford reported a range of good services that had positively impacted on the lives of vulnerable children. This inspection found that there had been a recent and rapid decline in those services, with some children now being left at risk of significant harm. Other services have continued to offer a better-quality response that meets the varying needs of the children.

26. In the last 12 months, Bradford local authority children's services rapidly lost a high proportion of its most experienced social workers and managers, some of whom left to work in neighbouring boroughs offering better financial returns. This was at the same time as Bradford experienced significant increases in demand across all areas, reflecting the rapid growth of children subject to child protection planning and those needing to be looked after. The numbers of agency and short-term staff increased significantly. External consultants were recruited to evaluate the quality of the services to enable senior managers to fully understand the impact from loss of staff. As a result, a broader audit programme commenced to explore the scale of the problems. At that time, approximately a quarter of all cases were found to be receiving 'inadequate' support and protection. The most recent audits are showing some improvements in the quality of work.

27. Inspectors could clearly see that Bradford local authority children's services responded to the recommendations from the last Ofsted full-service inspection in May 2014, and to the JTAI in April 2017. Documentation, performance data and quality assurance demonstrated the necessary improvements. However, at the time of this inspection, most of those earlier improvements were no longer being sustained. For instance, although the local authority ensured that all initial child protection conferences happened within the national minimum timescales for over two years, the most recent performance has dipped to only 71% of these happening in a timely manner.

28. The SDCS has kept the leader of the council, lead member for children and chief executive fully involved, and they all have a good awareness of the issues in children's services. Well-disseminated management information ensures a good understanding of the performance issues. Additional finance has also been allocated from the council to address the immediate weaknesses and to enable longer-term improvements. For instance, additional managers have been recruited, while whole scale-reviews of the 'front door' to services and the PLO are underway.

29. A service-wide improvement plan has prioritised areas including staff recruitment and continued auditing of casework. This has resulted in an improvement in permanent staffing and a reduction from 38 social worker vacancies to only five. The plan has been further developed, during this inspection, to respond to the issues that inspectors were raising. However, inspectors found there was insufficient prioritisation being given to ensuring

that children's lived experiences were at the centre of the service improvements.

30. Staffing vacancies, and use of agency staff, is an issue in some of the social work teams. The assessment teams and locality teams, which work with children in need and child protection, have seen a rapid changeover of staff, and this has impacted on some children having too many changes of social worker and work not being completed in a timely manner. The throughcare teams, which work with children in care and care leavers, have seen fewer changes of staff and managers, and this has enabled children to build better relationships with their social workers and ensure that work has been completed in a timely manner. Inspectors did see examples of good work throughout children's services, but more consistently in the throughcare teams.

31. Leaders have continued to focus on improving services for children. There is strong partnership sign-up to multi-agency work. For instance, the multi-agency commitment to an established model of social work practice has ensured that over 2,000 staff from different agencies are trained in its use, with many using this in their daily work to promote the welfare of children. There is also a well-located set of early help hubs, financed from core funding with an additional contribution from the National Troubled Families programme, with agencies working together to provide ongoing support to families with lower levels of need. There are good multi-agency services to respond to child sexual exploitation and children who go missing. There are also a number of creative initiatives that the local authority has been developing for children in care, including the Be Positive Pathways, to provide services to prevent children coming into care. Therapeutic social workers have also been recently employed to further address the emotional and mental health needs of children in care. The court team has also improved the quality and timeliness of work done prior to proceedings.

32. The vast majority of social workers and staff met by inspectors report that Bradford local authority is a good place to work, with good support, including access to training and workable caseloads. Formal supervision is not always happening regularly, though, and is not sufficiently reflective. This was recognised by senior managers, who have developed a practice supervisor role to bolster the quality and frequency of management oversight. This has resulted, in particular, in recently qualified social workers now receiving better quality support that addresses their needs.

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24 October 2018

Michael Jameson
City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, 1st Floor, Margaret McMillan Tower,
Princes Way
Bradford
BD1 1NN

APPENDIX 2

Dear Michael Jameson

Final report: ILACS Standard Inspection of Bradford

Thank you for the cooperation of your department during the recent ILACS Standard Inspection of your children's social care services. The inspection team have considered your comments on the draft report and amended the report where appropriate. I attach the final report. A response to your factual accuracy comments on the draft report is appended to this letter.

We will share this pre-publication version of the report with:

- the DfE
- the Care Quality Commission
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services.
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons
- Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Services Inspectorate

If you wish, you may share this report with others under embargo until 29 October 2018 at which time it can be publicly accessed on the Ofsted website.

Please send your action plan responding to this report to ProtectionofChildren@Ofsted.gov.uk by the 04 February 2019.

We would welcome your feedback on your experience of the recent inspection/visit.

You can access a feedback survey here:

https://ofsted.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/ilacs1718/1000060

We would be grateful for your feedback by 12 December 2018.

If you have any queries please contact ProtectionOfChildren@ofsted.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Roxanne Smith
Inspection Support Administrator

Response to your factual accuracy comment on the draft report

Paragraph / section in the report	LA comments	Ofsted action
Page 1		
Para 1	Wrong date and title of JTAI. **21 April 2017.** **Joint targeted area inspection of the multi-agency response to abuse and neglect (including a deep dive on the response to children living with domestic abuse).**	Partially agree. The title of JTAI is not reported in the opening paragraph. Date corrected.
Para 2	'... leaving children being harmed or at risk of being harmed'. The inspection asked us to review cases. We reviewed all these cases and agreed that there was drift and delay in some of these. We re-opened 5 cases from early help for a further assessment. None of these indicated that children had been	Agree.

	harmed. We, therefore, believe a more factually accurate representation is to change the sentence to **'potentially leaving children at risk of significant harm'** from **'leaving children being harmed or at risk of significant harm'.** See page 7, point 25 at the bottom for consistency.	
Page 2		
Point 1	**'potentially leaving children at risk of significant harm'** from **'leaving children being harmed or at risk of significant harm'.** For reasons stated above.	Agree.
Page 3		
Point 3	We request that the wording **'sometimes unlawfully as consent has not been agreed'** is changed to **'sometimes not compliant with Working Together'.** We have investigated this thoroughly and agree that	Agree. Revised. To follow our house style reworded as 'sometimes not compliant with national guidance'.

	our processes were not appropriate. We have immediately rectified this to ensure we are compliant with Working Together so are already operating a different model on consent to that seen at the time of the inspection. We are particularly concerned that use of the term "unlawful" may be the basis for attempted legal action around historic referrals to our front door against CBMDC which could prove a distraction from the need to improve services at pace. However our City Solicitor has asked for more clarification if the word "unlawful" is to be used noting that the reference to consent does not recognise other situations where it can be established that processing is lawful. The City Solicitor has requested clarification of the specific legislation being referred to so they can more fully research this. The City Solicitor advises that GDPR permits information to be gathered if a lawful basis for processing the data can be established, of which consent is only one. Others include public task (where processing is carried out in the exercise of public functions set out in law or for the performance of a specific task in the public interest as set out in law; no specific statutory power has to be identified). Sensitive personal data can also be	

	processed if it falls into special category data (where there is a legal obligation and legitimate interest together with substantial public interest). Information is obtained and collated as necessary without consent where safety may be at risk in order to make the judgement in some cases that there is no overriding child protection concern. If it is not possible to remove the word "unlawfully" please can we have clarification of the legislation being referred to beyond Working Together Guidance.	
Page 6		
Point 19	There is no mention about the waiting list for CAMHS services, which is something you provided feedback through the inspection but is not reflected in the report. Is this an omission?	Agree. This is not an omission. The report does not aim to reproduce all of the comments made by inspectors from the two week inspection. However, to assist understanding for wider partners in Bradford, we have added: 'However, local child and mental health support is not available in a timely way'.

Point 20	The following sentence is factually inaccurate. '84% of 16 and 17 year old children in care are EET which is much higher than the percentage for all Bradford children at this age which is 66%'. **Bradford's EET figures for all young people are currently 93% which are higher than the national and statistical neighbour average, which is very strong performance. 84% of 16 and 17 year olds in care are EET which is also strong performance.**	Agree. Revised accordingly. '84% of 16 and 17 year old children in care are EET which is a strong performance and higher than the national average.'
Page 7		
Point 25	Wrong JTAI (see Page 1, Para 1 comment above).	Partially agree. The title of JTAI is not reported in the report. Date corrected.

Page 9		
Point 31	This is factually inaccurate. Although these hubs include the National Troubled Families programme, the bulk of the funding is core funding. We believe a more factually accurate representation is **There is also a well located set of early hubs, in the main financed from core funding and the National Troubled Families Programme'** from **'There is also a well located set of early hubs, financed from core funding with an additional contribution from the National Troubled Families Programme'.**	Agree. Changed to: 'There is also a well located set of early hubs, financed from core funding with an additional contribution from the National Troubled Families programme'

APPENDIX 3
Children's Services Improvement Board: Terms of Reference

1. **Purpose**

To ensure that vulnerable children and young people in Bradford are safe, protected from harm and supported so that they can achieve their full potential.

Through a relentless focus on outcomes for children, the Board provides the drive and focus to ensure that necessary improvements are achieved and evidenced, resulting in Bradford Children's services being judged Good or better.

2. **Scope**

To address the areas of improvement identified in the 2018 Ofsted ILACS inspection report and subsequent monitoring visit feedback reports. To address areas identified within the Improvement Plan.

3. **Roles and Responsibilities**

- To ensure that all partners contribute to the delivery of effective arrangements to safeguard and promote wellbeing of all children in our district;
- To ensure that timely and effective responses are made to all Ofsted's recommendations and DFE required improvements;
- To give assurance that a culture and of improvement/ *putting the child at the centre* is embedded across all agencies and that there is an understanding of and recognition of good social work practice – we *know what good looks like* .
- To develop and agree the Improvement Action Plan and subsequently monitor, review and update regularly;
- Agree a work programme designed to deliver rapid and sustainable improvements as set out in the Improvement Plan;
- To advise, support and challenge leaders of council services and statutory partners to secure sustainable and measurable improvements leading to good or better performance in children's services.
- To ensure that children, young people, families and frontline staff inform the development of improvement actions and have opportunity to review their impact;
- To agree and oversee a communications strategy that articulates a clear vision of the quality, standards and range of services required to respond positively to the needs of children and young people.

