

# Report of the Strategic Director Children's Services to the meeting of Children Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be held on – 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024

R

---

**Subject: Bradford Children's Services Improvement Plan**

## **Summary statement:**

The Bradford Children and Families Trust continues to deliver on the Improvement Plan approved by the Improvement Board in April 2022. The Improvement Plan Progress Report is presented and discussed at the Improvement Board on a quarterly basis, with Quarter 2 Report being presented in September 23 and Quarter 3 due to be shared at the end of January 24.

The Trust is currently developing their Children and Families Plan in line with the priorities and imperatives set out in the Business Plan which will outline the priorities and focused areas for the next 18 months, this work will inform future progress reports.

The response to the areas for improvement identified in the Ofsted inspection (ILACS) which commenced in November 2022, have been set out in the Ofsted Action Plan and this has been incorporated into the Improvement Plan and will feature within the Children and Families Plan. Furthermore, areas of improvement identified from the Ofsted Monitoring Visit in July 2023 and November 2023 have been cross referenced and added or updated as required.

This report is to present a Progress Report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the progress since July up to November 23 and our next steps.

## **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY:**

There is not a dedicated strand for equality and diversity consideration, they are considered and addressed throughout the strands, objectives and the success measures in the Improvement Plan.

---

Charlotte Ramsden  
CEO Bradford Children and Families Trust

Report Contact: Ruth Terry  
E-mail: [ruth.terry@bradfordcft.org.uk](mailto:ruth.terry@bradfordcft.org.uk)

## **Portfolio:**

**Children & Families**

## **Overview & Scrutiny Area:**

**Children's Services**

## **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Bradford Children's Services Improvement Plan has strong leadership and assurance mechanisms in place. Support from the Chief Executive, elected members, Bradford Children and Families Trust, Bradford Local Authority Children's Services, partners and senior leaders, ensures focus, drive and pace.
- 1.2 The plan commenced in April 2022 and was commissioned and is governed by the refreshed Bradford Children's Improvement Board, which is chaired by the Bradford Children's Commissioner.
- 1.3 The Improvement Plan Progress Report is presented and discussed at the Improvement Board on a quarterly basis.
- 1.4 The response to the areas for improvement identified in the Ofsted inspection (ILACS) which commenced in November 2022, have been set out in the Ofsted Action Plan and this has been incorporated into the Improvement Plan and will feature within the Children and Families Plan. Furthermore, areas of improvement identified from the Ofsted Monitoring Visit in July 2023 and November 2023 have been cross referenced and added or updated as required.
- 1.5 This report is to present a Progress Report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the progress since July up to November 23 and our next steps.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Improvement Plan is in two halves and enables a relentless focus on improving outcomes for children and young people and ensuring that those supporting them and their families have the right conditions in place to provide quality services and for success.

### *A - Improving the lives of children and young people:*

1. Who are referred to our Front Door
2. Who need early help
- 3a. Who are in need of help and protection
- 3b. With disabilities
4. Who are on the edge of care (to include a Turning the Curve plan to safely reduce the number of children needing to be looked after)
5. Who are in care and who have left care

### *B - Creating the conditions for success:*

6. Ensuring children, young people and families have voice and influence
7. Strategic leadership ensuring the conditions for success are created
8. A sufficient and stable workforce
9. A constant focus on practice improvement and an agreed practice model
10. A strong and collaborative partnership
11. Buildings, IT, finance, admin. HR support and equipment that support quality practice
12. Data and Insight (Learning and improving through performance management and quality assurance)

