

Public Document Pack



Agenda for a meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on Wednesday, 20 March 2019 at 4.30 pm in Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford

Members of the Committee – Councillors

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

Alternates:

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

VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

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

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

From:

Parveen Akhtar
City Solicitor

Agenda Contact: Fatima Butt / Jill Bell

Phone: 01274 432227/434580

E-Mail: fatima.butt@bradford.gov.uk / jill.bell@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. MINUTES

Recommended –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2019 be signed as a correct record (previously circulated).

(Fatima Butt/Jill Bell – 01274 432227/4580)

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Fatima Butt - 01274 432227)

5. **REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Committee is asked to note any 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

6. **PROGRESS UPDATE FOLLOWING THE OFSTED INSPECTION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES CHILDREN'S SERVICES (ILAC)**

Previous Reference: Minute 46 (2018/19)

The Strategic Director, Children's Services will submit **Document "AD"** which provides the Committee with a progress update in respect of improvements identified within the Improvement Plan following the recent OFSTED inspection September 2018 and subsequent DFE notice to improve issued on the 4 December 2018.

More specifically the report will focus on changes and improvements within Workstream 2 of the Improvement Plan – Partnerships namely:

- The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
- Front Door Service

In addition, the report will provide the Committee with a general update relating to:

- The structure and governance around the Improvement Board including Improvement Plan, and

- OFSTED's first monitoring visit.

Appendix 1, Feedback from the Monitoring Visit, will be circulated to Members of the Committee and made available on the Council's website as soon as it has been finalised.

Recommended-

That the contents of the report be noted.

(Catherine Knowles – 01274 434335)

7. CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE OUTTURN REPORT

The Interim Strategic Director Children's Services will submit **Document "AE"** which provides a current position summary of key Children's Services performance indicators. The indicators in the report have been benchmarked against the England and Yorkshire & Humber averages.

Recommended-

That the report be considered.

(Phil Witcherley/ Laura Copley – 01274 431872)

8. PROGRESS OF THE FOSTERING SERVICE

The Strategic Director, Children's Services will submit **Document "AF"** which provides an update on the progress and development of the Fostering Service.

Recommended-

That the significant developments in the Fostering Service be noted.

(David Byrom – 01274 432904)



Report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services to the meeting of the Children's Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be held on 20th March 2019

AD

Subject:

Progress Update following the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authorities Children's Services (ILAC)

Summary statement:

To provide the panel with a progress update in respect of improvements identified within the Improvement Plan following the recent OFSTED inspection September 2018 and subsequent DFE notice to improve issued on the 4 December 2018.

More specifically the report will focus on changes and improvements within Workstream 2 of the Improvement Plan – Partnerships namely:

- The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
- Front Door Service

In addition, the report will provide panel with a general update relating to:

- The structure and governance around the Improvement Board including Improvement Plan, and
- OFSTED's first monitoring visit.

Gladys Rhodes White
Strategic Director Children's Services

Portfolio:

Children and Families

Report Contact: Catherine Knowles
Interim Improvement Consultant
Phone: (01274) 434335
E-mail: Catherine.Knowles@bradford.gov.uk

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children Services

1. SUMMARY

1.1 To provide the panel with a progress update in respect of improvements identified within the Improvement Plan following the recent OFSTED inspection September 2018 and subsequent DfE notice to improve issued on the 4 December 2018.

1.2 More specifically the report will focus on changes and improvements within Workstream 2 of the Improvement Plan – Partnerships namely:

- The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH);
- Front Door Service.

1.3 In addition, the report will provide panel with a general update relating to:

- The structure and governance around the Improvement Board including Improvement Plan; and
- OFSTED’s first monitoring visit.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 An Improvement Notice was issued to Bradford Council on the 4 December 2018, following the judgement that children’s social care services were inadequate, as identified in the OFSTED inspection report published on the 29 October 2018.

2.2 As a consequence the Secretary of State chose to appoint an advisor to provide advice to the Department and/or the council, with the expectations that the Council will work with the advisor until such time that the Secretary of State is satisfied this is no longer required.

2.3 The Independent Chair of the Improvement Board appointed to Bradford by the DfE is Mr Stuart Smith, who was a former Director of Children’s Services for Calderdale Council.

2.4 Mr Smith will oversee implementation of the improvement plan and report on progress against the objectives in the plan, to a timetable agreed with the Department.

2.5 Following the Inspection and subsequent notice to improve a number of actions have been identified to support and enable the Council to deliver safer and effective services to children/young people and their families.

2.6 Overall General Improvement:

1. The establishment of an Integrated Improvement board with Partner’s to drive the recommendations of OFSTED and from the DfE. Of note there are two boards comprising of a Strategic Improvement Board, chaired by Stuart Smith that includes external members from the DfE and LGA, together with Senior Leaders from the Council and partner agencies. The second board is an Operational Board, made up of senior manager’s from across Children’s Services and Corporate Resources, together with key partner agencies and the board manager from the children’s safeguarding board.

2. The development of an integrated improvement plan.
3. Additional capacity to support the improvement journey, including external programme management support, commissioned by the Strategic Director of Resources to further develop the programme management of the improvement plan, governance and functionality of the two respective boards.
4. A Back to Basic's programme for all children's social care staff, is being developed focusing on what good looks like in terms of case recording, voice of the child, analysis of risk within assessments; undertaking home visits and use of supervision.
5. Review and refresh of the social work job role, with a view to achieving an increase in grade to support retention of staff in a competitive market.
6. Reducing social work caseloads to a more appropriate level of 20 for experienced social workers and 17 for newly qualified. It is important to note that in order to achieve this target, there will be a redistribution of work across the services, together with a target recruitment programme to achieve a permanent albeit mixed level of skill workforce.

The table below outline current caseloads:

	ASYE (54 staff)	Experienced (181 staff Inc. SW Agency, SW)
No. of cases	1,050	3,496
Average Case load (FTE)	19.4	19.3
	Agency (33 staff)	Permanent (148 staff)
No. of cases	744	2,752
Average Case load (FTE)	22.5	18.6

The following case holders have not been included in the figures above:

Worker Type	No. of staff	Total cases (FTE)
CRW Level 2	1	6
CRW Level 3	34	410
Student Social Worker	13	78
Team Manager Agency	1	1
Team Manager	7	36
Practice Supervisor	2	15
Total	58	546

During 2018, there were 51 staff left the Council and 63 staff who started with "Social Worker" in their post title.

7. Quality Assurance through audits is beginning to show some green shoots of

improvement in casework, albeit there are still challenges around consistency and quality of practice for too many teams still.

8. Development of a robust data set that supports services in understanding performance and evidences the improvement journey.
9. A Social Work Health Check has been completed with some positive results including social workers stating they find their teams to be supportive, they liked the flexible working arrangements that Bradford offer and they had easy access to training and development. Whilst areas they would like to see improve centered around reduction in case loads, stability with the teams, retention of experienced staff and more opportunities to spend face to face time with children and young people.
10. OFSTED are scheduled to complete their first monitoring visit on the 6 – 7 March, where they will specifically focus on the front door and MASH.

2.7 **Workstream 2 – Partnerships progress/improvement update:**

In addition to the above there have been a number of specific improvements in respect of the MASH and front door services including:

- Multi agency review of the consent policy and thresholds. OFSTED identified that sometimes we were not compliant with national guidance when sharing information and acting on referrals. The safeguarding sub group has worked with the improvement consultant to go back to basics and develop a revised consent policy and redraft of the thresholds document.
- In order to test out the new draft policies a series of multi agency workshops have been arranged commencing on Tuesday 26 February. The workshops will allow practitioners from partner agencies to test out the new documents using case studies with a view to achieving a greater consensus and understanding across the partnership.
- There have been some internal changes to the front door and MASH, including a social worker now being based at the Contact centre that screens all calls coming in. In order to achieve this, a decision was made to redirect the current five email boxes where contact and referrals come into and four telephone lines into two each respectively. This allows and assists the social worker in monitoring just two email boxes.
- All information and advice sought is now recorded on a case file. Families are informed/advised where consent has not been sought that Children's Social Care holds case records in respect of their children.
- Section 47 safeguarding strategy meetings have now moved to the locality teams, this is where there are concerns/risk about a child and agencies through the MASH share key information in order to assess risk and consider whether a child should be made subject to a child protection plan. By moving the S47's to locality provides greater continuity in the case management, through timely allocation of a social worker, thereby reducing the 'handoffs' across service areas.

- Regular supervision is now in place with processes for tracking to ensure supervision remains a priority to support staff.
- A multi-agency mock inspection was carried out on 21 February by Alisa Newman from WY Police, Janice Hawkes from Barnardos, Vicky Cotter from Health, Tracy Taylor, Principal Social Worker and Anne Chester-Walsh, Interim AD Children's.

The inspection was held to test out improvements, including assurance that the service is safe, in addition to supporting staff in their confidence when faced with an external inspection. Inspectors spent time with staff in the Contact Centre, the Early Help Gateway and the Front Desk.

It was clear that overall staff were able to evidence understanding and grip across the service. The addition of a social worker in the Contact Centre was seen as positive and of added value, the live Dashboard evidenced increased timeliness in dealing with enquiries. Thresholds were understood and applied much more consistently, there was a good example of a strategy discussion observed and management oversight was evident. Staff were positive and understood the urgency required to make changes to ensure the system was safe. Partners within the front door were clear about their role and engaged with the changes.

It was evident that whilst positive changes were being made, the restructure of the system was still in its infancy and there remain challenges about managing the level of contacts/referrals coming through. The quality of some information from partner agencies needs to improve. Thresholds and consent need to be understood and embedded into practice and changes need to be undertaken in consultation with our partner. The integration of the Early Help Gateway and the Front Desk has begun but is not yet completed, however this was already showing signs of being a positive change that staff recognised and could articulate. Whilst the mock Ofsted was positive, it was acknowledged that whilst the changes were beginning to evidence better management grip and decision making, there remains much to do to ensure that we offer consistency of practice and safe decision making across the service.

