

## **Report of the Strategic Director Children's Services to the meeting of the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be held on 09 October 2019**

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**Subject:**

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**Progress update following the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authorities Children's Services (ILACS) – Ofsted monitoring visit preparation, progress and continued challenge**

**Summary statement:**

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

**Ofsted monitoring visit preparation, progress and continued challenge**

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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 improvement activity around the next Ofsted monitoring visit, preparation, progress and continuing challenge.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 An improvement notice was issued to Bradford Council on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018, following the Ofsted judgement, reported on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2018, that Children's Social Care services were inadequate.
- 2.2 At the beginning of July 2019, an Ofsted Visit 3 (12-week) plan was created, focussing on the following priorities:
  - Priority 1: All Social Workers to receive quality and timely supervision – Improve the quality of assessments, plans and their implementation;
  - Priority 2: Quality Assurance via learning through auditing – Improve all aspects of multi-agency child protection work;
  - Priority 3: Engaging partners in the correct application of the Continuum of Need which is the multi agency thresholds document that provides guidance to professionals about when to refer to children's services. The continuum of need also ensures proportionate and necessary intervention is applied at the relevant tier and level of need whilst ensuring prioritisation of those children in need of help and protection.
- 2.3 The plan commenced at the beginning of July 2019, with specific tasks, milestones and deliverables which are monitored for delivery and reported on at the end of each week by the individual Senior Responsible Officers (SROs). The plan will complete on 27 September 2019.
- 2.4 **Priority 1 Progress**
- 2.5 Back to basics training for Team Managers will have be completed by the end of August, this is on-going training for social workers. The training will enable us to evidence better compliance and quality of casework being undertaken. Case audit outcomes have begun to improve as more cases are graded as requires improvement and good evidencing that this training is achieving better outcomes for our children and families. It is important to note, however that quality and consistency of casework across the city and district of Bradford remains variable and further work is required to uplift the overall quality of practice.
- 2.6 Supervisions are reported on a monthly basis, with a target of 90%. Audits are taking place in September to ensure that supervisions are being held in a timely

manner and can evidence reflection and management direction on cases.

- 2.7 Trackers are in place for all cases in Public Law Outline (PLO), cases in the legal process and for cases where children have been subject to child protection (CP) for more than 12 months. Monitoring and updating the trackers are the responsibility of Service Managers who will evidence oversight on individual cases. The number of children subject to lengthy periods of PLO or CP is reducing.
- 2.8 Significant work has been completed on the development of a new performance dashboard which is used by Service Managers and Team Managers to drill down on specific key performance indicators (KPI's) by locality, team and practitioner. This will assist with early identification of risk and particular areas requiring focus or challenge. In addition team managers have access to the vital signs report (appendix 1) and the quarterly Children's Assessment Tool (CHAT) (appendix 2) that allows a comparison of Bradford's performance against the Yorkshire and Humber region. The Vital Signs report also provides material to support this Committee to see the overall direction of travel in children's social care improvement and to provide scrutiny and challenge.
- 2.9 **Priority 2 Progress**
- 2.10 Review of all children subject to Child Protection Plans for over twelve months has been undertaken. Actions to ensure no drift or delay are being carried out and service managers are responsible for signing off actions having been completed.
- 2.11 A new audit tool has been introduced which will allow us to compare and contrast outcomes on a monthly basis.
- 2.12 Audits are being undertaken with social workers, allowing them to understand the process, discuss cases and have an opportunity to reflect and learn through the process.
- 2.13 Audit outcomes will feed into the training plan to ensure that learning is shared across the whole service.
- 2.14 **Priority 3 Progress**
- 2.15 The revised Continuum of Need has been launched with a series of partner events.
- 2.16 Strategy Meetings now sit within the Assessment Teams which reduces the 'hand off' points and engages more effectively with partners throughout the process.
- 2.17 From a compliance perspective, it is evident that the quality of assessments and timeliness of social care practice is improving however these remain a challenge across the service and whilst performance for July was generally positive, there remained some areas of challenge particularly around assessments completed in timescale.
- 2.18 We will continue to see peaks and dips in performance as we embed compliance and quality whilst stabilising our staffing.

2.19 Significant activity has also been undertaken by the HR teams, looking at recruitment and retention, workforce performance, and workforce development to ensure that we have the required capacity and capability in our workforce for the future. The HR report also includes the ‘What Good Looks Like’ journey and this is being progressed through a campaign currently underway to recruit permanent social workers, with a series of events planned through September. We are beginning to see more stability within the Team Manager cohort, with Keighley having all permanent Team Managers. Sickness levels will show a rise within the reporting system over the next month as managers are now putting these episodes onto the system formally, this is not an area for concern currently as the service was previously under reporting and is now producing accurate figures. We are beginning to see staff returning to the work place.

2.20 Due to the lack of pace and engagement with the initial Improvement Programme the Strategic Director of Children’s Services has further requested that a refreshed programme is developed. This improvement business change programme is currently in development, and further details are provided below.

