

IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

July to December 2023



Improvement Plan Progress Report – July to December 2023

The Bradford Children and Families Trust have continued to deliver on the Improvement Plan approved by the Improvement Board in 2022, which was further adapted in May 2023 in response to the outcome of the Ofsted ILACS Inspection in November/December 2022.

In addition, the Trust has developed their Business Plan covering the next four years and this will be launched in January 2024 with the Trust workforce. The Business Plan has been shared with the Council but has not yet been agreed due to the need to review costings and timescales set against the plan, however, the Trust are working internally to progress the actual work. We are currently in the process of developing our Children and Families Plan to align with the Business Plan priorities and imperatives as outlined below building strongly on the existing Improvement Plan:

- 1) *Strengthen services to provide earlier help for children and families***
 - Develop a wider range of Early Help and Family Help interventions with partners
- 2) *Improve quality of relationship-based practice. And decision making with a clear focus outcome.***
 - Improve social work practice and do the simple things well
 - Create An environment where social work can flourish
- 3) *Better choices for local care.***
 - Establish the Sufficiency Board to deliver more local care
- 4) *The Trust being alongside children and families to empower them better.***
 - Embed a child and family engagement framework
- 5) *Build stronger partnerships***
 - Develop and maintain close cross-system partnerships

We continue to report throughout various governance forums as a Trust, and from January 2024, we are introducing a Child and Family Steering Group with the purpose and aims being to:

- Approve new projects, provide clarity for the scope of new projects, the outcomes to be achieved, the necessary resource commitment from services and timescales
- Track progress and next steps of live projects
- Review evidence of impact
- Address risks, barriers and challenges related to the project
- Make decisions on identified or highlighted areas of concern where the scope of project might need to be adapted
- Share and review case studies
- Share compliments
- Approve highlight and progress reports for various audiences.

The following pages provide updates on the various strands of the Improvement Plan.

Improving the lives of children and young people referred to our Integrated Front Door (IFD)

Embed conversations-based approach to receiving referrals

Establish a weekly referral review meeting and monthly partnership lessons learnt forum

The conversations-based approach was implemented in November 22 with an aim to switch from paper-based contacts and referrals to telephone conversations between a highly experienced consultant social workers and the referrer. In most instances, this is with partner agency professionals, and the approach allows for joint discussion, decision making and planning for the child as well as allowing for professional challenge regarding how best to support and help families as opposed to assessing all families. The approach recognises there will be an increase in the number of contacts, however, the conversation and accountability is designed to reduce the number of children escalating to statutory intervention by 30%.

The approach continues to be reviewed through the weekly referral audit meeting with lessons and areas of development shared with partners in monthly learning forums. Professor Thorpe and his colleagues continued to support and review progress up until December 23.

Within this reporting period:

- Professor Thorpe and his colleagues held our 26-week review on 20th October 23. The review found that, as expected, the number of contacts had increased, however, this was to a much greater extent than has been seen in other children's services. They also found that whilst the number of contacts resulting in a referral had decreased by 29% for Police, this was not mirrored across all agencies and our average reduction overall was 16% (expectation is an overall 30% reduction in referrals). Added to this, the integrated front door continues to receive a high number of referrals by e-mail, the aim of the conversations-based approach is to significantly reduce this activity.
- Professor Thorpe and his colleagues have undertaken refresher training sessions with the workforce from 15th to 20th November 23 with added coaching for managers where it was required.
- We have held a number of interactive workshops in December with partners sharing case studies to help them understand the journey of a contact to referral and then on to either statutory intervention, early help etc. The aim of these sessions are to ensure that partners are calling in at the best opportunity for children and families to receive the right support at the right time by the right agency(ies).
- Professor Thorpe and his colleagues held our final post implementation review on 19th December 23 looking at the full 52 weeks since the launch of the conversations base approach in Bradford. Within the 52-week period, we have seen a
 - 156.6% increase in telephone contacts from our partners, the biggest increase seen as be from Education
 - 15% unexpected increase in the number of referrals received by e-mail, this was explored as part of the review with the outcome being that this was a data recording issue.
 - 5.8% reduction in contacts resulting a referral, with some points during the year seeing a 21.9% reduction.
 - Minimal overall reduction in referrals resulting in a strategy meeting, however, there were times in the year we saw a 10.8% reduction.
 - 10.8% increase in the number of referrals resulting in section 47 child protection enquiry
 - 5% reduction in single assessments with some points throughout the year seeing a 26.5% reduction.

Our Next Steps are:

- Deliver further interactive workshops with partners through January and February 24.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sept 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23
Reduction in the number of contacts	Low	3567	2853	3467	3567	3741	2667
Reduced % in contacts resulting in a referral	Low	22.8%	23.7%	22.9%	20.9%	19.2%	18.3%
Increase % of contacts to IFD completed within 1 working day	High	78.9%	84.8%	80.0%	83.7%	89.4%	94.2%
Reduced % of referrals which were opened within 12 months of the previous referral opening	Low	19.1%	22.6%	22.9%	21.4%	26.0%	27.7%

Establish a dedicated Emergency Duty Team (EDT) for children and young people – Complete April 23

Establish a Domestic Abuse Hub within IFD to strengthen our multi-agency response to notifications

Within this reporting period:

- The Domestic Abuse Hub within IFD has been established with staff being re-organised to put in place a dedicated team that includes a Team Manager, Practice Supervisor and four Social Workers to respond to domestic abuse contacts and referrals.
- A review has been undertaken of the Daily Risk Assessment Meeting (DRAM) following feedback that this forum was adult focused and not informing safety planning for children. Agreement has been made to prioritise discussions on incidents that include children and for a safety plan to be developed.
- A joint audit was undertaken between IFD and Police on 31st October 23 looking at the quality of Police Protection Notices (PPNs). This review highlighted that the quality of PPN's being sent into IFD were not of a standard that would allow IFD colleagues to identify risk or required decision making on next steps for any children without the full scrutiny of the entire log.
- Police have rolled out PPN training with colleagues in October/November 23. The IFD has subsequently seen a 33% reduction in contacts since September 23.
- From the 22nd of January 2024, the police have allotted an officer to sit alongside a practice supervisor to co-triage all nondomestic related PPN's where an initial joint analysis and decision making will take place on next steps
- Quarterly reviews have been diarised for the next 12 months to continue tracking progress and areas of development in this area.
- Transferred the duties of MARAC from Safeguarding Service to the Domestic Abuse Hub which will conclude on 30th January 24.