- A peer review was completed in December 2018 undertaken by Doncaster Council; this review identified further recommendations all of which have been put into a priority action plan for the interim HOS and Service Manager to focus on.
- Following the peer review, Doncaster has continued to support Bradford, through a secondment opportunity of a highly experienced Assistant Director of Social Care - Anne Chester-Walsh.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The central theme of the Improvement Plan is the Voice of the Child, in order to achieve this, it is important to engage with some of our existing young people groups such as the Children in Care Council and Youth Voice. It is anticipated that over the next month arrangements will be made for the Strategic Director of Children's Services and members of her leadership team to meet with Youth Voice

and also the Children in Care Council, to share and gain feedback around the OFSTED findings, the improvement plan and what they believe needs to happen.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

4.1 As previously indicated additional resources have been secured to support the improvement journey, including additional Social Workers to help reduce the demand and manage down the caseloads.

4.2 A business paper from the service has been submitted to Council for a permanent increase in Social Workers, enabling the current structure of the service to expand from 3 locality areas to four. For example, current structure comprises of 3 Locality teams namely, Bradford East, Bradford South and Shipley and Keighley and West. The Business Paper proposed the new structure will comprise of 4 Locality Teams, namely; Bradford East, Bradford South, Bradford West, Keighley and Shipley. Each Locality team will have a Service Manager who will oversee the Assessment Teams and Children & Family Teams within their area.

4.3 Interim Programme management support has been commissioned by the Strategic Director of resources, together with an improvement consultant, Cath Knowles, and seconded senior leader from Doncaster, Anne Chester-Walsh.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

5.1 None.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

6.1 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

Ongoing consultation with the trade unions around social work grade uplift and case loads continue between senior leaders within the service and trade union representatives.

7.7 WARD IMPLICATION

The Improvement Notice and Improvement Plan affect all Wards, due to the Inadequate Judgement.

7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

In addition to the above improvements around the front door, further areas of improvement are also necessary, including services to children in care, subject to permanency plans, our fostering and residential services and children leaving care all of which sits under Corporate Parenting responsibilities.

7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

None; both the Notice to improve and OFSTED report have been published on their respective websites and are therefore in the public domain.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

8.1 None.

9. OPTIONS

9.1 Not applicable.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1: Feedback from the Monitoring Visit. (This will be made available as soon as it is available).

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

12.1 OFSTED Inspection report.

12.2 DfE Statutory Notice to Improve.

This page is intentionally left blank



Report of the Interim Strategic Director Children's Services to the meeting of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 20 March 2019

AE

Subject:

Children's Services Performance Outturn Report

Summary statement:

This report provides a current position summary of key Children's Services performance indicators. The indicators in this report have been benchmarked against the England and Yorkshire & Humber averages for your information.

Gladys Rhodes White
Strategic Director Children's Services

Portfolio:

Children & Families

Report Contact: Phil Witcherley Head of
Policy & Performance /Laura Copley
Phone: (01274) 431872
E-mail: laura.copley@bradford.gov.uk

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children's Services

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of key Children's Services performance indicators. The indicators in this report have been benchmarked against the England and Yorkshire & Humber averages for your information.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This report provides an assessment of key performance indicators across children's services. These indicators are reported annually and the report is based on the latest published information. A comparison against the England and Yorkshire & Humber averages has been made. There are a number of successes to highlight in the Department:

- In September, funding was confirmed for the 'Glasses for Classes' trial in 8 schools. This will be delivered in partnership with Varilux who will provide 2 pairs of glasses for all young people who need them in trial schools.
- In August, we launched 'Parents and Partners in Learning' in three areas (Keighley, Eccleshill/Idle and Tong/Bowling). This aims to improve parent's engagement with their education providers on their children's learning journey.
- For our primary school pupils, our recent results show that there is an increase in the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard across a range of subjects. However, the gap between Bradford and national performance has remained the same.
- GCSE results continue to improve with Attainment 8 narrowing the gap on the national average and Progress 8 showing positive progress and the second best performer in our family group of local authorities.
- Some of our schools and academy chains are performing at an exceptionally high level nationally. Dixon has performed particularly well at Progress 8 with Dixons Trinity the 3rd best nationally and Tauheedhal the highest performing nationally. This should bode well for local schools they sponsor.
- There is also improvement at A-levels and more young people continue to participate in the Industrial centres of Excellence and Bradford Pathways.

- 2.2 A case study from the B Positive Pathways project – supporting children on the edge of care and their families to safely return home:

"A Child was admitted to the Children's home on the 28th November 2017 after a breakdown in his relationships at home. The child's mother was initially rather resistant to making changes so that the child could return home, however with daily phone support from the Children's home and the social worker she began to understand that historical issues were clouding her ability to move forward. She also acknowledged that she often separated the child from his siblings leaving him feeling abandoned and singled out.

During twice weekly outreach sessions, the mother was able to apply more consistent boundaries and expectations and was open to the child having contact and or respite with his father’s family. She agreed that she needed to trust and make use of the professional support on offer while also taking responsibility for playing her part in the support package.

In the children’s home, the child started to respond positively in the children’s home. He acknowledged the need for support and opened up about his feelings about the domestic abuse that he had witnessed while living with his mum in the past. He came to see how this had led to his own aggressive behaviour, both at home and school.

The child returned home with a package of support. There have been ups and downs as the mother and child have settled back into living together. The child is attending school and is making great strides in his education. “

2.3 Performance Summary

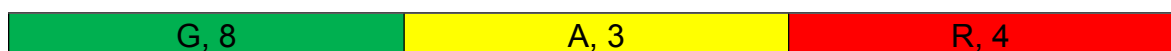
The rest of this section provides a summary of performance data against the Yorkshire and Humber average. Targets within Children’s Services are under review following the Ofsted Inspection.

Figure 1 outlines overall performance across the measures. A red/amber/green assessment of current performance against the Yorkshire & Humber average is included¹. A full list of all the indicators in this report is included in Annex A of this report.

Figure 2 includes both the overall performance rating against the regional average and also the direction of travel. A green direction of travel indicates that the measure has improved since the last reporting period; a red direction of travel indicates that the measure has got worse since the last reporting period.

A detailed narrative on performance against each of these targets can be found in Appendix A. In some instances it is more appropriate to benchmark performance against our statistical neighbours² and the narrative will reflect this.

Figure 1: Performance indicator RAG status (performance against regional average)



¹ Indicators are rated amber when there is a 5% variance from the Y&H average.

² Appendix B contains a list of our Children’s Social Care statistical neighbours

Figure 2: Performance indicator direction of travel

The following indicators are performing well against the regional average		
Description	Current Status	Direction of Travel
Re-referrals to children’s social care in 12 months	Green	Red
Children Looked After– short term placement stability	Green	Red
Children Looked After – long term placement stability	Green	Red
Children Looked After – Special Educational Needs with no statement/EHCP ³	Green	Green
Care Leavers – Suitable accommodation	Green	Green
Care Leavers – Education, Employment or Training	Green	Green
Special Educational Needs - appeals	Green	Red
Progress 8	Green	Red
The following indicators are amber rated (within 5% variance) against the regional average		
Description	Current Status	Direction of Travel
Key Stage 2 -reading, writing and maths	Yellow	Green
Foundation Stage Profile	Yellow	Red
Youth offending – reoffending rates (10-14 year olds)	Yellow	Green
The following indicators are underperforming against the regional average		
Description	Current Status	Direction of Travel
OFSTED – good or better schools	Red	Red
Unauthorised absence	Red	Red
Not in Education, Employment or Training	Red	Red
Children Looked After – missing	Red	Green

³ Education, Health and Care Plan

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 None.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

4.1 There are no specific financial issues or resource implications arising from this report.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

5.1 This report is for information only.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

6.1 This report is for information only. There are no specific legal issues.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

Report is for information only. There are no specific issues.

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Report is for information only. There are no specific issues.

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

Report is for information only. There are no specific issues.

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

Report is for information only. There are no specific issues.

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Report is for information only. There are no specific issues.

7.6 TRADE UNION

Report is for information only. There are no specific issues.

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

Report is for information only. There are no specific issues.

7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

Report is for information only. There are no specific issues.

7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

There are no data protection issues.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

8.1 Not applicable.

9. OPTIONS

9.1 This report is for information only.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the report.

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix A – Detailed Performance Information and Reporting