4. Further responsibilities and Resourcing

- Uses its authority to commit and deploy the necessary resources in line with decisions taken at the Board;
- Ensures improvement actions are implemented in a timely and sustainable way;
- Commissions working groups/task and finish groups to complete defined tasks delegating authority appropriately and setting clear success measures, reporting expectations;
- Identified and agrees key performance measures, milestones and targets, including for partners where appropriate;
- Actively works to remove any barriers that impact on the pace and progress of achieving required improvements;
- Ensures that relevant partners and working groups report on progress to achieve improvements through an agreed reporting timetable;
- Reports into relevant governance bodies including, but not limited to, full council, Executive, Children's Trust and the DfE on the progress in making improvements;

5. Membership

Name	Role	Agency and position
Board members		
TBC	Chair	DFES Independent advisor
Cllr Adrian Farley	Vice Chair	Portfolio holder
TBC	Board member	Chair of Children's OSC
David Niven	Board member	Chair BSCB
Kersten England	Board member (Chair until DFES independent advisor is available)	Chief Exec CBMDC
Gladys Rhodes White	Board member	Interim Strategic Director Children's Services
Joanne Hyde	Board member	Strategic Director Corporate Resources

Tracie Taylor	Board member	Principal Social Worker
Chatty Athwell	Board Member	Staff reference group representative
Helen Hirst	Board member	Bradford CCGs accountable officer
Scott Bissett	Board member	Chief Superintendent WY Police
TBC	Board member	Partner in practice
TBC	Board member	Representative from Children's engagement group
Janice Hawkes (Barnado's)	Board member	VCS sector Representative
TBC	Board member	Schools representative
In attendance regular or ad hoc appearances		
Mariam Haque	In attendance	DD Education
Jim Hopkinson	In attendance	DD Children's Social Care
Jenny Cryer	In attendance	AD Children's performance and commissioning
Andrew Crookham	In attendance	Section 151 Officer
Parveen Akhtar	In attendance	City Solicitor
David Walmsley	In attendance	AD Office of the Chief Exec Office
Phil Witcherley	In attendance	Head of Policy and performance
Anne Lloyd	In attendance	Head of HR
Clare Mulgan	In attendance	Programme lead BHBL
Jean Mawdsley	In attendance	Head of Service
Di Drury	In attendance	Head of Service
David Byrom	In attendance	Head of Service
TBC	In attendance	Police

6. Meetings and administration

Meetings will be arranged to take place initially on a fortnightly cycle. This will be reviewed when the independent chair is in post. All papers will be provided at least 4 working days before the meeting. The meeting and full papers will not be public but a summary of key decisions and actions will be made publicly available after each meeting.

Administration will be provided by the Children's Services department of the Local Authority.

DRAFT

7. Reporting Arrangements

See appendix 1

8. Governance

See appendix 1

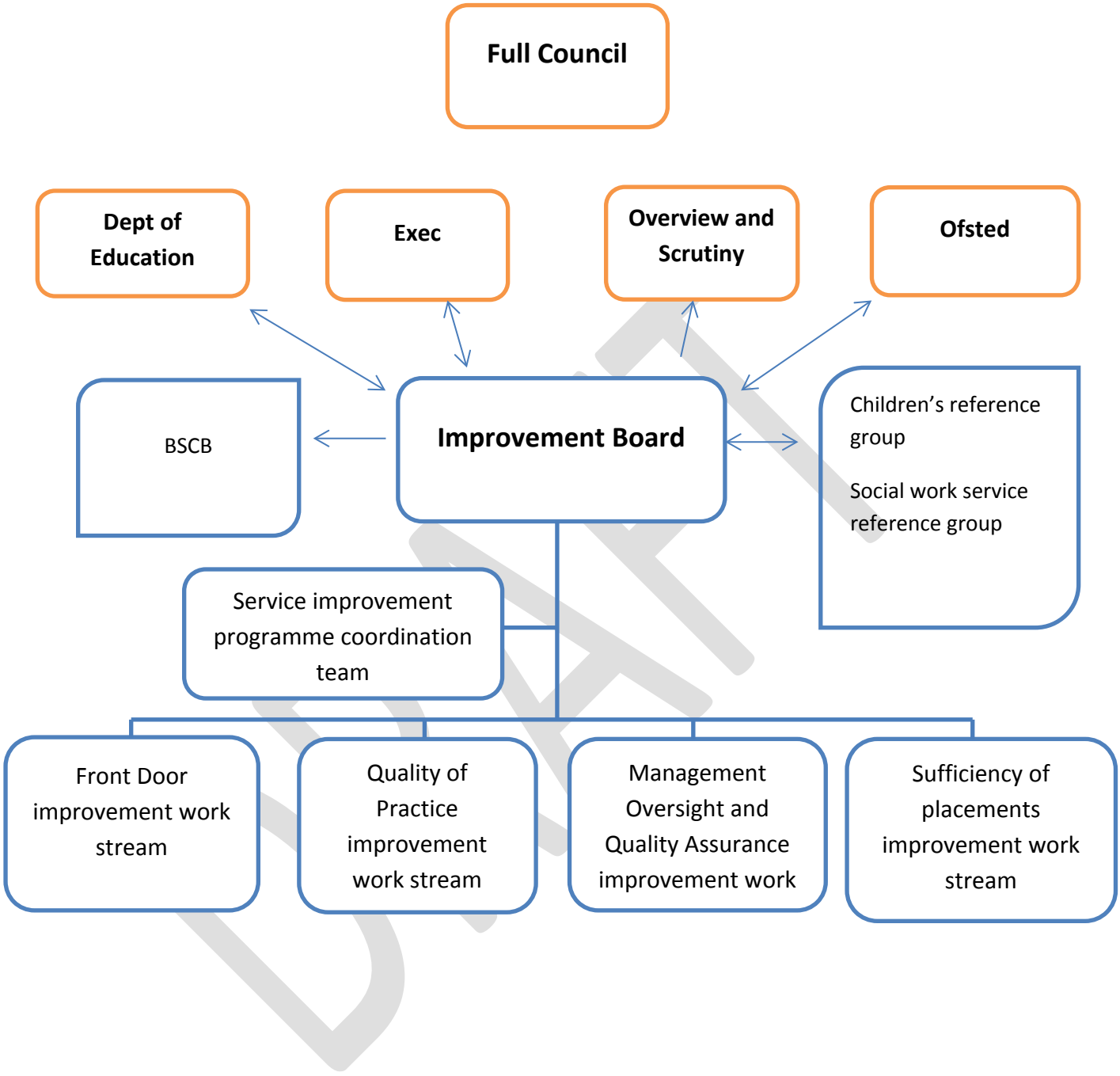
9. Review of Terms of Reference

The ToR will be kept under review and amended as necessary.

DRAFT

APPENDIX 3
Children's Services Improvement Board: Terms of Reference

Appendix 1



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City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of the Interim Strategic Director (Children's Services) to the meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 12th December 2018

Subject: **R**

CHILDREN MISSING FROM HOME AND CARE

Summary statement:

The report highlights the work being undertaken in Bradford to prevent children being missing from home or care the actions taken to protect young people when they do go missing and the provision that is in place to meet their needs.

The report covers the period April 2017 to October 2018.

Report Contact: David Byrom
Head of Service
(Through Care & Resources)

Phone: (01274) 432986
E-mail: david.byrom@bradford.gov.uk

Portfolio:

Children's Services

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children's Services

1 SUMMARY

1.1 This report considers the activity and performance of the system responding to children who run away or go missing from home or care. The report makes reference to the Statutory Guidance on Children who run away or go missing from home or care (January 2014) and the West Yorkshire Police Joint protocol for Children Missing from Home or Care (February 2015).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 This report will consider children and young people who are recorded as absent or missing both those not in care and those who are looked after. The overall numbers of missing recordings will at time include children who are not at risk but are in fact absent. For example parents and carers whose children are late home, or are unaware of their present location may contact police to report their children as missing. The police continue to work with children's services and across West Yorkshire to reduce the number of 'miss-reported' missing incidents.

2.2 Data for the West Yorkshire region (most recent aggregated full year data) shows that for the 12 months (01/04/2017 – 31/03/2018) West Yorkshire Police report that there were 21,402 recorded Missing Persons occurrences. . This covers both adults and children and represents an increase of 5.5% compared to the 20,291 recorded in the previous twelve months (Apr '16 – Mar '17).

2.3 There has been a concerted effort over the last 24 months across partners to improve our local arrangements for children missing from home and care. We are now in a much stronger position to prevent, protect and ensure there is the correct level of provision in place to address the issue.

Children Looked After

2.4 Between September 2017 and March 2018 there were 740 missing episodes involving 98 individual looked after children living in Bradford (including those looked after by other authorities and placed in Bradford). Over the last six months from April 2018 to October 2018 there have been 609 episodes involving 58 individual young people. This is reduction in missing episodes in the last 6 months of 18.1% and of individual young people going missing of 40%.

2.5 This would suggest that the revised reporting arrangements put in place within our Emergency Duty team (EDT) and Social Worker (SW) triage which is described later in the report is having an impact.

2.6 There is a 20.9% average increase of missing children occurrences over the summer months. It is a well documented national trend that missing incidents increase over the summer months (warmer lighter evenings being part of the pull factor) and Bradford has similarly experienced an increase in missing over the last two summer periods.

2.7 The vast majority of missing incidents involve children and young people who are between the ages of 10 – 17 the graph below indicates that the majority are 16 – 17 years of age.

April 18 - Oct 18		%
0-1	0	0
1-4	0	0
5-9	0	0
10-15	250	41
16-17	357	58.7
	609	100

In the same period there has been a 39% decrease in female children who are looked after (CLA) going missing and an increase of 14% in male CLA going missing. We have taken proactive measures in this period to move young people when it has been felt necessary to break a cycle of behaviour, this will account for the reduction to the female missing figure.

The vast majority of missing incidents involve White British CLA 57% with the next highest group being mixed White / Asian at 14.9%.

Children Missing from Home

2.8 In regard to children who are not looked after and have been reported (usually by parents or carers) as missing from home, between September 2017 and March 2018 there were 1003 missing episodes involving 540 individual young people. Over the last six months from April 2018 to October 2018 there have been 1109 episodes involving 394 individual young people. This is an increase in missing episodes in the last 6 months of 11.2%. However this is also a decrease of individual young people going missing by 27%.

In the same period there has been a 10% increase in episodes of females going missing and a 14% increase of in episodes of males going missing.

The vast majority of missing incidents involve white British 46% with the next highest group being British Asian / Pakistani at 10.6%.

Absent Recording

2.9 Between September 2017 and March 2018 there were 192 absent episodes involving 43 individual young people, over the last six months from April 2018 to October 2018 there have been 58 episodes involving 28 individual young people. This is reduction in absent episodes in the last 6 months of 70% and of individual young people going absent of 35%.

Report Issues

Prevention

2.10 A Police data analyst is in post to provide intelligence in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). In May 2016 Bradford introduced a dedicated Missing Co-Ordinator alongside a Police Missing Co-ordinator both of whom are co-located and directly link with the CSE unit within our MASH. . These two posts have proved invaluable in ensuring we have an accurate picture of missing children and a rigorous response. The Missing Co-ordinator and Police Missing Officer support children's home staff in ensuring that all young people have an agreed reporting strategy in place. After a missing incident, the Co-ordinator contacts the placement to discuss the issues and see what has been put in place to prevent a re-occurrence.

2.11 A Missing Protocol and flowchart is in place (Appendix A), an additional Social worker has been recruited into EDT to cover peak missing hours and works until 2am to provide triage to providers both internal and external who want to report a young person as missing. This post has been key to more accurately risk assessing, recording and responding to missing episodes. Providers out of hours often struggle with managing risk and this approach supports the additional activity to locate and own risk by the carer or carer home staff.

2.12 All children who go missing are offered a return to home interview within 72 hours. This is currently commissioned to Advocacy Focus. The provider reports that 99% of young people who are looked after receive a return to home interview within 72 hours. 94% are face to face, 5% are via telephone if placed at distance or if the young person prefers this approach.

2.13 The work completed by the Advocacy Focus return to care Coordinator has contributed to a multitude of positive outcomes for CYP such as:

- Reduction and/or eradication of Missing Episodes
- Reduced substance misuse and/or abstinence
- Engagement in employment, education and training
- Engagement in positive and meaningful activities
- Settlement in placement
- Increased engagement with other services
- Reduction of risk taking behaviour

2.14 For children missing who are not looked after, 77% receive a return to home interview within 72 hours; this activity has been proactively managed by the missing hub in the MASH. The detail from the interview is shared with the Police. By actively listening to young people, further incidents are reduced and referrals for service are made where this is necessary. 55 young people refused to engage with a return to home interview.