### 2.21 **Getting To Good**

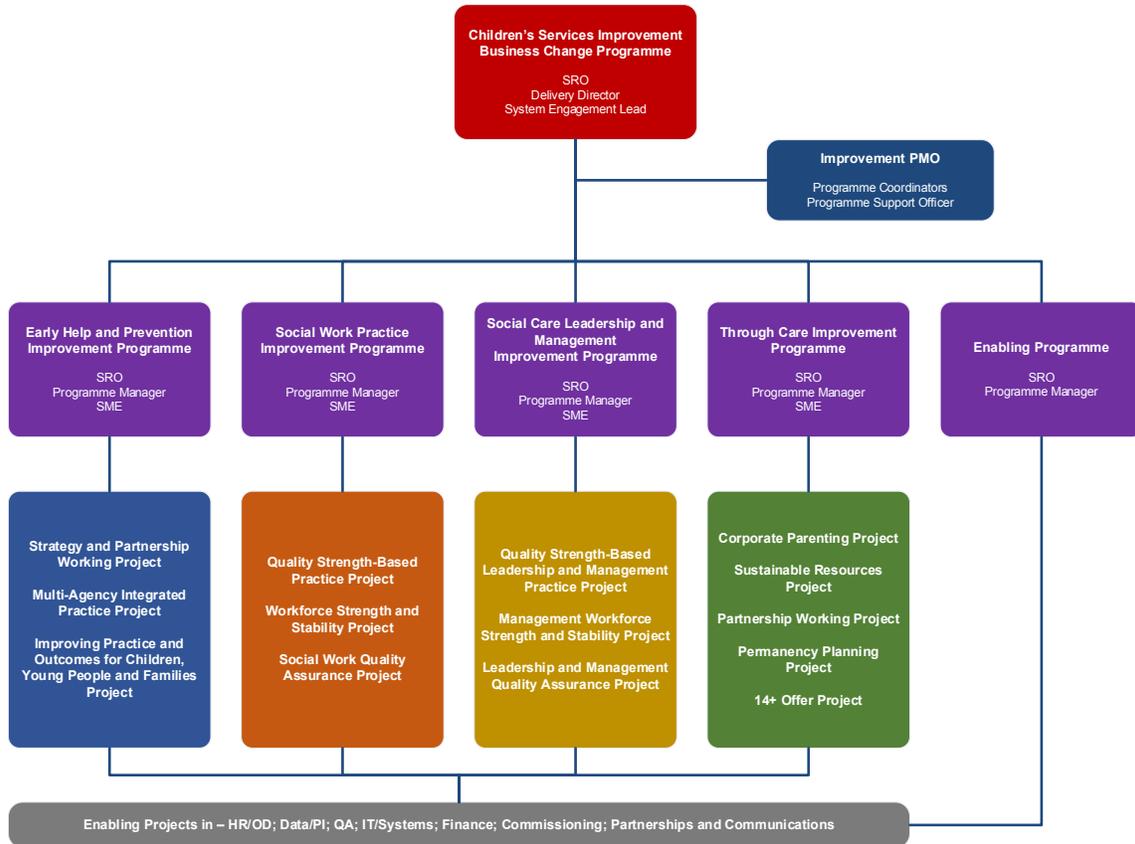
2.21 In order to increase the pace of improvement and system wide engagement, the Strategic Director of Children’s Services has requested that a refreshed programme is developed with a clear vision of “Getting to Good”. This refresh is currently in development, and has the following programmes within it:

- Early Help and Prevention improvement to ensure that children’s needs can be met in a timely manner, either in universal services or by a lead professional thus preventing the need for statutory interventions;
- Social Work Practice improvement to ensure that children receive the highest quality support and interventions to address identified need and prevent significant harm;
- Social Care Leadership and Management improvement to ensure appropriate management oversight of work and that children are receiving good or better interventions;
- Through Care improvement to ensure that children who are or have been looked after by the council have high quality provision and appropriate support to make the transition to adulthood;
- Enabling programmes that will ensure human resources, finance, IT and other systems are fit for purpose and supporting the delivery of good quality social work.

2.22 The distinct projects in each programme are being developed, and the overall programme structure finalised, ensuring that all Ofsted recommendations have been addressed.

2.23 The Children’s Services Improvement Programme is expected to take three years to fully implement, and regular reports will be published to provide assurance that the programme is on track and delivering the improvement benefits to the children of Bradford.

The draft programme structure is shown below:



2.24 The next steps in delivering this approach are to work with partners and front line staff to co-design and engage in the final programme delivery model and then mobilise the new structure.

### 3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

None

### 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. Any additional support required will be picked up and supported via the Enablers Programme.

### 5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

Risks in relation to improvement are being picked up and managed through the Improvement Programme governance framework.

**6. LEGAL APPRAISAL**

Not applicable.

**7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

**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**

The Ofsted judgement affects all wards.

**7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING**

All improvements across the Children's Services are the responsibility of Corporate Parenting and regular updates will be provided as part of the Children's Improvement Programme.

**7.9 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**

Not applicable.

**10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the contents of this report be noted.

**11. APPENDICES**

1. Vital Signs document:
2. Quarter One Regional Trends and Ranking Data

**12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None