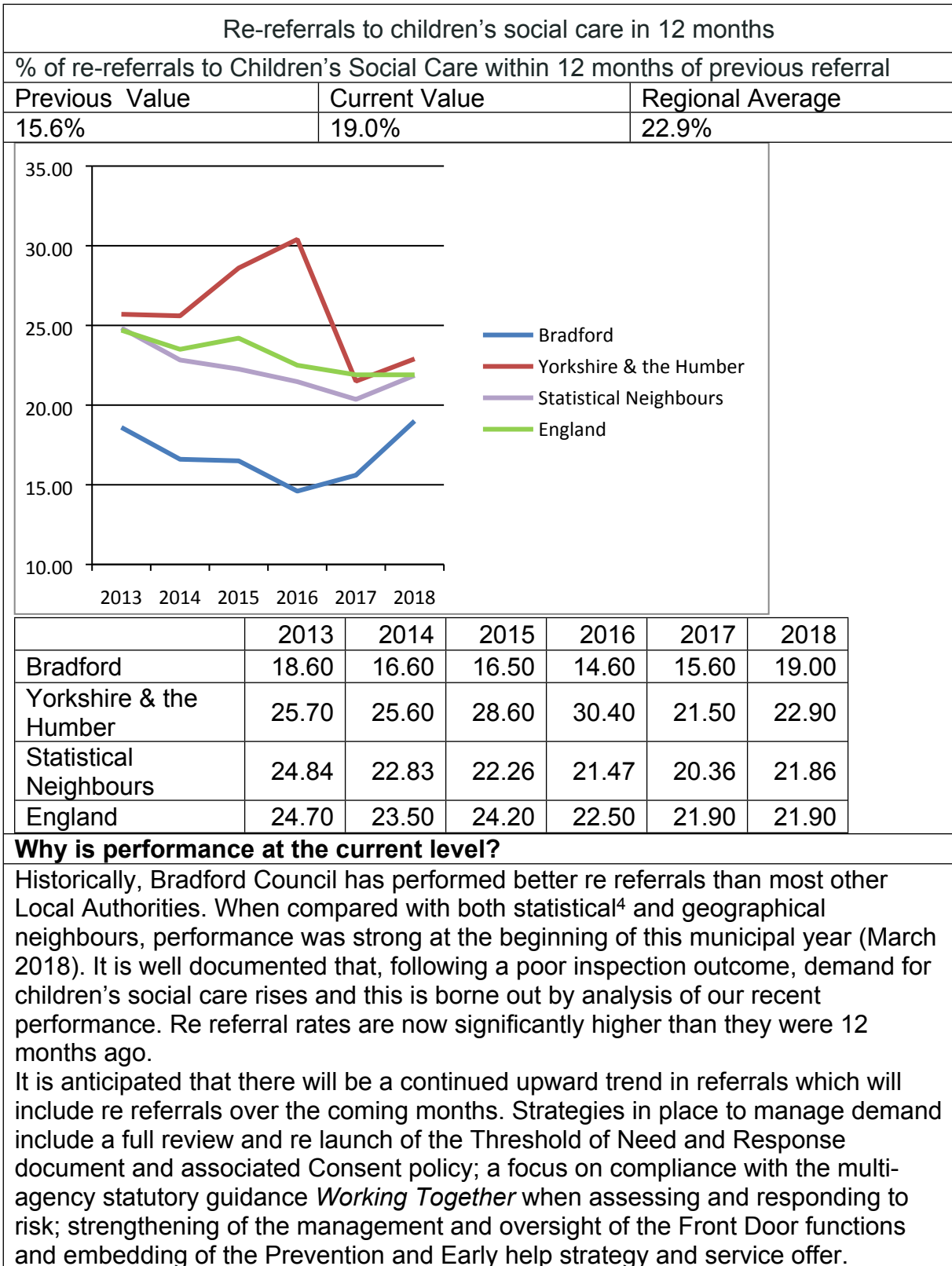
11.2 Appendix B - Children’s Social Care statistical neighbours

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

12.1 None.

APPENDIX A: DETAILED PERFORMANCE INFORMATION AND REPORTING

Detailed Reporting for Performance Measures which are exceeding the Yorkshire & Humber average

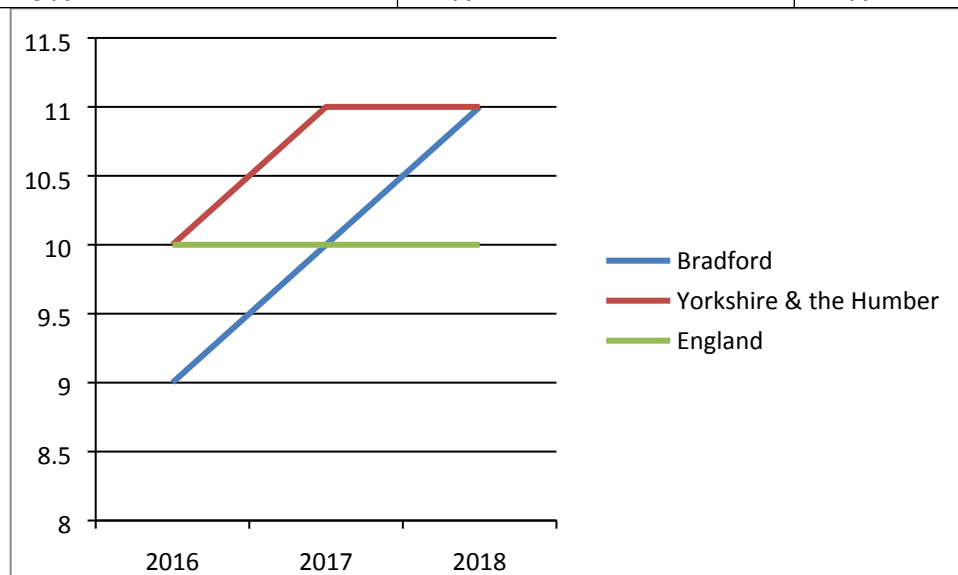


⁴ Appendix B contains a list of our Children's Social Care statistical neighbours

Children Looked After – short term placement stability

% children at 31st March with 3 or more placements during the year

Previous Value	Current Value	Regional Average
10%	11%	11%



	2016	2017	2018
Bradford	9	10	11
Yorkshire & the Humber	10	11	11
England	10	10	10

Why is performance at the current level?

A sufficiency strategy is in place, focussing on reducing the number of children looked after; developing more local placements; having the right accommodation for care leavers and enabling more children to be cared for through Special Guardianship, taking them out of the care system altogether.

Increased investment in fostering marketing and recruitment team has resulted in the number of foster carers increasing by 11%.

Be Positive Pathways is working at the edge of care offering outreach and short breaks provision, in order to keep children out of full time care. 90% of the 98 children worked with remain outside the care system.

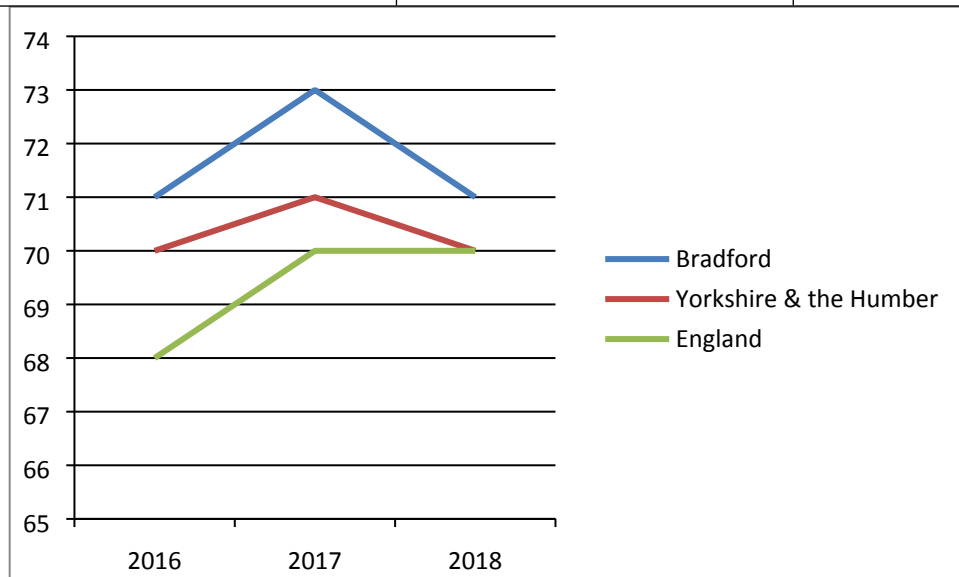
Some children have been returned to Bradford from external placements, resulting in an extra move, albeit a positive one.

Despite these strategies, numbers of children looked after have risen by 11% during 2018, in line with the additional demand across children's social care and the demographics of Bradford district.

Children Looked After – long term placement stability

% LAC in the same placement for at least 2 years, or are placed for adoption and their adoptive placement together with their previous placement , lasts for at least 2 years

Previous Value	Current Value	Regional Average
73%	71%	70%



	2016	2017	2018
Bradford	71	73	71
Yorkshire & the Humber	70	71	70
England	68	70	70

Why is performance at the current level?

The Through Care service is designed so that children who are looked after long term have a consistent approach with fewer placement moves and changes of social worker. Investment in fostering recruitment (47% increase in number of assessments of prospective foster carers, resulting in 25 new households to be approved in 2018/19); support for family and friends placements and an emphasis on permanency planning and adoption all contribute to strong performance in this area.

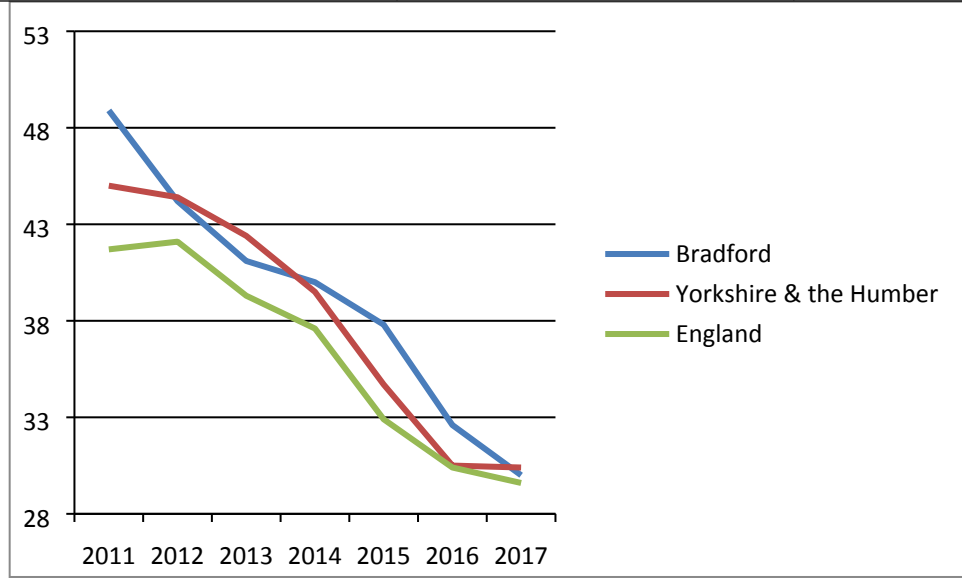
Further improvements in systems and processes are underway, to ensure continuous improvement in placement stability.