If a young person has 4 or more missing episodes a multi agency visit to their home takes place.

2.15 A missing surgery will commence in January 2019 targeting children and young people who have been missing from home for the first time. This approach was successful in Wakefield and resulted over in only 4 out of 169 young people having another missing occurrence across an 11 month period. This involves a PCSO visiting the home of a first time missing young person to hand deliver a letter inviting them to a meeting at a central Police station. When the young person attends with their parent they are shown a presentation on the impact and potential risks associated with missing where this is appropriate..

2.16 We have improved our arrangements significantly in relation to seeing young people after a missing occurrence, listening to them and acting on what they have said to prevent re-occurrence.

2.17 Currently there are 423 children from other Local Authorities placed in Bradford across a number of settings. The majority (345) are in a family setting, 52 are in residential and 26 in independent living settings. Links have been developed with the 7 private children's homes and 16+ settings in Bradford to ensure that they follow the local reporting arrangements around missing. When a child is placed in Bradford by another Authority they should notify us in writing. If there are additional risks this is highlighted and passed to the relevant team.

2.18 Where a young person has been missing from a foster placement there is an expectation that a meeting takes place involving the child's Social Worker, the Supervising Social Worker and the Foster Carer to ensure the issues are discussed and a protective plan put in place.

2.19 The co-located CSE and Missing hub meet on a daily basis to consider live issues and in addition report to a monthly overview meeting which is chaired by the Police.

Protection

2.20 A multi agency approach to information sharing has been established. Escalation and challenge process are in place up to Chief Executive level to ensure that children & young people are safeguarded. The overnight missing report is shared at the daily meeting in the hub; internal escalation takes place across the service to meet young people's needs.

2.21 Systems have been established to ensure that all agencies are informed effectively of a missing event. This triggers the appropriate follow up action within service to support the placement and young people.

2.22 A number of young people have had their internal placement disrupted to prevent further missing incidents. This has led to either an internal move or a move to an external placement. Where we place children out of Bradford a conversation takes place with the local Police Missing Co-ordinator and Placements Team prior to placement. For a number of young people this had proved to be a positive move with

the number of missing incidents reducing or even ending. The local push and pull factors to missing being no longer in place.

2.23 There is an expectation across residential staff that they will prevent a young person leaving the home if immediate risk is apparent and that they will go looking for young people if they have failed to return to the home. Cars have been leased to support this activity. Staff will remain in contact with young people and in some circumstances we now no longer need to formally record children as missing. All missing incidents are reviewed if a home hasn't followed the agreed expectations this will be challenged.

2.24 If a child living in a Children's home is recorded as high risk, an agreed reporting strategy is put in place jointly agreed with the Police and be reported missing almost immediately. This would also involve the setting up of a Special Operations Room led by a Detective Inspector to lead and co-ordinate the investigation. Senior Police leaders in Bradford have been very focused on ensuring that these children are prioritised when they go missing and all staff and managers have received several training inputs and briefings regarding Missing persons. This approach in Bradford does mean we have higher levels of recorded missing children, however, we agree this is the correct approach to assuring we are doing all we can to safeguard young people.

Provision

2.25 We have revisited and re-launched our training, policies and procedures regarding missing incidents to ensure that all staff involved understand the expectations of them to support and safeguard young people in Bradford.

2.26 We are revising our local placement and training offer to staff, this includes signs of safety training and PACE training linked to improving the relationship between carers and the young people. This will lead to improved care setting for young people and reduce the push pull factors linked with missing.

2.27 The internal residential offer now includes three specialist homes, a B Positive Pathways hub home and four mainstream children's homes. The homes are able to call on a psychologist, speech and language therapist and internal Police officers.

It has been reported through analysis of the Police officers working to the DfE Innovation Fund B Positive Pathways (BPP) that there has been a saving of £200K to the West Yorkshire Police force as a direct result in the reduction of missing episodes.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

None

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

None

5. RISK MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE ISSUES

None

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

None

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None

7.1 EQULITY & DIVERSITY

None

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

None

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

None

7.6 TRADE UNION

None

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

None

7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

7.8.1 The system for responding to missing children is a central feature for keeping looked after children in the district safe. There is a direct link between children who go missing and being vulnerable to being either the victim or perpetrator of crime. By improving our local partnership response we will see a reduction in the number of times children who are looked after become involved in criminal justice system.

7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY ASSESSMENT

None

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None

9. OPTIONS

9.1 The options are covered in the recommendations below.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 That the work being undertaken to safeguard looked after children who go missing in Bradford be received.

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Missing Children's Social Care Protocol and Flowchart

11.2 West Yorkshire Police Missing Protocol

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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Bradford CSC Missing Protocol

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Not Bradford Children - OLA

Bradford Children - CLA or CIN (supported by BCSC)

Young person's whereabouts are not known?

Do you have an immediate concern for the child's safety, based on the age and risks posed to that child? (equivalent to a 999 call)

Yes → **Contact POLICE** → **Contact EDT Missing** (provide log number and rationale as to why it went immediately to police)

No

Have you taken all reasonable steps to locate the child?

*Have you followed the **reporting strategy** or **trigger plan**?*

Is this a normal pattern of behaviour that could be addressed with the social worker in the AM?

Contact Other Local Authority EDT (Discuss the risks and safety plan)

Contact Bradford EDT Missing (Discuss the risks and safety plan)

Agreed Action e.g Away from placement, ***Police, absent

Is more Information Required *(what happened / bigger picture?)*

No identified risks → **Agreed EDT Action**

No apparent risk no role for police

***CLA** - Away from placement without authorisation*

***CIN** - U/A*

The young person still not returned and after consultation with EDT it is felt that the risk now warrants police intervention

Bradford EDT will contact Police Missing Investigator WYP (MASH)

(Share information/joint approach and consider the next steps based on the risk)

**** If the child has already been reported missing agencies may also share info to help on going enquiries*

Manageable Risk → **Agreed Action**

No apparent risk no role for police

***CLA** - Away from placement without authorisation*

***CIN** - U/A*

EDT feedback to carer

It is agreed risk cannot be managed by social care alone, concerns for the young person immediate well being have increased and whereabouts are unknown.

A Strategy Discussion should be considered if appropriate

Joint decision based on Risk → **Agreed Action** Child will be reported as missing

Information on every missing, absent or away from placement without authorisation episode will be fed back to WYP and BCSC Missing Coordinators to review and take appropriate action. Inappropriate reporting will be challenged and support offered to help manage future missing, review reporting strategies and offer advice around missing

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Joint Protocol
for
Children Missing from Home or Care

West Yorkshire Police
City of Bradford Metropolitan Borough Council
Calderdale Council
Kirklees Council
Leeds City Council
Wakefield Metropolitan District Council

Revised: 09 February 2015

Contents

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1. Introduction

This protocol has been produced jointly by West Yorkshire Police and Children's Social Care Services in Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield. A document of this nature can not anticipate every situation and therefore individual judgement should be used to decide any action that is deemed necessary to protect the safety of the child or young person, based on an assessment of risk. Where appropriate, advice should be sought from managers, and the West Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Procedures followed as required.

Children who go missing from home or care place themselves and, at times, others at risk; they are also at increased risk of being harmed. The reasons why children go missing from home or care are complex and frequently involve a number of 'push' and 'pull' factors, which should not be viewed in isolation from a child's experiences in daily life. Every individual absent episode should warrant professional attention, and practitioners need to offer a consistent and coherent response to safeguard a child from harm. It is therefore important for safeguarding the welfare of children and young people using services in West Yorkshire, that all practitioners who work with children are familiar with this protocol.

This protocol defines the roles and responsibilities of parents and carers (including kinship carers and foster carers), residential staff, the Police, Children's Social Care Services and other relevant practitioners. It applies to all children that go absent or missing, including:

- All children under 18 who go missing from their family home;
- All children in the care of a Local Authority Children's Home within West Yorkshire;
- All children in the care of a West Yorkshire Local Authority placed outside West Yorkshire

with a host authority;

- All children in the care of a West Yorkshire Local Authority placed with Local Authority foster carers;
- All children placed in private establishments or with Independent Fostering Agencies within West Yorkshire, where compliance with the protocol is specified in the contract or placement agreement;
- Children in the care of a responsible Local Authority who are placed in West Yorkshire (as the host authority); and
- All children in West Yorkshire for who the Local Authorities have continuing responsibilities towards as Care Leavers.

Although there are particular vulnerabilities associated with Looked After Children who go missing the majority of children who go missing, do so from their family home. Often, the same measures are required to protect both groups of children given that all children who go missing can experience the same risks.

Taking this into account, the first part of this protocol relates to protecting all children who go missing whether they go missing from home or care. Following this there is additional guidance covering the specific measures which are required to be taken when children go missing from care.

Practitioners should also be aware that when a child runs away or goes missing this may be an indicator that they are at risk of, or experiencing sexual exploitation; also that a child is more vulnerable to being sexually exploited when absent. All practitioners must therefore familiarise themselves with the indicators of child sexual exploitation and access the Child Sexual Exploitation procedures for more information and guidance.
http://westyorkscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_sg_ch_and_yp.html

Going missing from home or care may also be an indicator of other specific risk factors including a child being a victim of trafficking or Forced Marriage. The procedures for Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked and Forced Marriage should therefore be consulted and read in conjunction with this protocol.

Safeguarding Children who may have been Trafficked
http://westyorkscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_safeg_traff_ch.htm

Forced Marriage
http://westyorkscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_force_marr.html

Children who are missing from education are not necessarily missing from home or care; however when children are missing from education this can be an indication of other risk factors. Any incidences of children missing from education should therefore be appropriately investigated. For further information please refer to Children missing education Statutory guidance for Local Authorities November 2013 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education) and the West Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Procedures: Children Missing from Education.
http://westyorkscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_ch_miss_frm_educ.html

2. Definitions

The following definitions are used throughout this guidance:

Child	Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The term 'Children' therefore represents children and young people**.**
Young runaway	A child who has run away from their home or care placement, or feels they have been forced or lured to leave.
Missing child	A child reported as missing to the Police by their family or carers.
Looked After child	A child who is looked after by a Local Authority by reason of a Care Order, or accommodated under section 20 of the Children Act 1989
Missing from Care	A Looked After Child who is not at their placement or the place they are expected to be (e.g. school) and their whereabouts is not known.
Absent	A child not at a place where they are expected or required to be.
Away from placement without authorisation	A Looked After Child whose whereabouts is known but who is not at their placement or place they are expected to be and the carer has concerns or the incident has been notified to the Local Authority or the Police.
Responsible Local Authority	The Local Authority that is responsible for a Looked After Child's care and care planning.
Host Local Authority	The Local Authority in which a Looked After Child is placed when placed out of the responsible Local Authority's area.
Care leaver	An eligible, relevant or former relevant child as defined by the Children Act 1989.
Child Sexual exploitation	Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive something (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing and/or others performing on them, sexual activities.
Trafficking	Any child transported for exploitative reasons is considered to be a trafficking victim. Children may be trafficked both internally within the UK and externally, from or to abroad.

N.B. For the purposes of this protocol, a child who has run away or who is missing will be defined as one when the episode has been reported to the Police.

The Police categories of absent or missing do **NOT** incorporate Looked After Children who are defined as 'away from placement without authorisation'.

3. Procedures for Absent and Missing Children

Missing and Absent Criteria

A child will be defined as **Missing** if their whereabouts are unknown and:

a) the circumstances are out of character; or
b) the context suggests the child may be:
    - the subject of crime; or
    - at risk of harm to themselves or another.