Our Next Steps are:

- Embed the new process of hearing children's situations first and the production of a safety plan within the DRAM.
- To further strengthen the Domestic Abuse HUB offer by aligning more closely to Police domestic abuse colleagues, Staying Put and the Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA) service

How will we know we have been successful?

Reduction in the number of contacts resulting in Information and Advice which then tells us that the quality of contacts submitted has improved.

The data is telling us that the number of police contacts dropped from 1056 in July to 706 in Dec. Over the last 3 months the number of police contacts resulting in Information and Advice has decreased from 472 to 387. The % of police contacts resulting in Information & Advice has increased in the light of fewer contacts being made.

	Contacts			Information and Advice	
	All Contacts	Police	%	Number	%
July	3567	1056	29.60%	418	39.58%
August	2852	1094	38.36%	451	41.22%
September	3467	1049	30.26%	465	44.33%
October	3568	1038	29.09%	472	45.47%
November	3744	951	25.40%	381	40.06%
December	2669	706	26.45%	387	54.82%

Strengthen our early identification methods, response, and support to Child Exploitation (CE) within IFD

Within this reporting period:

- A simpler, shorter add on to the risk assessment has been developed which focuses on updates to existing information to an already completed risk assessment.
- Introduced eight weekly multi-agency forum meetings to undertake audits on the timeline of the child and incident. This allows multi-agency sharing of information to identify any risks throughout the child's journey, missed opportunities, good practice and lessons to be learnt.
- Launched fortnightly Identification Meetings and fortnightly Criminal Exploitation Meetings to identify any further children at risk in current investigations.
- Commenced co-working between locality social workers and exploitation workers to further embed the contextual safeguarding model into plans and improve earlier support offer.
- Introduced Identification Meetings specific to organised crime gangs.
- Re-established Mapping Meetings, which draws on the investigation of perpetrators to identify children linked to them.
- Launched quarterly partnership meetings at operational level, to develop practice and evidence improvement in line with the co-working model
- Introduced fortnightly information sharing meetings with West Yorkshire Police and Youth Services to target and address issues in locations of high criminal exploitation.
- Housing is now represented on our four weekly MACE meetings to further impact on early identification.
- Health practitioners within the IFD holding a caseload of children relating to child exploitation, particularly children assessed as moderate. They attend strategy meetings, undertake health assessments, support children around their vulnerabilities and emotional needs and signpost to other agencies such as advocates or ADHD assessment.

Our Next Steps are

- Increase co-working activities between child exploitation social workers and locality social workers for children as graded as a moderate risk (prevention).
- Training for staff linked to the Early Help / Bradford Strengthening Families offer to improve earlier identification for appropriate resources at the right time.
- Develop a contextual safeguarding workstream to review young people aged 15 to 17 who are subject to child protection planning to identify common themes to inform areas of development.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Q3 22/23	Q1	Q2	Q3
Increase in the number of children identified and supported by CE Service	High	-	122	151	201

Strengthen our response to children and young people who go missing whether vulnerable and / or in care

Within this reporting period:

- Introduce structured sign off process for missing related tasks. All missing episodes are reviewed daily by the team manager (service manager in the absence of team manager) who then progresses missing contacts to strategy meetings / child and family assessment as required. The senior missing practitioner progresses support to Tier 1, 2 or 3 Early Help as required and is responsible for the closure of missing contacts.
- Bradford Strengthening Families are now using intelligence from missing episodes with the initial priority being for young people who have had under 3 missing episodes. Where young people and families want to access support to make a change, they will be allocated an outreach worker to discuss and plan what support is required. The services has recruited an additional Team Manager to focus on this area with the aim of reducing or preventing future episodes and prevent placement breakdown in the long term.

Our Next Steps are:

- The Service Manager to develop a service plan for wider improvements within the Missing Service linked to the child exploitation work.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sept 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23
Reduction in the number of children who go missing	Low	134	107	144	138	111	103
Reduction in the number of children in care who go missing	Low	66	49	64	70	54	51
Reduced number of missing episodes	Low	267 164 (CiC)	213 134 (CiC)	274 164 (CiC)	259 164 (CiC)	208 117 (CiC)	183 102 (CiC)
Increased % in return home interviews accepted by children	High	43%	37%	47%	44%	39%	83%
Increased % in return home interviews accepted by children in care	High	32%	23%	41%	27%	27%	70%

Improving the lives of children and young people who need Early Help

Early help to be 'Simpler, Nearer and Earlier' – by further developing our Family Hubs arrangements and ensuring they are well known across the district

Within this reporting period:

- Focused targeted work on making access to services for families in need of help simpler, this has been strengthened by the newly appointed Navigators within each Hub. Their role is to :
 - Provide a whole family service - meet and greet as well as support services for children, young people, families and other agencies/partners within the Family hub. Dealing with and resolving requests for information / support / help in the Family hubs, acting as a 'bridge' between families, the community, and our Family Hub services.
- Delivering monthly information awareness sessions to children's social care staff to provide understanding on how to access services within early help and prevention and how to step a family down to family support.
- We have implemented a Child in Need reviewing process which is proving effective in safely stepping down to early help at the earliest opportunity.
- Introduced joint service manager discussion forums between the Assessment Teams and Family Support to ensure robust, reflective planning discussions take place and prevent further escalation in need/risk.