A small team provides therapeutic support to carers and residential staff, encouraging and supporting them to develop appropriate strategies to manage children’s behaviour positively. Using PACE techniques and working with the Mockingbird fostering project all contribute to strong performance in this area.

Children Looked After – Special Educational Need with no statement or Education, Health and Care Plan

% children who are looked after who have SEN but no statement/EHCP

Previous Value	Current Value	Regional Average
32.6%	30%	30.4%



	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Bradford	48.9	44.2	41.1	40	37.8	32.6	30
Yorkshire & the Humber	45	44.4	42.4	39.5	34.7	30.5	30.4
England	41.7	42.1	39.3	37.6	32.9	30.4	29.6

Why is performance at the current level?

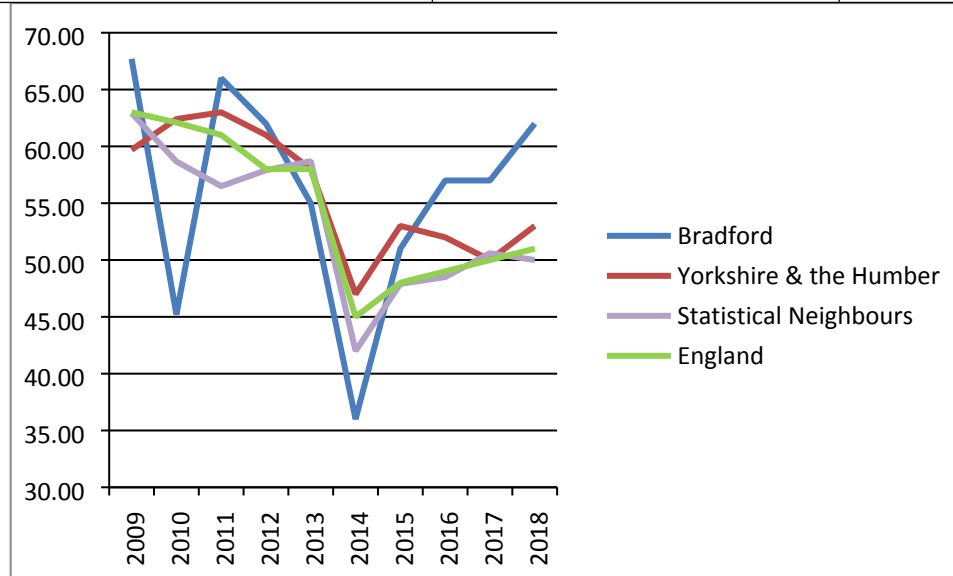
This indicator relates to children who have been identified as having special needs but do not qualify for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This group of children will receive additional support from school through Quality First Teaching. Bradford’s performance is comparable to regional and national performance.

Care leavers – Education, Employment or Training

% care leavers who are in education, employment or training

Previous Value	Current Value	Regional Average
----------------	---------------	------------------

57%	62%	53%
-----	-----	-----



	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Bradford	67.70	45.20	66.00	62.00	55.00	36.00	51.00	57.00	57.00	62.00
Yorkshire & the Humber	59.70	62.40	63.00	61.00	58.00	47.00	53.00	52.00	50.00	53.00
Statistical Neighbours	62.92	58.67	56.50	57.90	58.70	42.00	47.90	48.50	50.60	50.00
England	63.00	62.10	61.00	58.00	58.00	45.00	48.00	49.00	50.00	51.00

Why is performance at the current level?

Bradford has good performance in this area when compared the regional neighbours and compares even more favourably to statistical neighbours with similar economic and social characteristics to Bradford. This area was seen as a strength during the recent Ofsted ILACS⁵ inspection. The in house LEAP⁶ team is nationally recognised as best practice. They prepare young people who are at risk of dropping out and aim to raise their aspirations so that they are keen to remain in education or training after leaving school. In addition a dedicated NEET⁷ worker works within the Virtual School for children looked after, to ensure that the over 16 year olds receive appropriate support to continue to participate in education and training.

⁵ Inspection Local Authority Children's Services

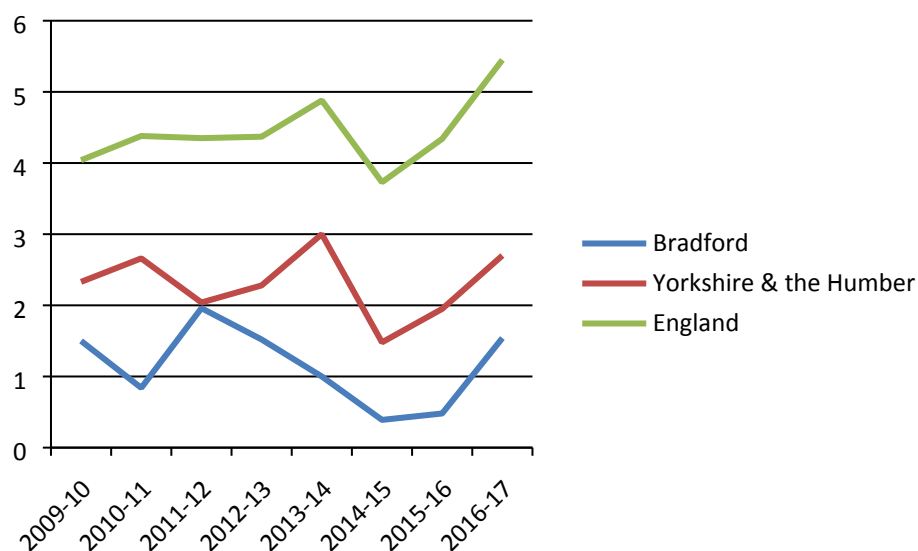
⁶ Learning, employment advice and preparation

⁷ Not in Education, Employment or Training

Special Educational Needs – Appeals

Registered appeals per 10,000 of school population

Previous Value	Current Value	Regional Average
0.48	1.54	2.7



	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Bradford	1.5	0.84	1.96	1.52	1	0.39	0.48	1.54
Yorkshire & the Humber	2.33	2.66	2.04	2.28	3	1.48	1.95	2.7
England	4.04	4.38	4.35	4.37	4.88	3.73	4.34	5.45

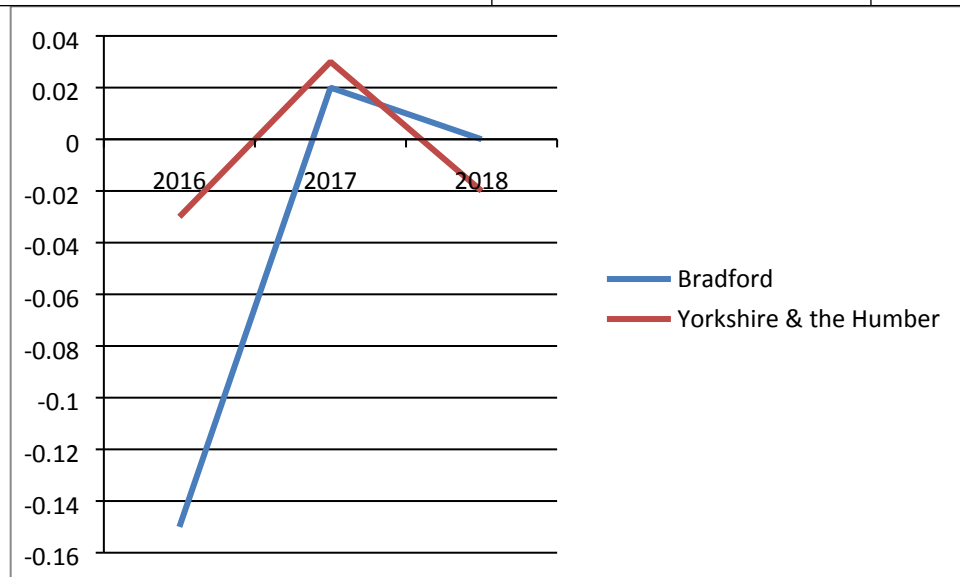
Why is performance at the current level?

Bradford has had and continues to have a very low level of appeals to tribunal. This is reflective of the engagement with parents at all levels including schools, officers, support services and other agencies. In addition the mediation process has had a positive impact on the number of potential appeals with cases resolved through this process and the support and engagement of parents.

Progress 8

Average Progress 8 Score per pupil

Previous Value	Current Value	Regional Average
0.02	0	-0.02



	2016	2017	2018
Bradford	-0.15	0.02	0
Yorkshire & the Humber	-0.03	0.03	-0.02

Why is performance at the current level?

Bradford's Progress 8 remains positive at 0.00 even though it is a decrease of 0.02 on the 2017 score of 0.02. It is slightly better than the national average Progress 8 score of -0.02. The decline is due to the low Progress 8 scores achieved by 21 (out of 37) secondary schools of which 5 are Special schools. However Dixons Trinity scored a Progress 8 of 1.55 ranking it as the 3rd best performing school in the country for Progress 8.