A child will be defined as **Absent (low risk missing)** if the following criteria are met:

a) The child has deliberately or carelessly absented themselves; and
b) This is not out of character or there is an apparent explanation for them going absent on this occasion; AND
c) The child is expected to return; AND
d) The child is not expected to suffer or cause harm whilst absent; AND
e) The level of risk does not justify police intervention at this time.

Responses if it is believed a child is possibly missing or absent

If any practitioner considers a child to be missing or absent they should:

a) Inform the child's parent/carer of their concern and establish when the child was last seen and the circumstances for the child. If the practitioner remains concerned that the child is possibly missing they must advise the parent/carer to inform the Police. The practitioner should also inform the parent/carer that they will notify the Police of their concerns that the child is missing;
b) Notify Children's Social Care Services if the child is already known to them or if there is a concern that the child is likely to suffer harm; and
c) Record what has been done.

If Children's Social Care Services are already involved with the child (for example as a Looked After Child, a Child In Need or subject to a Child Protection Plan) the Social Worker / team responsible for the child should then:

a) Inform other local agencies who know the child.
b) Inform all practitioners involved with the child's plan
c) Ensure that the missing episode is recorded on the child's file.

Responsibilities of the parent/carer prior to notifying the Police

A child's parent/carers should take all reasonable and practical steps to establish the whereabouts and well-being of a child in order to identify whether the child is absent or missing by:

a) Determining the nature and reasons for absence (including consideration of likely push and pull factors and any trigger events);

b) Ascertaining the likely intentions of the child;
c) Searching the immediate locality;
d) Telephoning and sending SMS (text) messages to the child's mobile phone and checking the child's social media sites, if these are accessible;
e) Checking places frequented by the child;
f) Making enquiries with the child's relatives;
g) Making enquiries with the child's friends;
h) Making enquiries with the child's school, college, providers of education or work placement, community groups or places of worship if appropriate;
i) If the child is Looked After, making enquiries with the other children in the foster home, children's home, or residential school to establish if they have seen or heard anything (this can also stop distressing rumours from circulating);
j) Making enquiries with and obtaining further information from other carers and professionals involved with the child; and
k) Attending at addresses frequented by the child to see if they are there.

N.B. Where the child is in temporary foster placement, the Local Authority will assume the responsibility to ensure the Police are informed or that the carer has done so.

Informing the Police

When a child is reported as absent or missing to the Police, they will create an incident log, obtain information and ask questions to establish a level of risk.

Information the Police will require includes:

- Name and gender of the child (including all names and aliases);
- Date of birth and age;
- Description of the child and their clothing;
- The child's home address and if relevant the child's family home address;
- The location the child is absent from;
- Circumstances of the absence, including any signs of pre-planning (have they taken any money, clothing etc.);
- Whether the child told anyone they intended to leave, including if they have they left a letter or note;
- The child's mobile phone number and if they taken their mobile phone;
- If any contact has been made been made with the child, including if a message been left on the child's mobile phone and /or if a text message has been sent;
- Locations where the child may have gone, including places where were they found previously;
- Details of any friends and associates they may be with;
- Name, address and telephone number of the reporting person and their relationship to the child; and
- Addresses that the reporting person has already checked (Including time / date and details of who lives at the addresses visited.)

4. Risk Assessment

To establish the type of absence, level of risk and vulnerability and appropriate level of intervention, the Police will explore if the person reporting the child as missing has any concerns relating to;

- The child's level of vulnerability (including age and any learning difficulties);
- The child being a risk to others;
- The child's emotional and mental well-being; and
- The child's physical vulnerability.

This will include establishing if:

- The child being a victim of a serious crime such as murder, kidnap or abduction;
- If the child has been involved in any recent arguments or disagreements;
- If the child has been the victim of a recent violent, domestic, homophobic or racist incident;
- The risk of self-harm;
- If the child has been a victim of bullying;
- If the child has any alcohol or substance misuse problems;
- Whether the child takes medication and the risk to the child /others if they do not take it on time;
- If the child is at risk of sexual exploitation;
- Whether the child is at risk of trafficking or forced marriage;
- Whether the child is likely to visit someone who may be violent, sexually abusive or supply them with drugs or alcohol; and
- When the child's emotional and physical condition when they were last seen.

Risk Assessment – Absent / low risk missing

Where a child's whereabouts are not known, and they are not at a place where they are expected or required to be but are not expected to suffer or cause harm, West Yorkshire Police will make a record of the absent missing report and agree with the parent/carer reporting a course of action.

A Police Inspector can delay despatching an officer to undertake an initial missing report if they are satisfied that the appropriate criteria apply. Any decision to delay the Police response should be clearly recorded.

If an officer is despatched, a missing from home report occurrence will be created and a missing person report taken. If an officer has been despatched and locates the child before full details for a missing from home report are recorded an *Initial Police Return Interview* will be conducted by the officer with the child and will be attached to the missing person occurrence. Where a missing person occurrence report has been recorded and a child subsequently is located or returns home an officer will be despatched to complete an *Initial Police Return Interview*

If the child does not return as expected, is not located, or the risk increases, the parent or carer should notify the Police and report the young person as missing.

All children determined as absent /low risk missing, where no officer has been despatched to take a report, will be formally reviewed by the Police at least every 8 hours.

Any information subsequently obtained on the location of the child, or information subsequently obtained that affects the risk assessment, should be reported to the Police without delay.

An absence must also be kept under regular review by the appropriate carer. If a parent, carer, or practitioner subsequently assesses the absence to fall within the definition of missing, they must inform the Police as soon as possible. If in agreement, the Police will attend to receive or take a missing person

report and investigate.

Although children categorised as absent (low risk missing) will not, in most instances be seen by the Police, it is still important for the Police to identify any information which indicates that the child has suffered or is likely to suffer harm:

- Where an absent / low risk missing child returns or is located, the Police will therefore ask questions of the person informing them of the child's return, and record the details;

- If the Police establish concerns relating to the child's welfare or safety whilst the child has been absent, these will be shared with Children's Social Care Services;

- It is the responsibility of the parent/ carer to make arrangements for the child to return to their home;

- If a child who has run away or been absent from home, is the subject of an Assessment by Children's Social Care Services, a Section 47 Enquiry, is a Child in Need, is subject to a Child Protection Plan or is Looked After, the child's Social Worker should ensure that the period of absence is clearly recorded on the child's case file;

- When practitioners or agencies are aware of children who have been absent from home, who were not reported as reported missing to the Police, they should actively work with the child's family, to reduce the risk of further incidences and encourage the family to report any future episodes of running away;

- The Police must notify the Local Authority Missing Coordinator or the Local Authority nominated Manager of all instances of children reported as absence / low risk;

- Regardless of the level of risk, all absences should be upgraded to missing if they continue for 72 hours.

Risk Assessment- Missing

If the Police, from the information provided agree the child is missing, they will attend to take a missing person report and investigate.

Information Required by the Police

The Police will require:

- The information required to complete the Initial Reporting Form from the child's carers;
- A completed Initial Reporting form and the risk assessment, if the child is Looked After;
- Details of all the enquiries conducted so far; and
- A photograph of the missing child.

If the child is Looked After or known to Children's Social Care Services, a copy of this documentation should also be provided to the Social Worker to retain on the case-file.

Police Officer Attending

The Police Officer attending will take the following action:

- Complete or review the Initial Reporting Form in consultation with the carer and confirm the risk assessment. On the occasions when it has not been possible for a carer (foster carer or residential staff member) to complete the Initial Reporting Form prior to police attendance, the Police Officer will complete the form with the assistance of the carer;
- Check all details on the Initial Reporting Form and confirm the risk status of the missing child;
- Obtain a recent photograph of the missing child;
- Conduct a house search, or if the child resides in a care setting, search the child's room, in order to ascertain further information that will assist in locating the child. This will be undertaken in a way that is sensitive to the needs of any other children or young people the child lives with; and
- Commence initial enquiries

Investigation

If a child is not located as a result of the initial enquiries, the Police Officer will create a missing person occurrence record on the Police Computer System and a formal investigation will commence.

The Police will continuously review any missing from home report in line with the West Yorkshire Police Missing Person's policy

Carers, practitioners and all relevant agencies will be expected to help the Police to find the child and to work co-operatively during any investigation.

Planning for Return

From the moment a child is reported as missing, parents, carers, Social Workers, and the Police as appropriate, should start planning for when a child is found.

Planning for a child's return is extremely beneficial, especially with regard to children who go repeatedly missing or those who fall into the high risk category. If planning is not undertaken the likelihood of the child going missing again will not reduce.

This may involve contingency planning; such as identifying suitable alternative short term accommodation for the child. This should be done in partnership with the child, the child's carers, family and the Local Authority.

It is important that if alternative accommodation is required, that this is risk assessed and meets the child's needs. Children must not be placed in accommodation that leaves them vulnerable to exploitation or trafficking.

Regard must also be given to who will support the child once they have been found and to who is the most appropriate person to conduct the return interview with the child.

Child Protection Concerns Identified whilst the Child is Missing

The Police will always contact Children's Social Care Services to ascertain whether a child is already known to them.

If a child is not known to Children's Social Care Services, and child protection concerns become apparent

during the investigation, the Police will make a formal referral to Children's Social Care Services.

If at any time during an investigation, an agency becomes aware of information that indicates a child will be at risk on their return home, both the Police and Children's Social Care Services must be informed immediately so that they can develop contingency plans and take appropriate action. Children's Social Care Services will consider undertaking a Section 47 Enquiry to determine if the child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Within this there will need to be consideration as to whether it is safe for the child to return home when they have been found.

Notification of Return

If a child returns or is located, all individuals who have previously been notified of the child's absence should be advised without delay.

Collection of the child

The carer is responsible for recovering and returning a child to their home after they have been located.

If a child has an allocated Social Worker, they may be able to assist with this.

If there are thought to be specific issues of safety or public order difficulties involved in recovering and returning a child, then co-ordinated action should be agreed with the Police.

The carer should only request Police assistance to recover a child if:

- The carer is being prevented from obtaining access to the child;
- There is evidence to suggest that the child is at immediate risk of serious harm;
- This is necessary to prevent a breach of the peace due to a threat of violence or disorder.

If the Police locate a child they should not leave them at a location where they are likely to be exposed to the risk of harm or from where they are likely to go missing again, prior to the child's carer being able to make arrangements to collect the child.

If the Police are considering leaving a child at an address to be collected by the Local Authority, they must contact the relevant Social Worker or Out of Hours Service to ensure that any known risk factors are shared and taken into account.

On occasions the Police may need to consider returning the child direct to their home or taking the child to a local Police Station after confirming a collection time with a carer or the Local Authority.

Children should not be returned to the place they ran away from until their safety is fully evaluated. If there are concerns that to do so would mean a child is likely to suffer significant harm, a referral must be made to Children's Social Care Services for the consideration of Section 47 Enquiries. The Police may consider the use of Police Protection Powers to ensure the safety of the child until Section 47 Enquiries are undertaken, including applying for an Emergency Protection Order, or applying for a Recovery Order.

If a Child Refuses to Return Home

If there is concern that the child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm by being at home, a referral must be made to the Children's Social Care Services. Consideration will be given to taking the

child into Police Protection, applying for an Emergency Protection Order, or applying for a Recovery Order.