Our Next Steps are:

- Develop the Early Help Model and offer following the pilot to include the continued work with children who step up from child in need or child protection
- Simplify the element of consent to ensure that this does not become a barrier for families accessing support, but in turn, captures consent at appropriate points of step up into statutory social work intervention.
- Develop promotional, awareness and communication campaign to include access to Early Help (Free Telephone number, Children's Portal and Hubs) and the step down to Early Help from statutory social work.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sept 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23
Increased number of Early Help Assessments – Tier 2 (universal)	High	89	23	35	39	62	42
Increased number of Early Help Assessments – Tier 3 (What good looks like)	High	93	84	97	79	85	72
Reduced % of repeat Early Help episodes.	Low	9.8%	12.2%	7.4%	9.6%	14.9%	9.8%
Increased % cases closed to Early Help due to progress made	High	39%	31%	45%	55%	46%	63%

Improving the lives of children and young people who need of Help and Protection

Multi-agency approach of information sharing and decision making within Strategy Meetings and Section 47 Investigations

Within this reporting period:

- Developed and rolled out a new, simplified Strategy Meeting Request Form and Recording Template which have been piloted and are currently being built into LCS
- Developed and widely shared across the workforce and partnership a Strategy Meeting Guidance emphasising the timescales of all strategy meetings being held within 24 hours (2 hours for injuries and long-term neglect).
- Internal review undertaken of strategy meetings in October which has informed targeted areas of focus required to improve practice and recording of strategy meetings.
- Service Managers have undertaken practice observations of all team managers chairing a strategy meeting to identify good practice and inform learning.
- Established weekly meetings with Police and Health colleagues to address issues in real time.
- Co-ordinated approach to Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) Medicals established with monitoring mechanism, this has resulted in an increase in timely submissions for strategy meetings.
- Improved quality of strategy meeting, this has been evidenced through our internal audit activities but also endorsed through our two most recent Ofsted Monitoring Visits with the published letters stating that:
 - “When children require a safeguarding response, decisions to convene strategy meetings and progress to child protection enquiries are timely. Strategy meetings are attended by the relevant professionals, who share appropriate information to inform decision-making with the outcome to progress to child protection enquiry being clearly recorded” (Ofsted July 23)
 - “When safeguarding concerns arise, multi-agency strategy meetings are timely and are well attended by key professionals, who share relevant information to inform safeguarding decisions” (Ofsted November 23).
- Audit undertaken of 133 children with repeat missing episodes which found the majority of the children were going missing under same/similar circumstances and would not ordinarily require repeat strategy meetings under statutory legislation. We have explored pathways that are more inclusive for families as an alternative to strategy meetings and these will be in the form of Vulnerable Risk Management Meetings (VRM) that are currently being developed.
- Locality pilot underway focusing on team managers meeting to review strategy meetings from the previous week.

Our Next Steps are:

- Incorporate training and learning as part of inductions and within our academies for Newly Qualified Social Workers in their Assessed and Supported Year of Employment (ASYE) and international social workers.
- Hold interactive Strategy Meeting workshops with all Team Managers and Specialist Minute Takers from 22nd January to 14th February 24 to further strengthen practice around convening, holding, decision making and recording strategy meetings, this will include specific training for specialist takers. These sessions will be led by service managers and will include reviewing and discussing case examples.
- Implementing weekly Strategy Meeting Practice Meetings to inform areas of learning (initially in one locality) that review individual practice and quality.
- Establish the resources to facilitate the Vulnerable Risk Management Meetings (VRM's) to be launched in Spring 24.
- Commence the focus of improvement and practice learning around Section 47 enquiries.
- Providing a safe place for children and their parents following child protection medicals.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sept 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23
Increased % in timeliness of strategy meetings	High	94%	91%	93%	97%	98%	97%
% of strategy meetings resulting in S47 enquiries	High	76%	75.7%	77.4%	71.9%	70.6%	68.7%

Good quality, consistent and timely Child and Family Assessments with a 'pass the baton' to other services approach.

Within this reporting period:

- Newly designed Early Help Assessment signed off and undertaken with five families across October and November 23.
- Audit and review undertaken on the current quality of Assessments to identify good practice, areas of training need and inform improved ways forward.
- Second round of surveys completed with families on their views of the Assessment process, areas of development have been identified with the process being rolled out to all localities.
- Monthly obsessions have commenced with an element focusing on Assessments.
- Practice improvement programme commenced with Team Managers and Social Worker which includes a focused area on Assessments with focus on team managers driving quality.
- Ten-day management oversight has been embedded with performance measures in place.
- The 10-day multi agency meetings have been trialled in one locality and the impact is being presented to our Multi-Agency Improvement Development Group and Children's Social Care Management Team Meeting with a planned rollout across the service. The current strength of this platform are:
 - Having a space to share the concerns when a referral has come from school or other agency working with the family, highlighted with parents and removes emphasis from the social worker, which is supporting better working relationships between social workers and families – this method provides clarity on where the concern comes from
 - Enables earlier planning and consideration of appropriate professional support for a family
 - Early Help Navigators attending via Teams to recommend community resources
 - Provides the family the opportunity to better understand the concerns and consider what they can do to promote change
 - Promotes participation and multi-agency accountability from agencies and builds relationships with partner agencies
 - Leads to better assessments, more evidence-based with clear recommendations that are family specific
 - Ensures effective working with a family at the earliest opportunity, avoids drift and delay
 - Reduces the number of children that need to remain with Children's Services/transfer to long-term teams
 - Enables contingency plans to be built into assessments if a child is re-referred i.e., clarity of signposting for support prior to agencies referring straight to Bradford Children and Families Trust
 - Increase in the number of 10-day assessments as a single meeting will provide the information necessary and the management oversight
 - Provides more information to support supervision and decision-making at an earlier opportunity