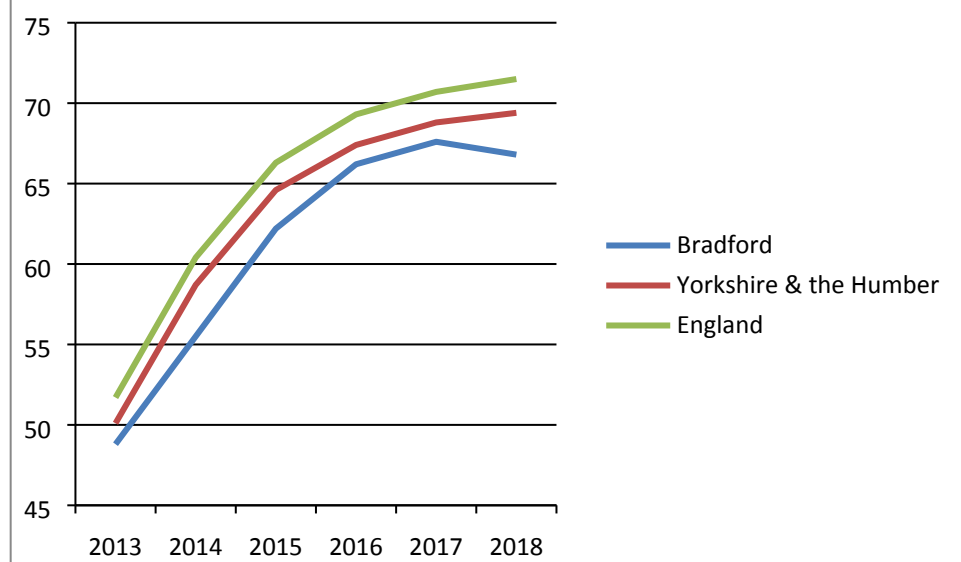
Detailed Reporting for Performance Measures which are within 5% tolerance of the Yorkshire & Humber average

KS2 – Reading, writing maths			
Key Stage 2: Reading, writing & mathematics – expected standard All Pupils			
Previous Value	Current Value		Regional Average
57%	61%		62%
	2016	2017	2018
Bradford	47	57	61
Yorkshire & the Humber	50	58	62
England	53	61	64
Why is performance at the current level?			
<p>This has improved in 2018 for Reading and Maths and slightly declined for Writing. The rate of improvement has gone up by 4% compared to national (3%) which has closed the gap to national by 1 percentage point.</p> <p>Number of LA maintained schools who scored below 65% in Reading, Writing and Maths combined has reduced from 79 to 59. Number of schools below floor level on KS2 has been reduced from 5 to 2.</p>			
How can we make sure things get better?			
<p>In order to improve the RWM at the end of KS2, the LA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is working in partnership with the Opportunity Area in the implementation of the School to School support initiative for a group of identified schools • has introduced 'Keeping in Touch' visit for its low risk schools categorised as P1 and P2 schools • is offering training to governors and school leaders where leadership has been judged as RI • has deployed a school improvement officer to monitor and challenge Schools with low KS2 outcomes (P3/P4 schools) • is using HT briefings to share best practice • is engaging with West Yorkshire Maths hub to develop the mastery curriculum in some schools • has analysed the predictions received to date and targeting schools whose RWM prediction is below their FFT 50 			

Foundation Stage Profile

% children achieving a good level of development in FSP

Previous Value	Current Value	Regional Average
67.6%	66.8%	69.4%



	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Bradford	48.8	55.5	62.2	66.2	67.6	66.8
Yorkshire & the Humber	50.1	58.7	64.6	67.4	68.8	69.4
England	51.7	60.4	66.3	69.3	70.7	71.5

Why is performance at the current level?

Latest EYFS data indicates that GLD is at 66.8% down slightly from 68% last year. National provisional data has increased from 70.7% to 71.5% which means there is a widening gap. Girls continue to out perform boys (73.5% GLD for girls compared to 60% for boys). In terms of children eligible for free school meals GLD is at 55% compared to 57% last year. Although Bradford has generally performed better than its statistical neighbours in regard to the FSM measure of GLD, this is a concerning development. The gender gap between boys and girls was particularly marked among children eligible for free school meals, where 47% of boys recorded GLD, compared to 63% of girls.

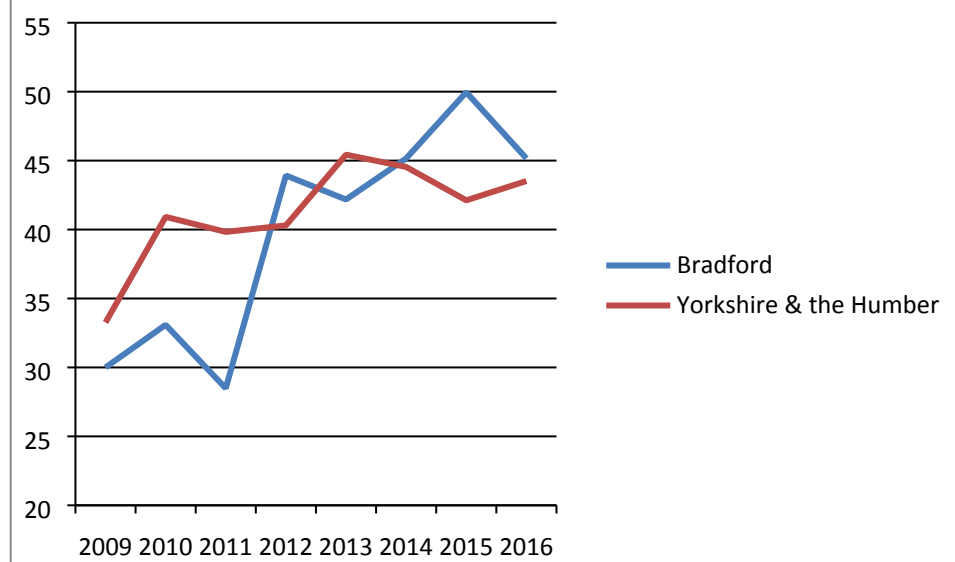
How can we make sure things get better?

The newly established Prevention and Early Help area teams have dedicated resource for access and take-up to address these issues and will target key wards and FSM children. Support for settings and schools continues to emphasise the need for different approaches to boys' learning.

Youth offending – reoffending rates (10-14 year olds)

% of young offenders who re-offend (19-14 year olds)

Previous Value	Current Value	Regional Average
49.96%	45.16%	43.52%



	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Bradford	30	33.09	28.49	43.92	42.18	45.16	49.96	45.16
Yorkshire & the Humber	33.26	40.92	39.83	40.3	45.43	44.54	42.12	43.52
England								

Why is performance at the current level?

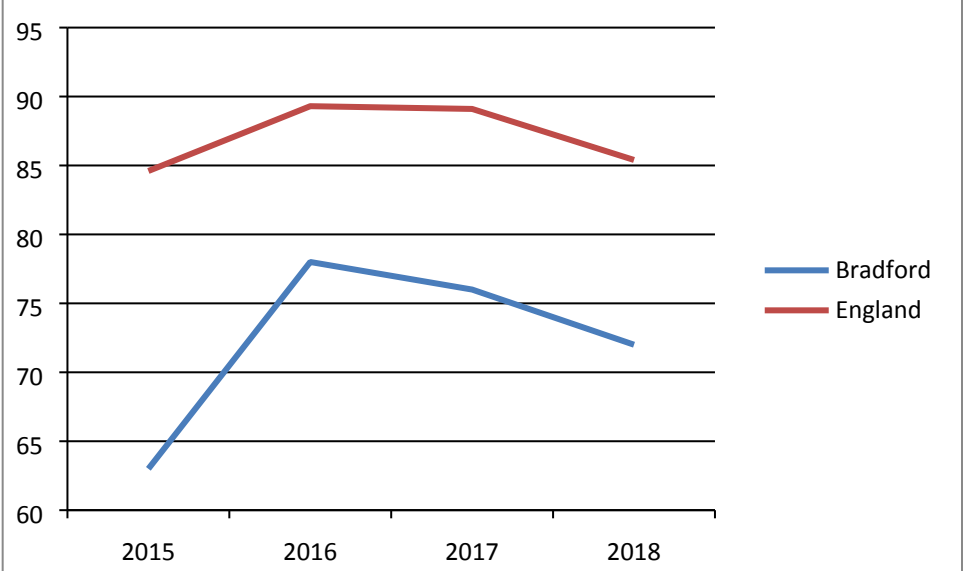
Performance is showing a decrease and is good. The cohort of young people who offend continues to fall, and has fallen at a faster rate than the numbers of reoffenders; this has resulted in an increase in the % of reoffenders.

How can we make sure things get better?

Continuous effort to improve outcomes for young people in the Youth Criminal Justice system through a focus on doing the basics well and maintaining the strength in the YOT multi-agency partnership.

Detailed Reporting for Performance Measures which are outside 5% tolerance of the Yorkshire & Humber average

Ofsted – good or better schools		
% schools that are judged good or better		
Previous Value	Current Value	Regional Average
77%	72%	81%



	2015	2016	2017	2018
Bradford	63	78	76	72
Yorkshire & the Humber				
England	84.6	89.3	89.1	85.4

Why is performance at the current level?

We are performing below the national average and were improving but the change in Ofsted’s approach in August 2018 has caused a drop in the number of schools judged good or better nationally and locally.

Nursery schools have been performing better than similar schools nationally over the last three years.

Primary schools are still performing significantly below similar schools nationally and the narrowing of the gap with the national has been maintained despite the decline in 2018.

Secondary schools are still performing significantly below similar schools nationally but the gap is narrowing.

How can we make sure things get better?

Some of the recent Ofsted visits have acknowledged the impact of the local authority’s intervention in its challenging schools e.g. Carrwood, Our Lady & St Brendan's, Lister, Knowleswood, St Williams and Worthinghead schools.

However, raising standards and increasing the number of good or better schools continues to be an area of high priority.

The Deputy Director has introduced “Learning Conversations” with the Chief Executives of the different Multi Academy Trusts operating in Bradford.

Propose KPI to be refined to take account of academisation and Free Schools as technically not possible to ensure all will be inspected by 2021. Need to be able to accurately measure against OFSTED Inspection schedule.