- 2.2 The Improvement Plan has identified measures for success; these success measures (data and milestones) are reported on quarterly and presented to the Improvement Board in the form of the Progress Report.
- 2.3 The plan is iterative and dynamic and will develop and adapt in line with improvement priorities. The next piece of work is to develop a phased approach to these priorities.
- 2.4 Examples in addition to what was provided in the February 2023 report on the Improvement Plan to Children's Overview & Scrutiny panel include:
- Integrated Front Door (IFD)
    - Review undertaken by professor Thorpe and colleagues with recommendations put forward for further embedding and improvement of the conversations based approach.
    - Refreshed training undertaken with existing workforce and with new social workers within the team.
    - Emergency Duty Team is now co-located with Police colleagues in Trafalgar House.
    - Police Protection Notifications review undertaken jointly with police and recommended areas of improvement currently being taken forward.
    - Joint partnership early identification methods introduced within the child exploitation service resulting in the service supporting more young people as identifying need.
  - Early Help
    - Early Help representation within child in need panels to increase the number of children able to safely step down at earlier points with early help practitioners able to advise on what support their service can offer.
    - Joint service manager forums to ensure robust, reflective planning discussions take place and prevent further escalation in need/risk.
    - Newly appointed Navigators within each Hub.
  - Help and Protection
    - Improved quality of strategy meetings has resulted in a decrease in the number progressing to initial child protection conference due to alternative approaches to supporting families safely.
    - Month on month improvement on timeliness of initial child protection conferences.
    - Introduced family group conferencing / family networking offer for children prior to public law outline (PLO) being initiated.
  - Edge of Care (Turning the Curve)
    - Established Bradford Strengthening Families Service to include 2 Outreach Teams, Family Group Conferencing and Family Time.
    - Developed priorities for both the babies and adolescence turning the curve priorities.
  - Children in care and young people leaving care
    - Sufficiency Board established and setting out and delivering on areas of priority.
    - Developed and delivering on the Independent Fostering Agency set up and improvement priorities.
  - Workforce Stability
    - Successful recruitment to 3 Assistant Directors to further strengthen the management structure.
    - Successful permanent recruitment at head of service, service manager and practice supervisor levels.

- Practice Improvement
  - Learning and Development prospectus developed and being delivered to the workforce.
  - Practice Improvement Programme being delivered to managers across the service.
  - Six obsessions programme has launched to support practice within key areas.
  - Restorative practice action learning sets being undertaken with leadership groups within social care in the Trust.
- Strategic Leadership ensuring the conditions for success are created.
  - Business Plan has been developed and shared with the Council

### **3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1 Capacity to implement the Improvement Plan has been reviewed for both the Bradford Children and Families Trust and Local Authority.

Within the Trust, an improvement and inspection service has been established, with the majority of the posts recruited to. The team currently sits under the Executive Director, however, from January 24, the service will sit under the new Early Help and Transformation Assistant Director. Within the Local Authority, inspection and improvement functions in addition to the ICF function, sit under the Assistant Director for Improvement and Partnerships (AD I&P).

- 3.2 In addition, Bradford is supported by Leeds Relational Practice Centre in the role of improvement partner through funding by the DfE.

### **4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL**

- 4.1 Budgetary, workforce, internal and media communication considerations are all high priorities within this improvement plan and are monitored in addition to the reporting requirements of the Children and Families Trust through the Intelligent Client Function.

### **5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

- 5.1 The risks relate to not implementing the improvement plan as the majority of the priorities are those which have been identified as being essential to the ongoing improvement requirements for social care, and areas for improvement identified in the ILACS, that will enable a move from an Inadequate Ofsted judgement.
- 5.2 By not making the required improvements, the risks are that children, young people and their families are not helped and safeguarded as they should be in the Bradford district, and that future Ofsted inspection activities continue to identify and judge the Trust/Local Authority to be Inadequate.

### **6. LEGAL APPRAISAL**

- 6.1 There are no specific legal issues arising from this report but many of the priorities in the plan relate to the local authority's responsibilities to the Children Act 1989.

### **7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

## **7.1 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable.

## **7.2 TACKLING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable.

## **7.3 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable.

## **7.4 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

No specific issues related to the Act.

## **7.5 TRADE UNION**

Trade Unions have been and will be consulted on relevant aspects of the plan, for example, the changes to the Integrated Front Door.

## **7.6 WARD IMPLICATIONS**

There are no specific ward implications.

## **7.7 IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

The whole of the Improvement Plan is concerned with improving outcomes for children and young people including through Corporate Parenting.

## **7.8 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT**

No issues identified.

## **8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS**

8.1 None.

## **9. OPTIONS**

9.1 Not applicable.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 The Committee is invited to note this report, the new Improvement Plan and the Quarter 4 Progress Report (see appendices).

## **11. APPENDICES**

11.1 Appendix 1 - Progress Report July to December 23

11.2 Appendix 2 - July 23 Ofsted Monitoring Visit Letter

11.3 Appendix 3 - November 23 Ofsted Monitoring Visit Outcome Letter.

11.4 Appendix 4 - Fostering Ofsted Monitoring Visit Letter

## **12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Not applicable.