Our Next Steps are:

- Revise Practice Standards and develop practice guidance and tools to support the workforce and managers on undertaking 'Good' assessments, this will be led by the Principle Social Worker

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sept 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23
Increased % of Assessments completed within 45 days	High	72%	72%	75%	79%	84%	82%

Increased timeliness of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC) held within 15 working days of the Strategy Meeting

Within this reporting period:

- We continue to escalate at the point of allocation when there is late notification of an ICPC, updating Service Managers. We are also raising more robust dispute resolution at the point of allocation when the request for ICPC is being made later in the child's journey than we would have expected.
- We continue to share a monthly timeliness report with the senior leadership team, setting out the reason why an ICPC did not take place on time, broken down into service areas.
- Requests to postpone conferences and reviews continue to need oversight and agreement of the Service Manager and Head of Service for the locality team and this has been reinforced during senior leadership meetings.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sept 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23
Improved % timeliness of ICPC	High	58%	81%	84%	95%	73%	93%
Increased % of Initial Child Protection Conferences resulting in a Child Protection Plan	High	85%	95%	94%	89%	97%	83% Tentative

Effective multi-agency meetings such as Child in Need, Child Protection and Core Group Meetings

Within this reporting period:

- Professional standards have been shared and implemented across the workforce and partnership, and discussed at the Multi-Agency Improvement Development Group
- Developed and undertook questionnaire with families in January 24 for children whose child protection plan ended in December to gain their views on the process to inform areas of development.
- Restorative Practice training and chairing scheduled to commence in March 23 with the child protection co-ordinators.
- Focused work has been undertaken around the attendance and/or information submission to multiagency meetings from GPs.
- Multi-agency training on contributing to multi-agency meetings and child protection processes.

Our Next Steps are:

- Develop a further improvement plan following the completion and outcome of the surveys to include child in need meetings and core groups.
- Undertake targeted work with partners with low attendance and information submission to highlight the added value of their information sharing and attendance for decision making to safeguard children.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sept 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23
Improved % timeliness of Child in Need meetings	High	65%	74%	59%	67%	60%	71%
Improved % timeliness of Core Group meetings	High	90%	87%	83%	89%	91%	93%
Improved % timeliness of Child Protection Reviews	High	90%	91%	87%	84%	80%	95%

Timely completion of statutory safeguarding checks and compliance with regulation regarding private fostering and connected carers.

Within this reporting period:

- Draft Annual Report for Private Fostering with Executive Director for sign off and highlights shared due to be shared with the Improvement Board late January 24.
- Draft Communications Plan developed and shared with Partners for their input on best ways to share the message across the partnership and public on Private Fostering.

Our Next Steps are:

- Update promotional materials ready for the awareness campaign across the service and with partners in identifying Private Fostering arrangements.
- Develop and deliver training across the service and partnership on Private Fostering.
- Execute the communications plan including the undertaking of a survey with young people and families to identify current awareness of private fostering and to inform future service delivery.
- Identify a dedicated social worker that will be dedicated for case holding all privately fostered young people under the lead head of service for private fostering.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sept 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23
Increase in identified Private Fostering Arrangements	High	5	5	5	4	3	2

Timely escalation to public law outline (PLO) and timely progression of permanence in all its forms

Within this reporting period:

- Leeds Relational Practice Centre have undertaken a review of the Legal Gateway Panel and decision making through observations and put forward recommendations of areas of improvement complementary and/or in addition to those made by the case review undertaken by Ingson (independent auditors) – this included a review of the agenda and minutes pro-forma to ensure full discussion is held and reflected in minutes consistently across all chairs.
- The agenda and agenda has been updated to become focused bullet points on the decision making rather than the narrative of the case. It is the responsibility of the chair to review and approve the minutes.
- A Co-chair will support and ensure thorough scrutiny with the decision making and recommendations of the legal gateway panel.
- Training updated and delivered to all localities.

- Practice introduced to offer family group conferencing prior to progressing to legal gateway panel, alternative options include family meeting and thorough exploration of extended family support, this will be part of all child protection plans.
- Developed and delivered mandatory pre-proceedings training package.
- Use of supportive language within paperwork to evidence the help and intervention families can expect and understanding children and family's trauma/journey.
- Ensuring we understand the child's lived experience, their wishes and feelings and the impact of the situation on their welfare – this is central to our decision making.
- Pre-proceedings and care proceedings are tracked by court consultants to support timeliness and quality

Our Next Steps are:

- Child Protection chairs to implement changes to their scrutiny around child protection plans, family, fathers, support, help and interventions and multi-agency to reduce keenness to progress to PLO when the child protection plan is not working rather than thinking the child protection plan needs changing.
- Introduce court consultants audits each month so that we have an ongoing oversight of the impact of the above to make sure the training and knowledge is being embedded.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like
Average time in, working days, between decision to progress to Legal Gateway Panel and the Panel taking place	Data platform currently being developed

Improve the response to young people aged 16 and 17 are risk or who find themselves homeless

Within this reporting period:

- Youth Homeless Protocol finalised and shared with Levelling up Officer from the Department of Levelling up, Housing and Communities in November 23 with positive feedback. Protocol includes the additional level of support from Bradford Strengthening Families which will include family networking, family group conferencing and mediation.
- Visits undertaken to Calderdale by Bradford Strengthening Families Colleagues and Housing Options looking at their crash-pad and long-term model for children who present as homeless.
- Potential emergency care and accommodation within Bradford identified as well as underutilised commissioned services and a voluntary service that can be used.
- Joint Audits have been undertaken on young people that have presented as homeless since 1st April. Audits continue under the weekly review meetings that take place in the Integrated Front Door as part of the implementation of the conversation-based approach.