Unauthorised absence

% of unauthorised sessions missed State-funded primary, secondary and special schools

Previous Value	Current Value	Regional Average
1.7%	1.9%	1.6%



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Bradford	1.76	1.7	1.6	1.8	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.9
Yorkshire & the Humber	1.26	1.3	1.1	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.6
England	1.04	1.1	1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.3

Why is performance at the current level?

The overall unauthorised absence figures for Primary and Secondary Schools continue to be higher than the national averages whilst figures for our Special Schools are lower than the national average.

This is due to schools not authorising term time leave for families who make effective use of cheaper holiday packages as well as the application of stricter and more rigid systems for authorising extended leave.

How can we make sure things get better?

Education Safeguarding continue to promote and support Schools through the traded offer and statutory duties.

Current Focus

- Exceptional Cases meeting to deal with cases where pupils have been absent from school for long periods of time
- Working with Schools and families to address issues preventing good attendance
- Liaising with other professionals within Bradford Children & Young People's Services (Children's Social Care, Special Educational Needs, Children Looked After and more) services to ensure our most vulnerable Young People are receiving appropriate, quality support

Challenges

- Ensuring consistent and accurate register marking by ALL schools
- Obtaining data & supporting Non-traded Schools

Intentions

- Clear guidelines given regarding expectations from Schools relating to register marking
- Challenge where possible to ensure PA is being addressed
- Network meetings to support school attendance staff to commence in June 2019

Not in Education, Employment or Training														
% young people not in education, employment or training – including those ‘not known’														
Previous Value	Current Value	Regional Average												
6%	6.5%	5.8%												
<table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2016-17</th> <th>2017-18</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Bradford</td> <td>6</td> <td>6.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Yorkshire & the Humber</td> <td>5.9</td> <td>5.8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>England</td> <td>6</td> <td>6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				2016-17	2017-18	Bradford	6	6.5	Yorkshire & the Humber	5.9	5.8	England	6	6
	2016-17	2017-18												
Bradford	6	6.5												
Yorkshire & the Humber	5.9	5.8												
England	6	6												
	2016-17	2017-18												
	6	6.5												
	5.9	5.8												
	6	6												
Why is performance at the current level?														
<p>The last update fields relate to the average over the 3 month period December to February as this is what the DfE⁸ publish in the NEET⁹ Scorecard. The latest value and national and regional averages are all based on November 2018 as the last month for which we have national comparative data. It is typical for NEET and Not Known to be slightly higher in November and as is indicated above our performance is currently slightly better than national.</p>														
How can we make sure things get better?														
<p>We continue to co-commission a Connexions service with 20 of our schools and colleges to meet our respective statutory duties. There have been budget reductions in this area but a number of actions are in place to address the rise in</p>														

⁸ Department for Education

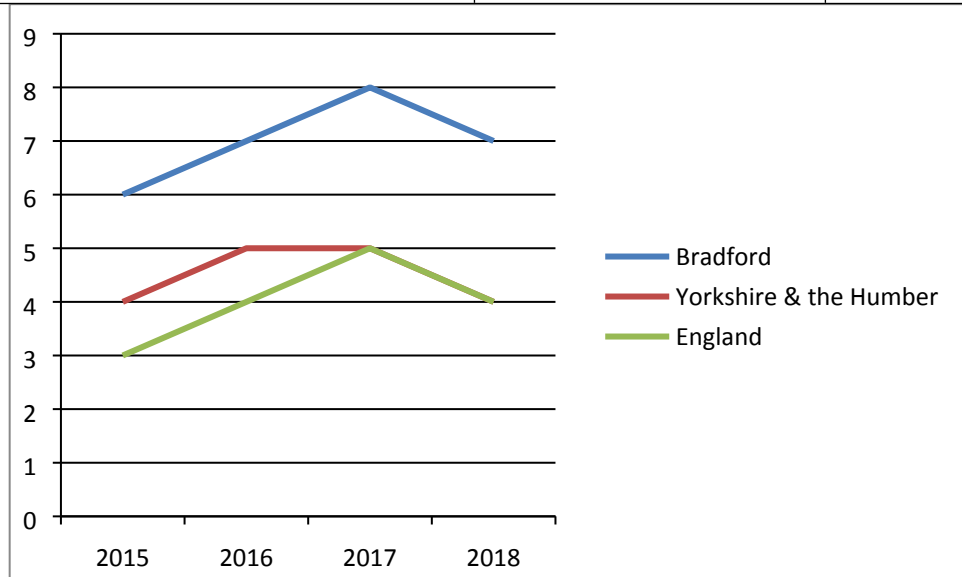
⁹ Not in Education, Employment or Training

NEET including: Skills Plan; additional post-16 adviser in Virtual School; Opportunity Area supporting careers work in Primary and additional ICE¹⁰ provision. As is the case nationally certain vulnerable groups (Youth Offending, Special Educational Needs, Children Looked After, Care Leavers) are over-represented in the NEET cohort and we continue to target our efforts accordingly and monitor the rate for these groups monthly.

Children Looked After – Missing

% Children Looked After who were away from placement without authorisation during the year

Previous Value	Current Value	Regional Average
8%	7%	4%



	2015	2016	2017	2018
Bradford	6	7	8	7
Yorkshire & the Humber	4	5	5	4
England	3	4	5	4

Why is performance at the current level?

The latest available benchmarking data describes performance to March 2018. In 2018, despite a growth in numbers of children looked after, fewer children have been reported missing from care between March and October than for the same period in 2017 (by 39% for girls and 14% for boys). West Yorkshire Police data shows that there has been a 23% overall reduction in missing occurrences in comparison to the last year. Specific measures taken to break a cycle of behaviour, has impacted positively on a number of very vulnerable girls. There has been a concerted effort over the last 24 months across the partnership to improve 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.

¹⁰ Inclusive Care and Education

This is measuring something slightly different in that this is about missing incidents rather than children with a missing incident. It shows that while the numbers of Children Looked After has risen the number of missing incidents has reduced during the same period.

It should also be noted that Police data reflects all Children Looked After placed in the area as opposed to local data which is just Bradford children who are looked after.

How can we make sure things get better?

The Be Positive Pathways programme along with the Mockingbird fostering support programme works with children looked after, foster carers and residential staff to develop positive strategies for managing behaviour as well as bringing in changes to how and when missing incidents are reported. This has helped to distinguish between a child being late back, where their whereabouts are known and those who are genuinely missing and require police action to search and recover them.

Meetings with private providers in Bradford are planned to revisit expectation regarding management of risk and reporting strategies.

APPENDIX B: CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE STATISTICAL NEIGHBOURS

- Sheffield
- Peterborough
- Bolton
- Telford and Wrekin
- Walsall
- Derby
- Rochdale
- Blackburn with Darwen
- Oldham
- Kirklees

This page is intentionally left blank



Report of the Interim Strategic Director of Children's Services to the meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 20th March 2019

AF

Subject:

Progress of the Fostering Service

Summary statement:

The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide an update on the progress and development of the Fostering service and changes in the last year.

Gladys Rhodes White
Interim Strategic Director of Children's Services

Report Contact: David Byrom
Head of Service (Children's Social Care)
Tel: 01274 432904
Email: David.Byrom@bradford.gov.uk

Portfolio:

Children & Families

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children's Services

1. SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide an update on the progress and development of the Fostering Service.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 In September 2018 the Service Manager - Fostering left the Council and the services of a suitably qualified and experienced Interim Service Manager have been secured. The recruitment of a permanent replacement Service Manager is on-going.

2.2 The Ofsted Inspection of the Local Authority Children's Services in September 2018, recommended 10 areas requiring improvement of which there were the following key areas in relation to Fostering Service activity were specifically identified:

Sufficiency of local placements to meet the needs of children in our care.

Completion of mandatory training for all foster carers.

2.3 The Fostering Service faces continuous challenges in identifying and resourcing good quality foster homes for our children and young people becoming cared for by the local authority. However, this is not just a local issue unique to Bradford but reflects the position nationally, not least because most children looked after are accommodated in foster homes.

2.4 In March 2018 the National figures indicated there were 75,420 children looked after of whom 55,200 (73%) were in foster placements. In March 2017, the number of children looked after was 72,670, of whom 53,420 (74%) were fostered. This showed a national rise of 3.8% of children looked after, albeit a stable proportion of children living in foster homes.

2.5 Of significance has been the increase in children becoming looked after is also reflected in Bradford over the same period but at a greater proportion, for example the numbers of children looked after increased from 927 to 987, an increase of nearly double the national rate at 6.5%. Of those, 691 children looked after (70%) were placed in foster homes on 31 March 2018, compared to 634 (68.4%) of children looked after on 31 March 2017.

2.6 An increasing proportion of those children in foster care have been placed with relative or friends, up steadily from 14% in 2014 to 18% in 2018. (Source: DfE). Nationally, 6750 (9%) of children looked after were placed with a relative or friend. In Bradford, 258 (26%) of children looked after were placed with a relative or friend. This is a 2% increase in Bradford from 2017. The figure shows the number of children placed with a relative or friend in Bradford is 17% higher than the national

average.

- 2.7 The approval of foster carers who can offer good nurturing high quality loving homes to our children is of paramount concern. The Fostering Service's recruitment and retention activity is under review and we are, as a service, open to considering the barriers to the people of Bradford becoming or remaining as foster carers. The barriers to becoming a foster carer are different to reasons carers give for no longer fostering. There have been national, regional and local campaigns to address the myths around who can foster since the DfE released its research in 2013: Understanding attitudes, motivations and barriers to adoption and fostering. The myths include marital status; property ownership; previous criminal convictions; age; gender; sexuality; parenting experience; physical abilities. We address these common myths directly and indirectly through messaging used in publicity including the website, social media posts, printed materials and case studies.
- 2.8 Recent national research conducted by The Fostering Network gives insight into foster carers' views of fostering in the UK, including why carers stop fostering. Many of the key findings and recommendations from this research are being addressed by the Fostering Service, including addressing out-of-hours support; re-engaging foster carers through the development of a Foster Carer Charter and re-developing an independent foster carer association.
- 2.9 In April 2019, the Team Manager of Recruitment and Assessment and the Marketing and Recruitment Manager, will review the journey of a foster carer from initial enquiry to approval to make the process less intimidating and more efficient.
- 2.10 Central to the service is a need to recruit, approve and develop skilled foster carers who can meet the needs of our most vulnerable children. This will enable our staff to match our children and young people to local foster carers who we have approved and therefore know their skills and abilities. An increase in recruited foster carers would reduce the cost of external placements. Furthermore, it would enable the service to focus on developing children's permanence plans, whilst keeping them in their local communities and in touch with people who are important to them.