Where the child is assessed as **NOT** suffering or likely to suffer significant harm;

- If they are under 16 or subject to a Court Order, the Police and a nominated manager from Children's Social Care Services will liaise, to discuss what action should be taken to safeguard the child's welfare.

- If they are over 16 and subject to a Care Order, there should be a formal review of their Care Plan at the earliest opportunity

Referrals

The Police should make a referral to Children's Social Care Services when a child who has been missing from home has been located by the Police and there is a concern that the child:

- Is a Child in Need (as defined in Section 17 Children Act 1989);
- Has suffered significant harm;
- Is likely to suffer significant harm.

An evaluation of whether the child is likely to continue to go missing will be one of the factors informing the decision to make a referral to Children's Social Care Services.

If a referral to Children's Social Care Services is not appropriate, or after discussion with Children's Social Care Services it is agreed a referral is not required, then provision of Early Help support for the child (and their family) should be considered.

Medical Assessment

As soon as a child is located, consideration should be given to whether they need medical attention. If required, a medical examination should be arranged once appropriate consent has been obtained.

If a child is in the care of the Local Authority, the medical examination should be recorded on the child's case file.

Suspected Victim or Perpetrator of a Crime

If there is any suggestion that a child has been the victim or perpetrator of crime, consideration must be given to the securing of evidence including forensic examination.

Where an allegation of physical or sexual abuse is made or becomes evident, the West Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Procedures must be implemented and contact made immediately with the Police and either a referral must be made to Children's Social Care Services, or if the child already has an allocated Social Worker they must be informed of the allegation.

Safe and Well Police checks

The purpose of a Safe and Well check and *Initial Police Return Interview* is to check for any indications that the child has suffered harm and to give the child an opportunity to disclose any offending by, or

against them when they have been absent. It is common for children, to be unwilling to engage in this process. If a child does not engage it is important for the Police to record the child's manner, their physical appearance and any other factors that may be relevant as part of the ongoing investigation.

When a child is located, the Police must attend to conduct a safe and well check and initial return interview with the child, **within four hours** unless:

- The child has returned or was located by the carer prior to the initial Police attendance;
- The child is a mental health patient;
- The child is in the care of the Local Authority and a return interview strategy has been agreed between the Police District Missing Person Coordinator and the Local Authority.

The *Initial Police Return Interview* should establish:

- That the child is safe and well;
- Where the child was when they were missing;
- Why the child went missing (considering the push and pull factors as well as possible triggers);
- What the child did when missing, where they went, and if possible who they were with;
- Explore with the child positive alternative options to going 'missing', so that if a similar situation arises the child can consider what alternative action they might take, and where they could get support from; and
- What if any action is now required to help prevent a reoccurrence; For example a child sexual exploitation investigation, a referral to Children's Social Care Services, a referral for Early Help support and intervention.

The Police must always conduct an initial return interview with a child who was categorised as missing when they return or are located, no matter how many times the child has been missing before unless the Police District Missing Person Coordinator has agreed an alternative return interview strategy with the Local Authority.

The Police must record details of their safe and well check and initial return interview on a return interview form (Misper7) even if the interview was conducted on behalf of the Police by a suitable individual identified by a return interview strategy.

Independent Return Interviews

Independent Return Interviews should be offered to all children who have been reported as missing.

The interview is an opportunity to identify and understand any risks and issues experienced by the child.

When a Looked After Child, child subject to an Assessment, Child in Need or child subject to a Child Protection Plan has been missing, the carer and Social Worker must consider who is the most appropriate person to conduct the Independent Return Interview.

The interviews should be initiated and where possible completed within 72 hours of the child returning to their home or care setting and be held in a neutral place, somewhere where the child feels safe.

The interview should be undertaken by someone independent of the child's family, placement, or care.

The interview should explore the push and pull factors as well as any risk factors. This should include discussing with the child:

- The frequency of the child's missing episodes;
- Whether the child has been hurt or harmed ;
- The child's risk of sexual exploitation or trafficking;
- Any involvement the child may have had in criminal activity or substance misuse;
- Whether the child has had any contact with people who pose a risk to children;
- Any on-going risk factors that may impact on the child going missing again; and
- Any risk factors the child may experience in their home.

The interviewer needs to:

- Help the child feel safe and understand that they have options to prevent repeat instances of them running away;
- Provide the child with information on how to stay safe if they choose to run away again, including helpline numbers; and
- Undertake an assessment of whether a child might run away again.

This assessment should be based on:

- The child's individual circumstances, including family circumstances;
- The child's reasons and motivation for running away;
- Where the child might run away to in the future
- Who the child might run away to be with;
- The Child's recent pattern of absences;
- The circumstances in which the child was found or returned; and
- The child's individual characteristics, vulnerabilities and risk factors, including factors such as whether a child has learning difficulties, mental health issues, depression, is at risk of sexual exploitation, trafficking, or forced marriage.

Any information obtained during an independent return interview that may affect any future risk assessment or may assist in finding the child should they go missing again, should be exchanged between the Police, the Local Authority and other relevant agencies involved with the child, to help build up a comprehensive picture of why the child was absent and what support they and their carers may require, to reduce future missing episodes and risk to the child. This needs to be undertaken in accordance with the home Local Authority protocol.

If the child is Looked After, or subject of an assessment by Children's Social Care Services, the independent return interview should be recorded and retained with the young person's records and on the child's electronic file.

For children not subject of an assessment by Children's Social Care Services, (Section 47 Enquiry, or a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan) the return interview should be shared with the Local Authority Missing Coordinator or nominated manager.

If a child is not currently subject to a Children's Social Care Services Assessment has run away two or more times, the information obtained in the return interviews with the child, should inform a professional discussion with the child and their parent/carer to explore what support and guidance the child and family may wish to access.

If the person /agency undertaking the return interviews have concerns for the welfare and /or safety of the child, a referral must be made to Children's Social Care Services.

If a child chooses not to engage with a return interview the Independent person or the child's Social Worker must record the reasons for this and share this with the Local Authority Missing Coordinator or nominated manager.

5. Looked After Children

Initial Missing Risk Assessment

Placement planning for every child who is becoming Looked After or who is already Looked After must include consideration of the risks and vulnerabilities associated to missing (and sexual exploitation where applicable) and reach an agreement with all those concerned with the child's care, of how the placement is expected to respond to any incidences of missing and 'away from placement without authorisation'.

The child's Social Worker has responsibility for ensuring that an initial assessment of risk is completed when a young person is accommodated. This should include an assessment of the level of risk of the geographical area in which the young person is to be placed, particularly where the placement is outside of the Local Authority area.

Where appropriate this can be completed by the children's home or fostering service practitioners on behalf of the child's Social Worker.

It is recognised that in emergency or unplanned placements, the Placement Plan, including the initial assessment of risk, is unlikely to have been completed within the first 72 hours. However, all available information should be shared at the time of placement.

If there are grounds to suspect that the young person is likely to go missing from their new placement, a multi-agency preventative strategy discussion or meeting should be held to reduce the risks.

The initial risk assessment and any missing strategy documents should be reviewed as part of the Looked After reviewing processes and following any episode of missing.

The Initial Risk Assessment should consider:

1)	The likelihood of the child going missing	• Has the child been absent, missing or 'away from placement without authorisation' before and if so, the pattern of their previous absent behaviour is? • What factors or potential incidents act as trigger events? • Are there are any other circumstances, behaviour or indicators that suggest the child may go absent in the future?
2)	The risks the child is likely to face whilst absent:	Is the child: • Likely to visit a person or people known to be a risk to children? • At risk of child sexual exploitation? • Likely to take alcohol or drugs? • Likely to sleep in risky places?

3)	Control measures to reduce the risks:	At the time of placement, the child should be given clear information about: • Times of going out and returning; • Who to inform about where they are going; • Appropriate telephone numbers to enable them to inform carers about their whereabouts; • An assurance that they can ring at any time and that carers will treat them positively and sensitively; • Their contact arrangements with families and friends; • How to seek help if they are unable to get back for the agreed time, whether this has happened accidentally or on purpose. Consider how to raise the child's awareness of the risks. Provide guidance to carers on what they should do to prevent the child going absent. Be clear about any persons or addresses that the child should not be having any direct contact with or visiting. Ensure the child is aware of what action will be taken by the carers and the Police if they go absent or are away from placement without authorisation.
4)	What action ought to be taken if the child goes absent:	• Who should be contacted by telephone? • Which addresses need to be visited? • What places frequented should be checked? • When should the Police be contacted ?

Photographs

Two recent photographs of the child (face and full body length) should be retained by the carer for missing from care purposes. Copies of these photographs should also be held on the child's electronic or paper record.

Digital photographs are preferable and they should be regularly updated.

If these are obtained post-placement, careful consideration should be given as to how these photos are taken so as not to stigmatise the child.

Away from placement without authorisation

Sometimes Looked After children can be absent for a short period of time with their whereabouts known. This might include children staying out longer than agreed, either on purpose, accidentally or to test boundaries. Examples of such situations include:

- Staying out at a known location with friends;
- Attending a known address;
- Staying at the home of family members; and
- Staying with a girlfriend /boyfriend.

In these circumstances the child will not be classified by the Police as missing, but they may still be placing themselves at risk because of where they are or who they are with. This might include children being at the homes of friends or family, where the carer has concerns about the risk of sexual exploitation, drug and alcohol misuse, offending behaviour etc.

Carers and Children's Social Care Services should take all reasonable and practical steps to locate and return the child.

If the assessment of the carer is that there is no apparent risk for the child's immediate safety, the carer is required to clearly record such absences as 'away from placement without authorisation' in the child's record.

The Social Worker needs to record the absence as required by national data requirements.

The record should be dated and timed including a log of any contact made or attempted with the child, the child's response (or lack of) an indication of the assessed risk, and a review period of the absence.

The responsibility for managing this type of absence remains with the carer, the child's Social Worker and the Local Authority.

All episodes of away from placement without authorisation should be recorded by the carer and reported to the child's Social Worker or the Local Authority Out of Hours duty team immediately.

If the carer or child's Social Worker know of the child's whereabouts, or suspect their whereabouts, they will need to make a decision about whether to allow the child to temporarily remain at that location, or make arrangements to aid the child's return.

After considering all the risk and vulnerability factors, if the decision is to arrange for the child's return and the carer has reason to believe that this may lead to public order difficulties; the carer should seek Police assistance.

Police assistance does not, in such circumstances, alter the 'away from placement without authorisation' categorisation.

If there is a concern for the safety of others and the child in returning the child, then action should be agreed between the Local Authority and the Police, with legal advice being sought should a Court Order be required.

Review of Risk and Category of Absence

Children who fall within the categories of absent or ''away from placement without authorisation'' must be the subject of a continuous risk assessment whilst they remain absent. During their absence, circumstances may change and carers and agencies need to be in a position to respond accordingly.

A review should be conducted and recorded by Local Authority staff at a minimum of six hourly intervals except during the night, when a review should be conducted and recorded at 2300 hours and then again at 0800 hours the following morning. Local Authority practitioners are able to seek advice from Police colleagues at any point if this is helpful to the assessment of risk.

When a child is absent or away from placement without authorisation, and the carer is concerned about the child's welfare and safety and / or the child has not returned, or been located, the carer should make a missing child report to the Police, clearly highlighting their concern and the risk factors.

A clear assessment needs to be made by the Local Authority in each individual case as to the length of time that elapses before a child who is 'away from placement without authorisation' becomes categorised as missing.

Where there is a difference of opinion between Children's Social Care Services staff and the Police over the appropriate category of absence, the Police will make the final decision about the Police response. However the Police Officer/member of Police Staff should refer all such cases of dispute to the Duty Inspector.