Our Next Steps are:

- Commission and establish appropriate short- and long-term accommodation and support for young people aged 16 and 17 who present as homeless.
- Develop and deliver training as well as build awareness with partner agencies around the newly revised protocol.
- Launch the new Youth Homeless Protocol in February 24 alongside training.
- Develop a joint audit framework for youth homeless to be undertaken between children's services and housing options.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sept 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23
Decrease in the number of 16 and 17 year olds who present as homeless	Low	4	1	1	8	8	3
Increase in the number of 16 and 17 year olds who return home	High	0	4	3	1	1	0

Improving the lives of children and young people with a disability

Within this reporting period:

- Local Offer information updated and now live on the new Local Offer platform.
- New terms of reference developed for the Multi-Agency Complex Case Funding Panel for Bradford Children and Young People and is being applied in practice.
- Positive feedback from Ofsted during their monitoring visit in November 23 stated
 - “There has been improvement since the last inspection in response to disabled children subject to child in need and child protection planning. Disabled children benefit from consistent, experience workers who know them well. Disabled children are seen regularly and in line with their needs. This enables workers to have a good understanding of the children’s experiences. Workers monitor risks to children and take appropriate action to ensure that disabled children are appropriately safeguard. The professional networks around disabled children are effective. Well attended multi-agency meetings facilitate regular information sharing and inform decision making. Children’s plans are informed by thorough assessments. Social workers understand the communication needs of disabled children and when disabled children are non-verbal, alternative methods capture children’s views are used”.
- Implemented revised transitions protocol between Adults Social Care and the Trust to ensure young people experience the right support as early as possible when planning for adulthood
- Successfully implemented a Dynamic Support Register, a multi-agency response and offer of a Key Work Service that seeks to support children with autism and/or learning disabilities at most risk of hospitalisation or placement breakdown
- Established a working group between CAMHS and social care to develop a multi-disciplinary preventative service to support children and families with the most complex needs
- Established quarterly social care and education meetings between the Head Teachers of our Specialist Schools and the Trust to address challenges affecting children with complex disabilities.

Our Next Steps are:

- Deploy the communication and engagement plan.
- Undertake a review of Short Breaks and Direct Payments for children with complex health and disability.
- Establish a Short Breaks Board in January/February 2024
- Develop training, tools and guidance for the workforce to support them in the work they undertake with children with complex health and disabilities.
- Implement new internal pathway for children with a disability.

Improving the lives of children and young people who are on the edge of care (Turning the Curve)

Establish an Edge of Care Service to safely support children to avoid coming into care and for children to go home where safe to do so.

Within this reporting period:

- Bradford Strengthening Families Service is established comprising two Family Outreach Teams, Family Group Conferencing, and a Family Time Team.
- Service manager appointed and now in post and the majority of the posts within the Family Outreach teams have been appointed to.
- Developed Training and Development Plan for the workforce to include Child in need and child protection awareness; Understanding of risk and safety planning; Motivational interviewing; Direct family work; Child and Adult sexual exploitation; Trauma informed practice; ACES; Working with children with disabilities; Domestic abuse and coercive control; Working with men; and Relationship Matters..
- Whole service away day held in July 23 with shared values being developed, a further away day is planned for 31st January 2024 focusing on doing the simple things well.
- Project Action Plan developed and currently being delivered to ensure the model is embedded across the service.
- Established weekly multi-agency resource panels which looks at referrals made to our Family Outreach Service. The panel provides an opportunity to: discuss new referrals, explore the support that individual members of the family may benefit from and ensure the needs and voice of the child(ren) and family remain central to all support that is offered.
- Added an additional layer of support to the Youth Homeless process to include targeted early help support from Bradford Strengthening Families Service.
- Secured funding to purchase a property (2 planned beds and 1 crisis bed) which will be a respite home for children on the edge of care for short periods of time.
- Established a service design and structure for expanding the Family Time Team.
- Service has developed a plan with Leeds Relational Practice Centre to increase awareness and communication about the FGC support that is available, this is currently awaiting approval to be rolled out.
- Held a 'Better Together' session on 4th December to explore how we can work effectively and have a joint offer with our specialist team colleagues (Health, Police and Education) to offer a multi-agency package of support for children, young people and families who may be on the trajectory to their children being looked after.
- KPIs have been agreed for the Family Group Conferencing Service:
 - Reduction in the number of children taken into the care of the Trust with the families we have supported through a Family Group Conference
 - Timeliness of allocation (5 days from referral)
 - Increase in referrals to the team, particularly for Child in Need or Initial Child Protection Conference
 - Increase in completed Family Group Conference and Family Network Meetings
 - Increase in de-escalations due to Group Conference at 3 months, 6 month and 12-month post intervention
 - (percentage closed to CSC , percentage now CIN from CP) Will come from LCS
 - Increase in child, young person and family thoughts and views recorded as part of the Family plan.
 - 100% of case have management oversight every 4-week period

.Our Next Steps are:

- Complete recruitment activities for Family Time and Family Group Conferencing Teams, currently two vacancies for Family Outreach Practitioners.
- Secure planning permission for the change of use of the residential property, develop a service design and recruit staff to work within the home.