PROGRESS SINCE THE LAST REPORT

2.11 Marketing

1. Following the £100K investment, an appointment was made to a permanent Marketing and Recruitment Manager and a Recruitment Officer.
2. The Marketing and Recruitment Manager has the lead role in marketing and communications, including both external communications with the wider Bradford district and internal communications with foster carers, and has responsibility for the enquiry stage of the fostering process up to a fostering assessment commencing.
3. Working alongside the Marketing and Recruitment Manager is the Recruitment Officer who has been appointed on a temporary contract (until May 2019 with plans to make this a permanent post).

4. The Recruitment Officer undertakes activities to attract new foster carers, including the key role of organising information meetings and other events as well as maintaining and managing the relationship between the Fostering Service and the enquirer to ensure the enquirer remains engaged and the Fostering Service remains on track to hit deadlines. The Recruitment Officer has taken on some of the marketing activities, such as running the Fostering Service's Twitter account, helping develop the new fostering recruitment website, setting up a group of carers who support marketing activities including meeting with the Marketing & Recruitment team to develop marketing plans and ideas.
5. The Marketing and Recruitment Manager, alongside the Service Manager, works to an annual marketing and recruitment plan, which is reviewed and revised as per operational requirements based on current foster homes needed for our children, looked after in Bradford. The target for 2018-2019 is an increase to 40 enquiries per month from 30 per month in 2017-2018. This is an 11% increase on enquiries in Bradford compared to the national increase of enquiries of just 3%. The cost per enquiry (CPI) has reduced from £23.15 per enquiry in 2017-2018 to £20.83 per enquiry in the current financial year. The key reasons for the reduction in CPI are more efficient and targeted enquiry generation such as Facebook advertising and the streamlined fostering front door looking after and developing enquiries.
6. New developments include the Emergency Foster Carers scheme, being developed with B Positive Pathways and recruitment of a specialist foster carer to live in the fully adapted bungalow at the Wedgewood facility in Holmewood, who will, when recruited, provide planned short breaks for children and young people with a wide range of complex needs including disabilities and health needs as well as trauma based behavioural issues.
7. The service is working collaboratively with partners across a number of channels locally:
 - a) The Service has signed for another year of the regional campaign 'You Can Foster', which brings together 8 local authorities in this region as well as 23 in the North West to fight off the challenge from Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs).
 - b) The Service is now working with the Muslim Fostering Network (also sometimes known as Mercy Mission) on an initial 6 month contract, to provide 6 leads to a full assessment from the Muslim community in Bradford that have undergone initial screenings.
 - c) The Service is also working closely with the Welcoming Young Refugees project (Coram BAAF) to identify and recruit new foster carers and supported lodgings providers for unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young refugees.

2.12 Recruitment & Assessment

Enquiry Stage Activity	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Totals
1. Having set a target of 40 enquiries per calendar month, in this financial year so far the number of enquiries has monthly target	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	28
No of initial contacts from IFA/OLA carers	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	*2	8
No at Information Meetings & phone consults	10	13	13	17	0	25	14	19	7	17	14	149

2. The service is on track to increase the number of enquiries from 2017-18 (which was 432 enquiries) by 7%. This is over twice the 3% national rise in the number of enquiries about fostering.
3. From April 2018 to 20 February 2019, 149 households have attended an information meeting, had a phone consultation with an assessing social worker or went straight to next stage (e.g. an IFA transfer).

Following this stage, 101 households were offered home visits after receipt of a positive expression of interest.

Of those not moving to an initial home visit, reasons are commonly:

- Want adoption not fostering;
- Language barriers (not having a good enough level of English to be able to support a child in education, record children's activities and work with the teams around looked after children);
- Expressing an interest but not able to foster at this time (life circumstances);
- Solely interested for financial reasons;
- Not having a spare room to foster.

Of those offered a home visit, not all enquirers took up the opportunity. No single reason stands out as a universal barrier. The top 3 reasons for applicants not moving on to an initial home visit are:

- Applicant does not respond to calls / emails (5);
- Not being in the right personal circumstances to foster at this time (3);
- In the process of or planning to move house (3).

4. In the same time period, 74 home visits have taken place, with a further 16 due to take place by the end of March 2019.
5. The national conversion rate for enquiry to mainstream / short break foster carer approvals is 4.19% (source DfE 2019) of 117,335 enquiries to 4920 'stranger' fostering household approvals. Bradford Fostering Service projected conversion rate for 2018-2019 is 5.2% - 25 mainstream / short break foster carer approvals are projected by 31 March 2019.
6. 65 Connected Person approvals that are friends of or related to the child were approved by January 2019.
7. 65 households were de-registered in this current year: 14 mainstream households; 8 short break carers; 29 family & friends' carers as well as 12 family & friends carers that had provided temporary placements but withdrew from the fostering process before approval at fostering panel. There were also 2 back up carers who were de-registered. Reasons for de-registrations ranged from carers' resigned (21 households); SGOs, PR or RO were granted (13 households); child moved out –

- either back to living with parents or over 18 (9 households). Of the other reasons, 1 carer moved to an IFA, 2 became Supported Lodgings or Staying Put providers or there was no reason recorded.
8. The Service continues to be represented at all major events in Bradford, for example, the team had successful days at the Dragon Boat Festival and Make Your Mela Day.
 9. All staff assisted at these events offering information and providing promotional materials. Future outreach events are being planned more within local Bradford communities such as coffee shops and also larger Bradford events and village fairs.
 10. Most importantly we are to work with our colleagues in the Children and Families Teams and Through Care Teams to talk with our children and young people age appropriately to gain their views on what we as a Fostering Service can do to attract the right kind of foster carer to care for them; what would they be looking for in a foster carer whilst living away from their birth families?
 11. The service has revised its telephone service for those interested in fostering. The 'You Can Foster' campaign and website directly relay people into the service. All enquirers are invited to attend an information evening held monthly to be informed and ask questions fostering for Bradford. Future developments include plans to focus on the child's journey and to offer potential foster carers a better insight from the child's perspective.
 12. Each information session is supported by two to three current foster carers. The whole service is committed to supporting these sessions; therefore staff from each team in the service attends. The presentation actively promotes the positives of fostering for Bradford and highlights the need for more carers.
 13. Workers interview and gather initial information during the sessions and highlight any early potential barriers to them fostering. The evenings have averaged around 15 families attending on a regular basis.
 14. Following the session the Recruitment Officer meets with the Assessment Team Manager (generally the day after the meeting) to look over the forms. Potential fostering families with a positive recommendation are reviewed by the Team Manager. The Recruitment Officer will call enquirers the same day to let them know they are moving forward to the next stage. This supports a discussion on which enquirers are viable and ready to be progressed to a home visit.
 15. The Service Manager has set a timeframe where prospective carers are contacted by an assessment social worker within 3 weeks of the information session (Stage 1) with the aim to set up the initial home visit.
 16. The assessment team undertakes all the initial home visits to undertake a Stage 1 assessment and holds 3-4 full assessments at anyone time in stage 2. From when the Service accepts a completed registration form, the team manager and team are aware they have a target of completing an assessment within 20 weeks.

2.13 Engagement and Consultation

1. On 5 November 2018, the fostering service held its first foster carer conference with Luke Rodgers; a care experienced public speaker as keynote speaker. The conference included the foster carer awards and workshops in subjects that aimed to interest and engage. It was very well received.

2.14 Engaging Foster Carers

1. There is a recognition that many Bradford foster carers are disengaged from the fostering service and no longer feel valued. This project has been developed as a response to this concern. The primary objectives are to:
 - Improve outcomes for our children and young people
 - Ensure foster carers feel valued, engaged and respected as professionals
 - Strengthen the relationship between foster carers and staff
 - Ensure that foster carers and fostering team working together as one Fostering Service
 - Impact on the recruitment and retention of foster carers
 - Develop a Charter for Foster Care
 - Form a Foster Carer's Association to meet regularly with Senior Leaders and Elected Members
2. The Service believes that central to influencing a cultural shift within a fostering service is an enhanced engagement with foster carers. The process of strengthening carer involvement sends a message that foster carers matter and that the reason they matter is because they are key to delivering improved outcomes for our children and young people.
3. The service is regularly attempting consultation with carers to guide some of our development work. Recent consultations have been on placements and support and training. Carers who cease fostering for Bradford are also offered an exit interview.
4. Quarterly coffee mornings continue to be successful, hosted by Supervising Social Workers from in the service. These informal sessions have proved very positive in establishing peer support groups focussing on children and young people (confidentially) across our foster carer community and also include some Yoga sessions. Between 10 and 15 carers attend regularly.
5. Worry Monsters have picked up in pace and the community in the Bradford district has got behind their production. The pace and size of knitting groups has supported social workers being able to put an order in for a worry monster for children they are supporting. The monsters support direct work with children and young people. The children are reassured its ok to have worries, they write them down and pop their worries into the worry monsters mouth and the worries can stay there until they are ready to talk to a trusted adult.
6. A monthly newsletter is sent out to all carers and includes key dates, articles of relevance, training information and regular updates around service development

from the Service Manager, as well as opportunities for carers to support the service and get involved. Not all carers are actively engaged with the newsletter due to their IT capabilities (newsletter open rates 62% for February 2018). Supervising social workers are asked to take out key documents to their carers when we are aware they do not access online material.