Where Children's Social Care Services are not satisfied with the decision of the relevant Inspector, they should refer the matter to a Manager as soon as possible.

If a child repeatedly stays away from their placement without authorisation, the child's individual missing risk assessment and plan must be reviewed and updated to reflect the issues and risk.

Local Authorities should keep accurate records of all episodes of children being away from placement without authorisation. For individual children this should include the length of time they are away from their placement, whether they return of their own accord or are found, and the locations that they are found at, or stay at and any other relevant information, such as who the child was believed to be with.

The Child's Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) must be informed of all instances of a child being absent or away from placement without authorisation. The Care Plan should be reviewed to include details of arrangements required to keep the child safe and minimise the future risk of the child going missing from their placement.

Children who go Missing or Absent During External Activity or Outings

If a Looked After Child goes absent outside the Local Authority area they reside in, the carer in charge of the external activity or holiday will:

- Arrange a search of the area where the young person went absent;
- Notify the local Police for that area.

The Police for the area where the child went missing and the Police for the area where the child normally resides will decide which Police Force and division will take responsibility for managing the investigation. This will normally be the Police Force and division that covers the area where the majority of enquiries are likely to be conducted. The Police will notify a relevant Children's Social Care Services Team Manager of their decision.

The Children's Social Care Services Manager or an Out of Hours practitioner will be responsible for ensuring the general procedures in relation to a missing Looked After Child are followed.

The person in charge of the external activity or holiday will make a joint decision within 24 hours of the absence whether the rest of the party should return home.

If they do return home, ongoing communication must be maintained between the child's Social Worker and the Police Force responsible for managing the missing person enquiry to aid the investigation. The child's record must reflect all the actions and discussions undertaken.

The child's Social Worker should inform the child's parent or any other person with parental responsibility so soon as it practical to do so

Children who are subject to Placement with Parents Regulations

A child living at home and subject to the Placement with Parents Regulations is still a Looked After Child.

In such circumstances, it is the responsibility of the parent to inform the child's Social Worker or their manager, the Children's Social Care Services "Out of Hours" Service and the Police or when it is evident that the child has gone missing from the placement. This responsibility should be discussed with the parents before the placement is agreed and it must be part of the Placement Agreement.

The Children's Social Care Services Manager who approved the placement should also be informed of the incident at the earliest opportunity. The Social Worker must check that the child *has* been reported as missing to the Police and must record the missing incident on the child's electronic file.

A Social Worker should visit the child within 72 hours of the child returning to the placement and a return home interview must be completed.

Missing and absent and away from placement without authorisation - Out of Area Placements

An Out of Area Placement is a placement of a child by one Local Authority:

- In a residential placement that is located in another Local Authority area, (the host authority) or
- With foster carers who live in another Local Authority area.

Before a child is placed in an Out of Authority Placement, child's the Social Worker for the responsible authority should check with the residential / foster care agency provider that local protocols are in place that are consistent with this protocol and if not that the Agency agrees to comply with this protocol. The Agency should be fully informed and agree to the actions required to be taken if a child is reported as absent, missing or away from placement without authorisation from by their provider.

The Agency should contact the child's Social Worker or the responsible authority's Out of Hours Service as soon as it is confirmed that a child is missing from their care.

The appropriate responsible Children's Social Care Services Manager should be informed within 24 hours receive regular updates as to the situation.

The child's Social Worker should make any necessary enquiries to clarify the reasons why the child went missing and to plan how best to minimise the chances of this occurring in the future.

The child's Social Worker should also inform the child's parent or any other person with parental responsibility as soon as it practical to do so, but no later than 24 hours, after the child was reported missing.

A return home interview must be completed within 72 hours. The social worker is responsible for negotiating who is the most appropriate person to complete the interview.

Incidences of missing, absent and away from placement without authorisation must always be recorded on the child's electronic file.

The child's Independent Reviewing Officer must be kept fully informed of any incidences of a child missing, absent or away from placement without authorisation.

Record Keeping

Throughout any period that a Looked After child is absent or missing from their placement, the child's Social Worker and carers must keep a full record of all actions taken and information shared. This information must also be recorded on the child's electronic file.

Review of Looked After Child's Care Plan

When a Looked After Child who has been missing has been located, the child's Social Worker and their line manager should decide in consultation with the child's Independent Reviewing Officer, carers and the child whether they should convene an early statutory review of the child's Care Plan.

The statutory review will provide an opportunity to check that the Care Plan has been appropriately amended to address the reasons for the child's absences and include an intervention strategy to prevent reoccurrences.

The Child's Independent Reviewing Officer should also review the suitability of the placement in conjunction with the child, and his /her family, the child's, the placement provider and the child's Social Worker This might require the statutory Looked After Review to be brought forward.

Children's Home Regulations

Children's homes are required under regulations to have a clear policy in place which seeks to prevent children going missing and identifies what action is required if children do go missing.

This policy must specify the roles and responsibilities of residential carer's when a child is away from placement without authorisation or missing. For Children's Homes in West Yorkshire the policy must have regard for this protocol.

Media

The Police have responsibility for considering whether to inform the media regarding missing Looked After Children to assist in locating that individual and warning the public if that individual poses a significant threat.

However decisions to publicise a missing Looked After Child will only be taken after discussions have taken place between the Police and a senior representative (head of service level) of the Local Authority to agree a media strategy.

The Social Worker should consult relevant family members.

Any decision to publicise must be authorised by a member of the Divisional Senior Management Team and the approval of a senior representative of Local Authority Children's Social Care Services must be sought.

Where agreement over publicity cannot be reached between the Police and Local Authority, the ultimate decision on publicity is that of the Police. However, the Police must have cogent reasons to publicise against the wishes of the Local Authority and these reasons must be recorded.

Wherever possible, there should be an appropriate time-scale to enable those with parental responsibility to be informed and forewarned so that the first they hear of the child being missing is not through the media presentation.

Unless it is absolutely necessary, the child will not be identified as a Looked After child.

6. Information Sharing

Whenever there are concerns about a child's safety or well-being, it will be necessary for agencies to share information with each other. The safety and welfare of a young person must always be the first consideration.

Under the Data Protection Action 1988, sensitive information *can* be shared if it is necessary to protect a child or to prevent or detect a crime.

For further information and local protocols relating to information sharing, consult the West Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Procedures
http://westyorkscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_info_shar_confid.html

7. Multi-Agency Missing Planning Meetings

Missing Planning Meeting

If a child missing from home or care is the subject of an assessment by Children's Social Care Services, a Section 47 Enquiry, is a Child in Need or subject to a Child Protection Plan or is Looked After; the relevant Children's Social Work Team should convene a missing planning meeting in accordance with the local area protocol.

The meeting will:

- Review the action taken so far;
- Identify what action now needs to be taken and time scales;
- Identify the most appropriate person to interview the young person when found; and
- Consider whether it is appropriate and safe to return the young person to their home address and consider if alternative accommodation is required to be identified.

Meetings in respect of persistent absent behaviour

If a child is repeatedly absent, missing or away from placement without authorisation and there are specific concerns due to risk factors then a multi-agency meeting should be held to develop a 'Missing plan to help prevent reoccurrence and reduce risk of harm.

If another type of Child Protection / Planning Meeting has already been organised for another purpose, it is possible to utilise that meeting in order to address the missing concerns and formulate a Missing Strategy rather than hold a separate meeting.

8. Missing Plan and Intervention Plan

Content of the plan

Should include:

- A risk assessment;
- A reporting strategy – which should include guidance on when to report a child as absent and when to report them as missing;
- Recommendations on the minimum enquiries to be conducted by the Local Authority;
- Recommendations on the minimum enquiries to be conducted by the Police;
- A Return interview strategy, and
- An Intervention strategy to address the long-term risk and vulnerability factors.

Intervention Plan

Missing interventions seek to reduce the risks that a child may be exposed to and prevent the likelihood of further incidents of the child being absent / missing / away from placement without authorisation.

Common strategies include:

- Disrupting the child's contact with adults suspected of being involved in grooming, abuse, coercion, trafficking, violence, use and supply of illegal substances, illegal activities and sexual exploitation;
- Disrupting the child's relationship with other young people suspected of introducing them to adults involved in grooming, abuse, coercion, trafficking, violence, use and supply of illegal substances, illegal activities and sexual exploitation;
- Gathering evidence to prosecute adults suspected of being involved in grooming, abuse, coercion, trafficking, violence, use and supply of illegal substances, illegal activities and sexual exploitation;
- Listening and taking account of the child's wishes and feelings;
- Promoting positive relationships with family, friends and carers;
- Identifying ways of physically protecting the child;
- Ensuring contact is maintained with a child whilst absent;
- Enhancing the return procedure to ensure it is a positive experience;
- Setting clear boundaries and developing contracts regarding expectations and responsibilities;
- Motivating positive behaviour;
- Empowering the carer/ foster carer;
- Building the child's self-esteem, self-confidence and self-worth through the provision of positive activities;
- Raising awareness of the risks associated with running away or being missing;
- Meeting any physical, emotional, mental health needs the child might have;
- Working with the carers or parents to make the child's home a place where they want to be;
- Working with education & training providers to meet the child's needs; and
- Providing specialist support through multi agency partnerships.

9. Legislation and guidance

This protocol is based on the following legislation, guidance and policy

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation, (DCSF, 2009)
- The Right to Choose: Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage (DCSF, 2010)
- APCO guidance on 'Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons', (APCO NPIA 2010)
- Missing children and Adults, A Cross Government strategy (Home Office, 2011)
- Safeguarding Children Who May Have Been Trafficked (DFE 2011)
- The National Minimum Standards in Residential and Fostering Agencies (2011)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013
- Interim Guidance on the Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons (ACPO 2013)
- Statutory guidance on children who runaway and go missing from home or care (DfE, 2014)

The legal parameters within which missing person enquiries are conducted can be found in common law, international law and the provisions of the European Convention of Human Rights Some of the provisions of the EHCR have been given legal effect within the United Kingdom by virtue of the Human Rights Act 1998.

10. Data and problem profiling

The Local Authority Missing Person Coordinator (or nominated manager) should regularly review all incidents of children absent, missing and away from placement without authorisation to ensure appropriate referrals and responses are undertaken, effective safeguarding practices implemented, and multi-agency strategy meetings when required are held.

To assist in achieving this aim the Missing Person Coordinator (or nominated manager) should receive regular reports from all care homes of any absences not reported to the Police, in order to ensure a full pattern of missing/absence can be established for all individuals.

The Local Authority should ensure that reports relating to children placed within their care from out of area are shared with the responsible placing Local Authority, in order to instigate reviews of care placements if required.

Collecting, sharing and analysing data relating to children who go missing, is essential; the sharing of data assists to detect problems and issues as sexual exploitation, offending behaviour, adults who pose a risk to children and crime related activity, such as trafficking that might not be apparent. It also assists to contribute to implementation of effective preventative strategies which focus on reducing the incidence of missing children, whilst ascertaining the priorities for collaborative safeguarding, and ensuring that needs of children are met

Additionally analysing data aids strategic problem profiling; identifying missing patterns and trends, for example, areas where children are frequently located, repeat missing individuals or if a particular

children's home has a high level of children reported as missing from care, allowing for informed responses and action.

Therefore missing children data is required to be cross referenced with children missing from education, children not in school data and youth offending service data on absconding and breaching to assist with comprehensive problem profiling.