- Increase the use of the Family Group Conferencing Model, including Family Networking.
- Promote the services across the social care locality teams for us to work with children in need and child protection children to reduce the number that escalate into becoming a child in care.
- Recruit to the Family Time Team and safely transfer the supervisory functions of Family Time from social workers to family time workers which reduces burden on social workers.
- Work jointly with the exploitation service to develop a workstream that enables us to offer support earlier when children and young people have been reported as missing by their family.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sept 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23
Increased number of children supported by Outreach Service	High	61	54	63	58	58	60
Increased number of contacts supervised by Family Time Service	High	Datasets currently being developed					
Increased number of Family Group Conferences	High	12	9	15	25	19	11
Increased number of Family Network Meetings	High	16	10	6	0	1	1

Partnership Turning the Curve platform that identifies actions to address numbers of children who need statutory interventions including being in care

Within this reporting period:

- Held a workshop with Partners looking at the journey and experiences of bringing babies into care at birth or soon after and developed a joint improvement programme of works with five key areas of focus:
 1. Support package for pregnant mothers, fathers of the baby and their wider family and friends' network where the anticipated outcome is for babies to be removed at birth
 2. Preventative support and intervention for vulnerable young people in place to educate, guide and support them in positive life choices
 3. Clear and fair legal support and guidance for pregnant mothers and fathers and professionals
 4. Detailed understanding of the factors leading to the removal of babies to further inform areas of focus and prevent unnecessary removals
 5. Support for the workforce following the removal of babies
- Internal meeting held with colleagues to start the development of the adolescence joint improvement programme and to date, 3 areas of focus have been developed:
 1. Support package for young people and their wider family and friends' network to ensure wrap around support and alternative creative ways of working with young people
 2. Suitable accommodation and preventative intervention for young people at risk of being remanded and support package for them and their wider family and friends
 3. Multi-agency training and support package for the workforce
- Identified leads for each area of the programme and working on timescales for each area of works.

Our Next Steps are:

- Establish the Turning the Curve Steering Group and commence delivery of the programme.

Improving the lives of children and young people who are in care and leaving care

The Trust is committed to establishing permanence and stability for all our children in care at the earliest opportunity. Our children in care service has been working on practice to improve the below areas. Our data is telling us that we are slowing improving stability and timeliness of reviews are being undertake and there is further work underway to improve the recording of visits to our children.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sept 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23
Improved stability – decrease in % of children with 3 or more placements in year	Low	7%	9%	10%	9%	8%	8%
Increase % of children who have all their visits carried out according to timescale (month)	High	82%	84%	82%	84%	82%	80%
Increase % of reviews carried out on time in the month	High	99%	96%	95%	94%	96%	97%

Establish a Placements Review Panel

Panel has now been established.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sept 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23
Increase in the number of children returning safely home	High	5	18	16	8	12	11
% children ceasing care made subject to a Special Guardianship Order	High	14%	19%	20%	21%	23%	22%
Number of children in a Purchased Residential Placement at month end	Low	156	190	196	203	208	209

Children in care and care leavers Corporate Parenting Strategy and Action plan is developed and implemented; and Corporate Parenting Panel provides robust governance for the Corporate Parenting Strategy and Plan
Develop and implement Training and development programme for Elected Members to bolster strategic support and challenge

Within this reporting period:

- The [Children and Young People's Strategy \(2023 to 2025\)](#) has been finalised and published online which sets out 18 priorities to ensure good outcomes for children and young people in the areas of education, physical and mental health, safe homes, places and communities and skills.
- Work is being undertaken to map out the requirements of a programme for apprenticeships for care leavers.
- Local Government Association (LGA) is planned in for a corporate parenting diagnostic peer review on 25th and 26th January 24 to identify areas of strength and areas for development, and this will inform areas of development as well as the Corporate Parenting Strategy and Action Plan.
- A corporate parenting workshop was held on 5th December with partners to develop our ambitions for children in care and care leavers.

Our Next Steps are:

- Establish a multi-agency process to produce a cross system Corporate Parenting Strategy that ensures the delivery of the shared and individual Corporate Parenting Objectives agreed by the Council Senior Leadership Team, and all services to have a Corporate Parenting Goal in their service.
- Develop a Corporate Parenting Strategy with success measures and a reporting framework.
- Carry out a self-assessment using the LGA Corporate Parenting tool/template, followed by a LGA identified peer diagnostic team (from another Local Authority) to carry out their evaluation on 25th and 26th January 24.
- LGA and the Local Authority and partners agree and implement a training and development programme for Corporate Parenting Panel and other elected members based on the outcome of the peer diagnostic.

Sufficiency Strategy is fit for purpose, iterative and responsive to change

Within this reporting period:

- BCFT established a Sufficiency Board in June 23 to develop and maintain the Bradford Placements Sufficiency Plan.
- There are now sufficient resources identified to deliver on the Sufficiency Strategy and Plan due to changes within the Local Authority through the strengthening of the commissioning capacity allied to the establishment of the Trust Improvement Team.
- Working to improve and increase the use of Friends and Family Foster Carers and increasing the use of Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs).
- Ongoing examination of the adequacy and cost of placements through a Placement Review Panel process.
- Working with partners (especially the ICB) regarding sharing costs and better supporting children in care.
- One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY) is now picking up all non-agency adoption and inter-country adoption applications.
- The Foster Carer Service Development Plan has a strong focus on recruitment and retention of foster carers with some early success and continuing plans for further work, improvement includes a marketing strategy focussing on recruiting more in house foster carers.
- Phase one capital investment plan to improve our residential capacity linked to existing revenue costs for staffing is being implemented. Our In-house residential provision is being modernised and better utilised, two homes closed for refurbishment and one closing and being replaced by a new home, in the process of being purchased.
- Phase two is being scoped out for recommendation of release of further capital funding.
- Residential service is improving (has more homes and 5 are now rated good by Ofsted) and has become more stable.
- Use of residential agency managers has significantly reduced and now all but 1 of the homes is being managed by BCFT employees.
- All open homes are now full and there is better integration with wider services.
- 2 homes due to close have now closed and are in the process of being returned to the Local Authority's Estates Team
- Augmented its placement team and a review have been undertaken regarding procurement and we continue to work well with the White Rose Framework Agreement.
- Detailed review of the "market" (in house provision and purchased provision) has been undertaken and the report was presented to the Board in November 2023. Where appropriate the findings from the report will support the refresh of the 2022-2025 Placement and Sufficiency Strategy.
- An application for all in house Supported Accommodation to be registered was made in October 23 as per the Post 16 Supported Accommodation provision new regulation process.

