

Report of the Interim Strategic Director to the meeting of the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be held on 10th April 2019

Subject:

AG

Progress update following the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authorities Children's Services (ILAC) - Improving the Quality of Social Work Practice

Summary statement:

To provide the Committee with a progress update in respect of improvements identified within the Ofsted Improvement Plan, namely:

**Improving the quality of social work practice across the service areas
(Theme 1 being Front Door)**

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Portfolio:

Children and Families

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children's Services

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with a progress update in respect of improvements identified within the Improvement Plan following the Ofsted inspection of September 2018 and the subsequent Department for Education (DfE) notice to improve issued in December 2018.
- 1.2 More specifically the report will focus on the actions underway in improving the quality of social work practice across front line services

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 An improvement notice was issued to Bradford Council on 4th December 2018, following the Ofsted judgement, reported on 29th October, that Children's Social Care services were inadequate.
- 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 is Mr Stuart Smith, appointed to Bradford by the DfE, who was previously Director of Children's Services for Calderdale Council. Mr Smith's role is to oversee the implementation of the improvement plan and report on progress against the objectives within a timetable agreed with the Department.
- 2.4 Following the Inspection and subsequent Improvement Notice a number of actions have been identified to support and enable the Council to deliver safe and effective services to children/young people and their families.

Improving the Quality of Social Work Practice

Back to Basics - The Bradford Basics highlights the following as our basic principles;

Children are at the Heart of all we do – there will be a “golden thread” throughout all our activity that children are central, we need to understand their experiences and listen to their voice.

Assessments – informed by Evidence, Research and Analysis.

Recording – which is timely and includes Accurate Chronologies.

Smart plans – Plans which are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, **T**imely, which are reviewed regularly and **U**dated.

Management Oversight – Supervision and Continuous Professional Development.

- 2.5 This campaign is visual with posters around the building reminding workers of our Basic principles so that they recognise that this is what they need to do to achieve good practice for our children.
- 2.6 A training programme has been built around these principles and we have stripped practice right down to the very basics. **Focus on Practice Weeks** have been introduced as part of this programme. This works departmentally with everyone working on the same issue to improve the practice; practice weeks will be driven by Service Managers within their Service area via their meeting with the Team Managers; Team Managers will then disseminate the information in team meetings, supervision, and action learning sets. Practice Supervisors, the Principal Social Worker, the workforce Team and other will offer training session.
- 2.7 The aim is to ensure that all staff are clear about the expectations of them in their role, that they have had support in understanding the expectation and that they have seen the relevant guidance.
- 2.8 Each Practice week will have at least 3 key learning points. In everything we look at our overarching principle will be to **'understand what good looks like'** and **'capturing the voice of the child'**
- 2.9 In order to understand and evaluate this approach to our learning the audit team will dip sample case files following the practice weeks to ensure the success of this approach.
- 2.10 The Strategic Leadership team have determined that children's files need to be compliant and in good working order so wanted to prioritise this in the initial weeks.

Date	Practice Issue	Principles	Practice Leads	Guidance/training	Audit outcome
25.02.2019	Visits to Children	<p>Compliance – the schedule of visits for CIN/CP/LAC/PF and understanding why i.e. statute or internal policy.</p> <p>Purpose of the visit to link clearly to the child's plan</p> <p>Recording How to record a visit, what needs to be recorded and why; how this</p>	Traci Taylor Michelle Pickles	<p>Delivery of face to face learning (lunch and learn)</p> <p>Practice Guidance</p> <p>Practice Standards</p> <p>One Minute Guide</p> <p>Exemplar.</p>	To be arranged.

		<p>should be set out.</p> <p>Understanding what good looks like.</p> <p>Is the voice of the child captured?</p>			
11.03.2019	Case summaries	To ensure there is a consistent standard across all case files capturing succinct, relevant Safety plans.	Traci Taylor Claire Smith	As above	
25.03.2019	Chronologies	All case files to have an accurate chronology that is fit for purpose and gives a clear picture of the experience of the family; the interventions and actions of the Local Authority– what has worked and why.	Traci Taylor Kate Leahy	As above	
08.04.2019	Capturing the Voice of the Child	All files have the voice of the child in case summaries, visits and in all activity; their experiences are understood and their wishes and feelings have been taken in to account.	Bev Mann Imran Cheema		
22.04.2019	Genograms and Family Finding	All children have a meaningful genogram on file evidencing discussions with the family or child about their support network	Traci Taylor Sarah King.		

- 2.11 Once file compliance has been achieved in terms of the basics a further plan will be sent out to social workers for further Focus on Practice Weeks; this is an on-going programme which will be repeated and themes added as agreed by the Senior Leadership Group.
- 2.12 At the same time as the Focus on Practice Weeks; the Lunch and Learn sessions will run alongside this to enhance the learning. Additionally, workshops are being planned following the completion of the work streams and Task and Finish Groups which are underway to review every part of our social work practice, reviewing all our Guidance, Practice Standards and influencing our policies.
- 2.13 **Task and Finish Groups** – have or are currently looking at:
CIN (Child in Need)/Assessment Processes, Plans, Chronologies, Core Group/CIN (Child in Need) meetings, Child Permanence Reports, Plans and Public Law Outline.
- 2.14 Following our most recent Ofsted visit – the protocol for homeless young people is being revised and training across the board will be offered to ensure that there is a consistent approach to this vulnerable group

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The plan is to ensure that the quality of social work practice is of a 'good' standard across the whole service. In order to ensure we evidence that the training programme is having the desired impact, auditing will take place from team manager level and above on a monthly basis beginning at the end of March '19. This will evidence that managers are able to recognise what 'good' looks like and that the training being delivered is able to evidence impact on outcomes for our children and young people.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

- 4.1 There are no financial issues beyond the additional social work resources that have already been secured to assist in the improvement journey.

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

The Ofsted judgement affects all wards.

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

None.

7.9 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

All improvements across the Children's Services are the responsibility of Corporate Parenting.

7.10 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

None; the Ofsted report and Notice of Improvement are in the public domain

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

9. OPTIONS

N/A.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That this Committee note the contents of this report.

11. APPENDICES

None.

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None