All data relating to children missing or away from placement without authorisation should be reported to the Department for Education by the responsible Local Authority through their annual data returns on Looked After Children.

11. Legal Powers and Duties

See Appendix C for details of legal powers and duties to:

A. Use physical restraint to prevent a child going missing
B. To use reasonable force to recover a child ; and
C. To enter premises to search for a child.

12. Harbourer's Warnings

The Police and the Local Authority should seek to identify those individuals that harbour children who go missing.

This will require a co-ordinated approach to investigation and the exchange of all relevant information and intelligence.

Detailed information relating to the criteria for Harbourer's Warnings can be obtained in 1.5.3 Investigation Strategy for Harbourers of Children and Young People of the West Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Procedures.

13. Contact Information

When any child is missing or absent and there are concerns about their welfare and safety, this should be reported without delay to West Yorkshire Police.

When reporting a child who is missing is subject of an assessment by Children's Social Care Services, a Section 47 Enquiry, is a Child in Need or subject to a Child Protection Plan or is Looked After, this should be reported in the first instance to:

- The child's Social Worker, or in their absence;
- The relevant duty Social Worker for the team; or,
- Emergency Duty Team (EDT) when out of normal working hours/weekends.

Police		Local Authorities	During office hours	Out of hours
Emergencies	999	Leeds	0113 376 0336	0113 2409 536
Non Emergencies	101	Kirklees	01924 326 097	01924 326 489
		Calderdale	01422 393 336	01422 288 000
		Bradford	01274 437 500	01274 431 010
		Wakefield	0845 8503 503	0845 8503 503

Appendix A: Examples of Different Types of Absence

Please note that these examples are included as a guide only. Every case will be different and should be assessed based on the individual circumstances

High Risk Missing child	• A 17 year old boy who is suspected of being abducted against his will for the purpose of rape and sexual assault. • A young person who has left a suicide note, there are indications that they have taken an overdose and there is concern that they have left to make a genuine attempt at suicide. • A 10 year old child who has been missing overnight
Medium Risk Missing child	• An 11 year old girl who regularly goes missing and in the past has always gone to the home of a friend. She has not suffered significant harm when she has been missing before. • A 16 year old boy with learning difficulties who is Looked After and has not returned to his foster placement after school. This is out of character
Low Risk Missing child /Absent	• A 15 year old boy who has failed to return home. The parents believe he is staying at a friend's house overnight. They can contact him on his mobile phone, but he refuses to say where his friend lives. The parents do not think he is at immediate risk of harm, but he has no permission to stay out overnight. • A 16 year old girl subject to a care order who is believed to be with natural relatives. The family are not co-operating and refuse to state where the girl is staying. The girl is not considered to be at risk of suffering significant harm • A 14 year old girl who is Looked After and who fails to return to the residential children's home where she lives. She is regularly stays at her natural mother's address. She generally returns after a day or two unharmed.
Away from placement without authorisation	• A 15 year old girl who resides in a children's home and who regularly leaves the home late in the evening to meet friends at a house in the local area. She is assessed as at risk of child sexual exploitation. • A 12 year old boy who has not returned home to his foster placement, but has phoned his carer's and said that he is with a group of much older children in a local park. When he phoned the foster care believed him to be under the influence of alcohol or substances.

Appendix B: Example questions that may to help to establish if a child is missing

1)	• **Have they ever done this before?** • **Can you think of any reason why the child might be absent or have not returned?** • **Why do you think the child has left and not returned?** • **Are you surprised that the child has done this?**
	Establish whether the behaviour is out of character or whether there is an obvious explanation for the absence. If the behaviour is out of character and there is no good explanation for the person being absent, treat as a missing person.
2)	• **Do you expect the child to return?** • **When do you expect the child to return?** • **Do you know where the child is likely to be?**
	Do not report a child as missing if you know where they are likely to be unless there is an obvious immediate serious risk to the child or public. *It is the responsibility of the carer to locate and return the child in these circumstances.*
3)	• **Do you have any immediate concerns that the child will suffer or cause harm whilst absent?** • **What are those concerns?** • **How likely do you think it is that the child will suffer or cause harm?** • **How worried are you?**
	When a child is absent, there is always a certain level of concern. However, consider whether the risk is immediate and serious. Consider how likely it is that the child will suffer or cause harm whilst absent. Consider whether a responsible parent would take responsibility for locating the child or whether they would report the child as missing to the police in these circumstances.
4)	• **What have you already done to find the child?**
	Attend addresses and search places frequented to find the child. The amount of effort the reporting person makes to locate the child will be considered by the police as an indication of how concerned the reporting person is. Local Authorities should not use the police to locate and return a child due to a shortage of resources when the risk level does not justify police intervention. Consider whether a responsible parent would ring the police in similar circumstances.

Appendix C: Legal Powers

Power to use Reasonable Force or Physical Restraint

Police

If a constable has reasonable cause to believe that a child would otherwise be likely to suffer significant harm, the constable may remove the child to a place of safety and keep the child there (S46 Children Act 1989).

The Children Act legislation implies the power to use reasonable force in appropriate circumstance to take a child into Police protection or to keep the child at a place of safety (Home Office Circular 44/2003).

This implied power 'is appropriate for detaining and returning missing from homes against their will so long as they are at risk from significant harm. For example, if a missing fifteen year old child is found safe and well at the home of a school friend where she had been doing homework, she is not at risk, but the same child walking the streets at 11.30pm would almost certainly be at risk' *(Police National Legal Database 2008)*.

Local Authority

It is permissible to physically intervene to prevent a young person running from their care. This action will need to be justified by an assessment of the risks that the young person might face if they run. However, physical intervention does not offer a long-term risk management strategy *(Department of Health: Children Missing from Care and from Home – a guide to good practice 2002).*

Power of Entry to Recover Child/ Young Person

Under S17 (1) (e) Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984:

A constable can use reasonable force, but in some circs a recovery order would be required to enter premises. The welfare of the child/ young person is paramount and where there are grounds to believe a vulnerable missing child/ young person is on premises and access is being refused, there should be no hesitation in gaining entry under this provision. The reason why there is no power of entry under the Children's Act 1989 to take a child/ young person into police protection is because the power under S17 (1)(e) was considered sufficient.

Under S17 (1) (b) Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984:

A constable can use reasonable force to enter premises to arrest someone for an indictable offence.
Therefore where there is another person on the premises who is preventing access, consideration should be given to entering to arrest that individual for abduction of a child contrary to S2 Abduction Act 1984 or S49 Children Act 1989.

Breach of the Peace:

Under Common Law, a constable has a power of entry to prevent a breach of the peace.

Recovery Order:

Under S50 (1) Children Act 1989, the court may make a recovery order, where it appears to the court that there is reason to believe that a child:

- Has been unlawfully taken away or is being unlawfully kept away from the responsible person
- Has run away or is staying away from the responsible person or
- Is missing.

A Recovery Order:

- Operates as a direction to a person able to do so to produce the child on request to an authorised person
- Authorises the removal of the child by an authorised person
- Requires a person who has information as to the child's whereabouts to disclose it, if so requested, to a constable or an officer of the court
- Authorises a constable to enter any premises specified in the order and search for the child, using reasonable force if necessary.

Emergency Protection Order:

Under S48 (3) an emergency protection order may authorise the applicant to enter premises specified by the order and search for the child with respect to whom the order is made.

Warrant:

Under S48(9) Children Act 1989, a warrant can be obtained authorising a constable to use reasonable force to enter and search premises if a person trying to exercise powers under an emergency protection order is being prevented from doing so by being refused entry to those premises.

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City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of the Deputy Director to the meeting of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 12 December 2018

Subject: Children Missing from Education **S**

Including information on Unregistered Schools and Elective Home Education

Summary statement:

Under Section 436A of the Education and Inspections Act 1996 all local authorities have a statutory responsibility to *"make arrangements to enable them to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children residing in their area who are not receiving a suitable education. In relation to children, by 'suitable education' we mean efficient full-time education suitable to her/his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have."*

Gladys Rhodes White
Interim Strategic Director

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Portfolio:

Education, Employment and Skills

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children's Services

1. SUMMARY

This report focuses on the vulnerable learners targeted by the Education Safeguarding Team, namely Children Missing out in Education **(CME),** the children whose families have opted for Elective Home Education **(EHE),** and an update on Unregistered schools.

In relation to CME, Local authorities have a duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to establish the identities of children in their area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise. This duty only relates to children of compulsory school age. The local authority should consult the parents of the child when establishing whether the child is receiving suitable education. Arrangements made under section 436A also play an important role in fulfilling the local authority's wider safeguarding duties. This duty should therefore be viewed alongside these wider duties and local initiatives that aim to promote the safeguarding of children.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The statutory responsibility for children missing education is issued under Section 436A of the Education and Inspections Act 1996 and requires all local authorities to make arrangements to enable them to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children residing in their area who are not receiving a suitable education. In relation to children, by 'suitable education' we mean efficient full-time education suitable to her/his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have."

2.2 Since early 2006 the Education Social Work Service (ESWS) has had in place procedures for managing Children Missing from Education. In April 2017 the Education Safeguarding Team **(EST)** revised these processes in order to meet the challenge of ensuring all children residing in Bradford are receiving a suitable education, and the time spent out of education is reduced.

2.3 Children Missing Education referrals are managed by the Education Safeguarding Team, and Access Officers within the team particularly support Central and Eastern European Families in accessing school places.

2.4 **Risks:**

- Children not in education are at an increased risk of negative outcomes
- More likely to become NEET
- Increased vulnerability to external influences including radicalisation
- At risk of neglect, abuse, forced marriage, and engaging in criminality

2.5 **The Out of School Register**

In order to fulfil its statutory duty the EST established the 'Out of School Register' where all known pupils missing from education are placed in one of four referral categories until they have access to an appropriate education provision. These categories are then RAG (red, amber, green) rated against risk. This doesn't capture any possible 'unknown' children in the district, this number maybe considerable, therefore the Out of School Register will not represent the whole picture for Bradford.

2.6 **Referral Categories:**

Missing Children - The EST has established information sharing and gathering arrangements with Children's Social Care, Health Services, Police, Housing, HMRC and Welfare Benefits – these agencies are contacted by the team to try and establish the child and family's whereabouts. Since 2011 we have also had access the Council's Benefits system. This has been extremely useful in tracking and tracing families.

If we have information that the family have moved to another Local Authority, the 'named person' for Children Missing Education in that authority is contacted.

Not on Roll – pupils who have been identified as living in Bradford but not on the roll of a school. These pupils are identified through a variety of sources including Health Services, Police, Children's Social Care and Education Services;

Removed from Roll – Pupils having failed to return following a period of Leave of Absence or Extended Leave of Absence. The Pupil Registration Regulations allow a school to remove a child from the school roll if they fail to return to school within 10 schools days of the agreed return date or after 20 days of unauthorised absence and there is no good reason for the non-return.

Other Local Authority referrals – there is an established network of Named Persons responsible for Children Missing from Education within every LA. The EST via this network regularly receive referrals from other LA's informing them of pupils who have or may have moved into the Bradford area.