Our Next Steps are:

- All existing children's homes to be open, operational, and occupied by March and the new home by the autumn of 2024.
- Develop and maintain the Bradford Placements Sufficiency Plan with a clear focus on family and community first that describes the needs of children looked after and care leavers in Bradford.
- Develop a Commissioning Strategy which describes the approach to be taken to commission external placements.
- Develop the proposal for joint commissioning between the children's Trust, the Council and the NHS.
- Review and refresh the existing sufficiency strategy.
- Develop an updated sufficiency action plan.
- Develop and implement phase 2 of residential and fostering provision

Establish dedicated children in care and leaving care service – Complete

Life Story platform to store all children and young people's memories and memorabilia whilst throughout the journey in our care

Our Next Steps are:

- Identify the resources to implement and roll out the Life Story platform.
- Develop the Project Action Plan to launch the Life Story platform.

Systematically identify those children whose care orders can be discharged and take action to discharge where appropriate (ongoing)

We are continuing to track long term Children in Care to identify those requiring discharge of their Care Orders to remain home and those progressing to Special Guardianship Orders with their connected or mainstream carer.

There has been significant work in CIC with the following progressed since the start of the trust, with 133 children care period ending:

- 57 were placed at home subject of Placement with Parent Regs
- 37 children secured in their placement via an SGO both kinship and mainstream carer
- 39 children have been adopted

The trust set a target this year of 111, including those children who progress to adoption. The target has been exceeded with a further 27 before the court.

Transition work to adult services for those who need them is timely and managed jointly by adults and children's services

Within this reporting period:

- Continued to embed Eco-Map Assessment Tool across the service as part of an overall programme to ensure consistency and support the identification of helpful networks for young people as and when they leave care, this would be updated every 6 months.
- Established Accommodation task and finish group with housing with discussions ongoing with commissioning and adult services to focus on reducing the number of young people in unsuitable accommodation, to date, we have seen 6% reduction from last year.
- Implemented monthly sessions for our young people delivered by Skills House, Careers Guidance Service which offers careers advice, application forms, CV writing, support with interview skills, accessing the right course, finding an apprenticeship, securing employment and accessing higher education.

- Skilled up workforce to support young people transitioning to adulthood, including PA's who hold a Level 2 CACHE Certificate in Information, Advice and Guidance and a worker who sits within the DWP offices each week to support those young people accessing benefits to access education, employment or training, working closely with DWP in doing this.

Our Next Steps are:

- Complete a targeted audit of the quality of Pathway Plans, which will include the use of the Eco Map Assessment Tool to better understand the quality of planning for young people and inform a training programme for social workers and personal advisors that will be rolled out in early 2024 . We are looking for whether plans are aspirational, whether they are effective in relation to preparedness for independence and whether young people are clear about their destination at 18 years.
- Develop an Independence Skills Programme (currently exploring certified ASDAN Programme or develop our own).

Joint Housing Protocol for care leavers is agreed, approved and operational

Joint Housing Protocol is in situ and positively mentioned as part of DfE report whom we gained support from. All other areas of placements and accommodation is running through the sufficiency board.

Improved access to mental health support

Within this reporting period:

- BCFT representative attended Pillar 3 of the health improvement strand which has focus on mental health services, further involvement is to be established with the permanent appointment of the head of service within children in care and leaving care.
- The Service Manager and Principle Social Worker have reviewed well-being tools (including mindfulness and social prescribing) to ensure best use for our care leavers and there is a 5 monthly cycle in place to review as well as monthly audits which commenced in January 24.

Our Next Steps are:

- Develop further plan of improvement following the audit findings and feed into Pillar 3 of the health improvement strand.

District wide approach to increasing work-related opportunities for Care Leavers to ensure they are in education, employment, or training

Within this reporting period:

- Apprenticeships is key focus within the Corporate Parenting Plan to increase opportunities for our young people leaving care. This is being driven, the barriers to accessing these is maths and English as a prerequisite and so the focus is to enable care leavers to achieve functional skills/maths and English to gain access to apprenticeships.
- Implemented the delegation portal for the completion of personal education plans (PEP's) in October 2023, this allows school to access, which speeds up the process of inputting and sharing information.
- Additional capacity to support the PEP process has been allocated through increased Virtual School staffing with a training, coaching, and modelling programme in place to support schools and social care colleagues with the new processes from September 2023.
- Additional quality assurance process is being undertaken for every PEP by the Virtual School and feedback is provided.