2.15 Support, standards and processes

1. A significant development within the service was the launch of the Fostering Service's Standards of Practice in January 2018. This 15 page document sets out timescales and expectations in relation to practice. It is a significant development as the service is in a much better position to challenge poor practice when the standards are not being met. The standards include an emphasis on timeliness of carer reviews, visits to carers, assessment timescales and matching children with a long-term placement. They also include allegations management timescales where there has been an allegation made against a carer which can result in a carer possibly being suspended until the outcome of the allegation is known and then subsequently a review of them as carers. This can be a difficult time for the carers and so it's important the process has some clear expectations, which need reviewing on a regular basis in relation to timescales and outcomes.
2. In light of the recent inadequate judgement from Ofsted, the absolute priority of the Fostering Service in the first quarter of 2019 is to assess compliance against legislation and minimum standards and Bradford's Service Standards of Practice January 2018. Initial case audits have been undertaken and this will be followed by a self-inspection.
3. An audit of the fostering service will undertake a complete Service review looking at all aspects of team functioning from recruitment, support for foster carers, managing allegations through to a positive approach to retention and handling resignations. Following on from this will be a detailed Action Plan which I will lead in implementing within six months of the audit. What will result from this detailed work will be a clear understanding of what works, and what doesn't. The Action Plan will detail remedial work to improve things; initially in line with legal requirements but with an aspirational approach to achieving best practice.
4. The Statement of Purpose for the Fostering Service has now been fully revised and is now compliant with National Minimum Standard 16 (NMS, 2011) and Fostering Regulations 3 (2011). The draft version of a Children's Guide is now complete and will be ready for distribution by the end of March 2019.
5. The LCS system continues to be developed to fit the business need of the service. To ensure consistency, key assessment templates which have historically sat outside the system in paper form, are now nearing the end of testing to enable all key assessments to be in the LCS. The data intelligence team are also developing a platform where all data for the fostering Service will be available on one platform for all managers to access and check their individual team data.
6. The service appointed an Independent Reviewing Officer who started in role on the 1 April 2018. This role provides independent oversight and is the designated person

for managing the allegations process. The role brings compliance with the NMS 22 (2011). The post also contributes to the development of the service overall including evaluating and monitoring standards of practice and fulfilling a quality assurance role. This role is being developed to encompass independent scrutiny around foster placement stability by facilitating Stability Meetings at the earliest opportunity when a child / young person, foster carer or professional raises any concern about the future of the placement. The structure and attendance of the meetings is under discussion as part of the on-going 'placement stability task and finish' group and meetings will be introduced as of April 2019.

7. A drive to embed Delegated Authority (DA) within the service and the wider Children's Service was commenced last year. A decision support tool is available at pre and post placement planning meetings and provides clarity on what day to day decisions can be made by a carer in relation to a child in their care. This process needs further strengthening by all involved with the child and can be focussed on in the audit of the service planned for March 2019.
8. The Interim Service Manager is reviewing the functioning of the Fostering Panels in Bradford and the subsequent decisions that follow from the Agency Decision Maker (ADM). The service manager has ensured the following:
 - All fostering panel members and panel chairs are involved in professional challenge at Panel Business Meetings. A further meeting to be set up with Agency Decision Makers, Head of Service and Service Manager.
 - Due to the size of the Fostering Service and the business on a day to day basis, there are now 2 Agency Decision Makers (ADM's) across Children Services. There are 4 fostering panels who each sit once a month so there is an ADM attached to each of these panels. On occasions because of the high volume of work due to compliance and Connected Carers assessments an extra Panel a month is being convened. The additional work on the service in this area is ever increasing.

2.16 Training for foster carers

1. Over the last 2 years as part of the Journey to Excellence and the New Model of Care for Children Looked After in Bradford, we have worked hard to train, develop and support PACE practitioners in order to help us embed the Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy (PACE approach). PACE is a way of thinking, feeling, communicating and behaving that aims to make the child feel safe to enable a trusting relationship to develop. The priority group for this training is children's residential managers and workers and at least one foster carer in each household. We estimate this to be approximately 800 people that need the course which is delivered half a day a week over a 6 week period.
2. Significant progress has been made to achieve this vision.
 - 171 practitioners have attended the introduction to PACE
 - 24 practitioners have attended DDP level 1 (Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy- supports relationships between two people)

- PACE practitioner support group established
 - 18 practitioners have attended DDP level 2 training
 - 15 practitioners have attended the Foundations for Attachment Training for Trainers
 - Staff trained in DDP have had refresher training and will have additional training during the year to support appropriate implementation of the approach
 - 15 staff trained in group work skills, and will lead on groups for carers of teenagers and children with additional needs to provide PACE/DDP informed support to groups of carers.
 - 20 additional staff and foster carers have been trained as co-trainers, to increase capacity to deliver of this programme.
 - Foundations for Attachment has seen 20 six week courses delivered to mixed groups of residential and fostering staff – 240 people in total have completed the course.
3. Almost 200 fostering households have received this training and are starting to report an impact within the relationships with young people. Feedback from carers has been extremely positive:

“It has been brilliant for us. We started practicing on each other and it has been lovely- as well as helping with the children, it has helped our marriage. Everybody is calmer and we all feel a bit closer”

“I have really slowed down. I stop and think before I speak and don’t over react like I used to”

“This course was a revelation. I realised why some of the things I used to do with the older children just didn’t work. I get less stressed now and they talk a bit more about what is really going on”

“What is so good about this is that it works with everybody. I try to be ‘PACE’ with my foster baby and it certainly works with his mum at contact”

Work is underway to revise the training offer and identify the learning and development which is essential. There is a broad programme available to carers, which includes Safeguarding, First Aid, Recording, Counselling Skills, Supporting Education and Domestic Abuse. As highlighted within this report, we are consulting with carers on what training and development needs they feel they need.

2.17 Workloads

1. The Service Manager is reviewing staffing and resources across the Fostering Service to make a balanced review of the resources needed in the Friends Family and Connected Persons part of the service and the Recruitment and Assessment Team in streamlining their activity and focussing on assessment work and increase this capacity also. At present, this team complete the support and induction of new foster carers to the service as well as focussing on assessments.
2. Teams supporting foster carers are above the agreed caseloads of 21 averaging

around 24.

2.18 Mockingbird update

1. As part of the successful innovation bid by Children's Services, the fostering service is one year in to supporting 2 Mockingbird hubs since February 2018.
2. The model is proven to achieve greater resilience in placements and reduce the number of children and young people experiencing an unplanned ending in their foster home placement. The model increases support to carers and is a whole family approach with the carer's birth children all being involved too.
3. The official launch of the Mockingbird project was on 4th February 2018. The project is to be reviewed by the social work team and project manager in March 2019 to check against the models criteria. This will include the data analyst where we can review all the care offered to our children against data gathered and analysed.
4. We continue to meet as a working and operational group monthly, alongside attending fostering network training, forums and meetings. We also run various sub groups and communication opportunities for constellation members, hub carers and key staff members.

2.19 Oversight

Progress of the fostering service is being reported at the Children's Social Care Internal Change Board and to the Head of Service - Through Care and Resources.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 None.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

- 4.1 Progress on marketing the service has been achieved with the aid of one off Transformation Funding which is limited to £100k. This has supported the temporary recruitment of a CRW and has enables further marketing activity to take place. The fund has also supported the service to recruit casual social workers, to increase capacity to undertake assessments of prospective new carers.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

- 5.1 The best and most efficient outcomes are gained from in-house fostering and there is an imperative to increase the number of approved foster carers in Bradford. The Marketing and Recruitment Officer and CRW in this area are both on a temporary contract. There are clear improvements in their area of work but there is a significant risk if the resource in this area could not continue. Capacity has been created by moving staff around the service but increasing the number of foster carers will require some additional resourcing later in time as every cohort of 20

foster carers requires a 'supervising' Social Worker.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

- 6.1 Full consideration is given to any relevant statutory instruments governing the implementation of any of the proposed actions in the plan at all times and legal advice sought as necessary

7 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

Children and young people in need of foster care are of all ages and backgrounds. Some have suffered from abuse or neglect and they need the support of foster carers from all walks of life who can offer a stable home environment. The council is seeking to ensure that in a period of financial constraint it can continue to provide high quality, affordable foster care. A key element of this is to ensure the supply of suitable foster carers, on an on going basis. By growing and improving the pool of foster carers looked after children have better prospects of securing a placement that best meets their needs

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None.

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

None.

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

Fostering is a process where a foster carer looks after children and young people who cannot live at home with their own family for a variety of reasons. They could be with a foster carer for a few days or a few years until they reach adulthood. Foster carers improve the life chances of the child by listening to their needs, providing a stable home life and providing a safe and secure home environment.

By having a larger pool of foster carers along with a good knowledge of the child's needs and the skills of the foster carers the following benefits are anticipated:

- Increased placement stability through more options of placements
- Higher level of in-house placements;
- Better geographic placements;
- Fewer placement breakdowns if better matched
- Enhanced awareness of fostering services and the council's role as a corporate parent;
- Reduced costs;

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

None.

7.6 TRADE UNION

A more streamlined service for recruiting foster carers has been created with the addition of a temporary post of Recruitment and Marketing Manager supported by a Community Resource Worker.

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

None.

7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

Elected members to support and promote the importance of fostering in their wards and opportunities for children who are looked after and their carers to access local facilities.

7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

None

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

8.1 None.

9. OPTIONS

9.1 Not applicable.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Members are requested to note significant developments in the Fostering Service.

11. APPENDICES

11.1 None.

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

12.1 None.

This page is intentionally left blank