2.7 **Procedures**

Missing Children – There is an expectation that prior to referral, schools will make ***reasonable enquiries*** to try to establish the child and family's whereabouts, visiting the last known address, trying all known telephone numbers, contacting family members within school etc. On receipt of the referral the EST immediately contacts the Police, Health Services, Housing and Welfare Benefits in an attempt to gather information to establish the child's whereabouts. The Children's Social Care and Council benefits data systems are checked for information. If after 6 weeks we have still not been able to trace the family, these agencies are contacted again to see if any new information regarding the family's whereabouts has come to light. If there is information that a child and family have moved to another Local Authority, the named person for Children Missing Education in that authority is informed. We request that the receiving authority then carries out a 'safe and well' visit, and confirms with us that the family is in their area and request they take responsibility for the child and assist them to access an appropriate education provision. If at the time the child and family go missing, Children's Social Care are contacted immediately and in person. Any child we are unsuccessful in finding is posted on the S2S 'Lost Pupil Database', all schools and local authorities have access to this.

Not on Roll - Once identified, contact is made with the family and support and guidance is provided to assist the family find places at the most appropriate education provision.

Removed from Roll - The EST keep regular contact with the family or extended family to establish when the child is returning to Bradford. On their return support is given to find an

appropriate school place

Other Local Authority Referrals – We are regularly contacted by other local authorities with information that a child may have moved into our area but the referring authority have no forwarding address in Bradford. In these cases our pupil database is checked to establish if they have been admitted to a Bradford school. If not they are then placed on the Out of School Register for 3 months and regular checks are carried out to establish if the child has been admitted to a Bradford School.

Referrals from other local authorities where a Bradford address is provided are treated as 'Not on Roll' cases.

If at any time there is evidence to suggest that a child is at risk of significant harm, Children's Social Care are informed.

Information and guidance for schools is provide via Bradford Schools Online and the document 'Children Missing Education – Guidance for Schools'

2.8 The EST has initiated a change in how CME data is now reported to provide measurable impact which is outlined in the tables below. The focus is on reducing the number of days children are missing from education. The target of the service, working in close partnership with schools, social care, health, police and parents is to reduce this to less than 42 days. The change in reporting showed an immediate improvement on being able to reduce the amount of time that a child is not in receipt of a suitable education. In January to March 2018, **25%** of cases were resolved within 42 days, whereas between April to August 2018, this figure had increased to **41%** of cases that were resolved within 42 days.

The model implemented is the time (in days) taken from being notified of a CME case to the date that the child is known to:

- be on the register of a Bradford school
- be in another LA that is now taking responsibility for the case
- have left the country

The number and percentages are presented for each of the following bands of time:

- Less than 42 days (on the basis of statutory requirements for action within six weeks)
- Between 42 and 84 days
- Between 85 and 180 days
- Over 180 days - all cases that reach this stage will be discussed at Exceptional Case Meeting

Jan 18 – Mar 18 **317 CME Cases opened**	**% of cases**
Remained Open	1
Over 180	16
85-180	34
42 – 84	24

Under 42	25

April 18 – August 18 617 CME Cases opened	**% of cases**
Remained Open	0
Over 180	1
85-180	28
42 – 84	30
Under 42	41

2.9 **Multi Agency Education Safeguarding Team**

The on-going focus of the Multi Agency Education Safeguarding Team (MEST) is to accurately identify the numbers and details of children and young people who are Missing from Education, those young people who are educated at home (EHE), and to identify the possibility of unregistered schools that are operating and coordinate the partnership response.

Prompt action and early intervention continue to be crucial to discharging the statutory duties that are placed on Local Authorities with regards to CME. The MEST aims to accurately identify the true figure and identities of the children who are missing. A process map for CME has now been created. There can be over 200 referrals received each month. Work of the MEST has been focused on RAG rating individual cases that are received, and draws together Attendance Officers, Safeguarding Officers with a responsibility for Elective Home Education, Access Officers working with new communities (all Education Safeguarding), Bradford Children's Safeguarding Board, Public Health, and West Yorkshire Police and Children's Social Care. Information is now shared between partners to enable proportionate, timely, effective and robust interventions that are undertaken in the interests of children.

2.10 **Elective Home Education (EHE)**

The number of EHE pupils has risen over the last three academic years. At January census point 2015/2016 – 2016/17 there was a **35%** increase in EHE pupils and a **21%** rise from 2016/17 – 2017/18. Overall from January 2016 – January 2018 EHE registered pupils had risen by **63%.** The rise is more prevalent in secondary aged pupils largely due to high numbers of pupils becoming EHE from KS4 secondary education believing this was a route into college education. Primary pupils have increased by **16%** and secondary has seen a **94%** rise. During 2017-18, there was a rise of 3% on the previous year. So although this is still a rise, it wasn't as significant as in previous years, Education Safeguarding were able to evidence some disruption to the upward trajectory of registered cases in the district.

2.11 **Actions taken by EST:**

- This increasing trend has led to an increase in resourcing from the Education Safeguarding Team.
- The EHE team has challenged increases in EHE through formal meetings with the Principals and Head teachers of the schools concerned. This has resulted in reduced numbers of pupils becoming EHE from these schools.

- A School Attendance Order (SAO) is initiated where informal enquiries have determined there is insufficient or unsuitable education taking place. In 2015/16 no SAO was issued, in 2016/15 1 SAO was initiated. Since September 2017, 42 SAOs have been pursued

Like with CME, EHE cases are risk assessed based on a rating of red, amber and green (RAG). See below for a data overview of EHE cases in October 2018:

Red	147
Amber	124
Green	131
White	85
Total	**487**

The data is further analysed to indicate the number of individuals who are also on current Child Protection Plans (CP), Child in Need Plans (CIN), in receipt of Early Help, known to the Youth Offending Team (YOT), have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or receive Special Education Needs Support (SEN):

CP Plan:	0
CIN Plan:	2
Early Help:	18
YOT:	7
EHCP:	15
SEN Support	78

The data above informs the risk assessments we carry out and expected level of engagement with families in relation to whether they are providing a suitable education.

2.12 Unregistered Schools

In order to actively seek out possible unregistered schools, the EST will regularly remind stakeholders of the agreed reporting protocols through a range of means including newsletters. Concerns / intelligence are reported directly to the MEST.

Actions taken:

- The EST regularly interrogates the monthly Companies House database on searching for Nature of Business (SIC) codes production of any LA Unregistered Schools.
- Since September 2016 improved community links have been established by the School and Community Development Officer namely with faith organisations and community groups. This relationship is giving members of the community and other partners the opportunity to share concerns and intelligence hence enabling the LA to investigate, as appropriate. One investigation based on this intelligence has been undertaken and it was found to be a supplementary school. There are clear guidelines in place for investigation when intelligence is received. This is leading to more transparency and sharing of intelligence between agencies for effective safeguarding.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The EST has recently joined a pilot by the DfE involving work with Out of School Settings. Part of this remit will involve mapping the provision that is provided by settings such as Tuition Centres and ensuring they are operating within the legislative guidelines, and are not in breach of guidelines that would relate to unregistered schooling.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

None at this time.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

No issues at this time.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

No issues at this time.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

No issues at this time.

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

Not applicable

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

Not applicable

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Not applicable

7.6 TRADE UNION

Not applicable.

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable

7.8 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS (for reports to Area Committees only)

Not applicable

7.9 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

Not applicable

7.10 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

Not applicable

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None

9. OPTIONS

Not applicable

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive and note this report on matters relating to Children Missing Education, Elective Home Education and Unregistered Schooling.

11. APPENDICES

None

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of the Chair of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the meeting to be held on Wednesday 12 December 2018

Subject: **T**

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2018-19

Summary statement:

This report presents the Committee's Work Programme 2018-19

Cllr Mike Gibbons
Chair – Children's Services O&S Committee

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Portfolio:

Children and Families
Healthy People and Places

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children's Services

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This report presents the Committee's Work Programme 2018-19.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee is required by the Constitution of the Council to prepare a work programme (Part 3E – Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, Para 1.1).

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 **Appendix 1** of this report presents the Work Programme for 2018-19.

3.2 **Work planning cycle**
Best practice published by the Centre for Public Scrutiny suggests that 'work programming should be a continuous process'. It is important to regularly review work programmes so that important or urgent issues that come up during the year are able to be scrutinised. In addition, at a time of limited resources, it should also be possible to remove projects which have become less relevant or timely. For this reason, it is proposed that the Committee's work programme be regularly reviewed by Members throughout the municipal year.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

None

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

None

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

None

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

None

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

None

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

None

7.6 TRADE UNION

None

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

None

7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

None

7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

None

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None

9. OPTIONS

None

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 That the Work programme 2018-19 continues to be regularly reviewed during the year.

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1 – Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2018-19

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

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Democratic Services - Overview and Scrutiny

Childrens Services O&S Committee

Scrutiny Lead: Licia Woodhead tel - 43 2119

Work Programme 2018/19

Agenda	Description	Report
Wednesday, 23rd January 2019 at City Hall, Bradford.		
Chair's briefing 07/01/2019. Report deadline 10/01/2019.		
1) Schools Forum	The Committee will receive an update on the work of the Schools Forum	Andrew Redding
2) School Travel Service	The Committee will receive a report on the new structure of the School Travel Service.	Jenny Cryer
3) Bpositive Pathways	The Committee will receive a report on the Bpositive pathways programme with details of the cost savings realised.	
4) Children's Services O&S Work Programme	The Committee will consider its work programme and make changes as necessary.	Licia Woodhead
Tuesday, 5th February 2019 at City Hall, Bradford.		
Chair's briefing 21/01/2019. Report deadline 24/01/2019.		
1) Young People's Mental Health issues		
Wednesday, 13th February 2019 at City Hall, Bradford.		
Chair's briefing 29/01/2019. Report deadline 31/01/2019.		
1) Youth Voice	The Committee will receive an update in respect of the work of Youth Voice.	Heather Wilson
2) Young Carers	The Committee will receive a report on Young Carers to include details of progress made with GPs developing methods of identifying and referring young carers.	Jim Hopkinson
3) Local Cultural Education Partnership	The Committee will receive a report on what the cultural offer for young people could look like.	Jim Hopkinson
4) Children's Services Performance Outturn report	The Committee will receive a report on performance against the Key Performance Indicators for the the service.	Gladys Rhodes White / Philip Witcherley
5) Children's Services O&S Work Programme	The Committee will consider its work programme and make changes as necessary.	Licia Woodhead

Childrens Services O&S Committee

Scrutiny Lead: Licia Woodhead tel - 43 2119

Work Programme 2018/19

Agenda	Description	Report
Wednesday, 20th March 2019 at City Hall, Bradford.		
Chair's briefing 04/03/2019. Report deadline 07/03/2019.		
1) Schools Forum	The Committee will receive an update on the work of the Schools Forum	Andrew Redding
2) Workloads of Children's Social Care Services	The Committee will receive a report on the work of Children's Social Care Services, including information on national and statistical neighbour comparison figures.	Jim Hopkinson
3) Bradford Safeguarding Children Board - Annual report	The Committee will receive the Annual Safeguarding report	Jenny Cryer
4) Neglect	That Document “AJ” be noted and a further update on the progress of the response to neglect be presented to the Committee in 12 months time	Jenny Cryer
5) Children's Services O&S Work Programme	The Committee will consider its work programme and make changes as necessary.	Licia Woodhead
Wednesday, 10th April 2019 at City Hall, Bradford.		
Chair's briefing 26/03/2019. Report deadline 28/03/2019.		
1) Progress of the Fostering Service	The Committee will receive a report on the progress of the Fostering Service.	Jim Hopkinson
2) School Expansion Programme, Education Capital Funding, and Academy Conversions	The Committee will receive a report on a number of key areas related to school organisation in the Bradford District.	Ian Smart
3) Children's Services O&S Resolution Tracking	The Committee will receive a report detailing the outcomes of resolutions made during the 2018-19 municipal year.	Licia Woodhead