Our Next Steps are

- Establish a monthly panel to consider each child on the edge of exclusion and not receiving 25 hours education to ensure that they have a plan that addresses risks associated with exclusion or a clear trajectory back into education.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sept 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23
Increase % of young people in education, employment, or training	High	66%	61.3%	62.8%	62.5%	64.0%	64.9%
Increase % of young people in suitable accommodation	High	93%	92.3%	93.2%	93.5%	94.3%	94.4%
Increase % of young people in touch	High	58%	69.1%	68.6%	62.9%	57.1%	55.7%

Set up of the Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) and preparation for inspection framework due 7 to 10 months post establishment

Within this reporting period:

- All foster carers were re-registered at fostering panel in 2023 as part of the IFA set up.
- Locality based foster carers groups have been established in the 4 locality areas and each operates once a month and one evening every 3 months.
- Appointed learning and development officer who will be responsible for the training calendar and delivery of face-to-face training for carers.
- Trained 18 Therapeutic Crisis Intervention Train the Trainers of 13 staff and 5 foster carers.
- Launched 2 mockingbird constellations with a third being planned for launch in December and a further two for 2024.
- SGO policy developed and presented to executive leadership team, further work underway looking at financial impact.
- Appointed business analyst to ensure we have accurate reportable data required.
- Appointed an additional service manager who will act as Agency Decision Maker, nominated officer for approval of Regulation 24/25 placements.
- Fostering work is now electronically built into the system to ensure consistency and accurate compliance reporting
- Appointed an enrichment officer who has been focusing on enrichment activity for foster carers and children.
- First monitoring visit has been undertaken by Ofsted and feedback has been positive that we know ourselves and areas we need to work on. The letter outlined a requirement of ‘The registered person should ensure timely schedule 7 notifications and provide an update to any linked section 47 investigations at conclusion’ – this has been completed within timescale of 31st December. The areas of recommendation include the below which have all been incorporated within the service improvement plan:
 - The registered person should ensure that foster carers receive sufficient training on health and hygiene issues and first aid, with particular emphasis on health promotion and communicable diseases.
 - The registered person should ensure that all foster carers, including all members of a household who are approved foster carers, are supported to achieve the children’s workforce development council’s training, support and development standards for foster care. Short-break carers who are approved foster carers should be supported to achieve the training support and development standards for short-break carers. Family and friends foster carers should be supported to achieve the training, support and development standards for family and friends foster carers.
 - The registered person should ensure that where a family and friends foster carer is temporarily approved as a foster carer under regulation 24 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010, a full assessment is carried out as soon as practicable, where the intention is for the child to stay with the carer, and always within the statutory time frame set out in the regulations.

Our Next Steps are:

- Continue to deliver on the Service Plan for the fostering service, including areas highlighted within the Ofsted Fostering Monitoring Visit Letter.
- Recruitment of permanent Head of Service and management team.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sept 23	Oct 23	Nov 23
Increase % of Foster Carers with up-to-date review	High	27%	30%	36%	32%	28%
Increase % of up-to-date supervision with Foster Carers	High	50%	46%	74%	77%	85%
Increase in the number of applications to become a Foster Carer	High	63	78	75	75	48

Improving the lives of children and young people by ensuring they have a voice and influence

Strengthen the three forums for children in care and care leavers including more structured approach to working with the Corporate Parenting Panel

Within this reporting period:

- In August we successfully appointed to new Participation Co-ordinator within the Trust and is building relationships with our children and young people.
- Chat Back sessions continue to be held with themes chosen by our children and young people, in January the theme is personal safety, youth justice service and community police.
- Attended the Corporate Parenting event on 5th December to improve networks and to contribute to development of the corporate parenting panel
- A slight increase in participation of young people in the forums
- We successfully facilitated Youth Service Ambassador role applications and one of our Care Leavers, who is due to cease attending the Forums this year as she has reached 25, was successful in obtaining this.
- The Participation Service now attends the Bradford Youth Voice Practitioners Meeting regularly to ensure inclusion in wider development.
- We have, and continue to build, relationships with Fostering, ASYE Academy and Virtual School to help with partnership work.

Our Next Steps are:

- Develop further joint planning with the Corporate Parenting Panel from findings of the corporate parenting diagnostic taking place January 24.
- To establish improved oversight and implementation of the takeaway tasks within the Trust and our partner agencies.
- Young Voice still needs a way to improve, however, working closely with the Fostering Service should help this area once the regular forums are running as well as they can.

Establish a digital mechanism to routinely communicate with, seek feedback from all children in care and care leavers and provide information outcomes.

Within this reporting period:

- Mind of My Own is live for our children and young people to use with monthly meetings taking place to understand children and young people and social workers are advertising and utilising the platform.
- Developing a Shout survey to obtain feedback from children and young people about how they would like to be communicated with.
- We continue with sending out a quarterly newsletter which highlights the service and developments.

Our Next Steps are:

- Continue to promote the use of Mind of My Own
- Utilise the Shout Element of the Mind of My Own App which offers three surveys a year.

Establish consistent and routine approach to Exit Interviews for Care Leavers

Our Next Steps are:

- Implement the Exit Interview into LCS with links to reporting mechanisms to monitor performance and quality.
- Develop a quarterly report to feedback the findings from care leavers to further inform service improvement and delivery.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Quarter 2 July to September	Quarter 3 Oct - Dec
Increase % in participation with children and young people (breakdown below)	High	111	117 to date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your Voice attendance 		55	36
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Voice attendance 		26	49
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people attendance at Corporate Parenting Panel 		12	No CPP till Jan 24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of care leavers offered exit interviews 		11	26
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child and young person led interview panels 		7	6

Strategic Leadership ensuring the conditions for success are created

Establish the Bradford Children and Families Trust, and senior leadership team

Within this reporting period:

- Successfully recruited to three of the four social care Assistant Director (AD) posts. The Safeguarding, QA and Learning and Development AD is already in post, the Early Help and Transformation AD commences at the end of January 24 and the Corporate Parenting AD commences early February 24.

Our Next Steps are:

- Complete the recruitment process for the final Assistant Directors for social care.

Develop an improvement team to ensure inspection readiness and relentless focus on improvement.

Within this reporting period:

- Successfully recruited to posts in the team.

Develop a district wide and multi-agency approach to co-production, voice and influence for children, young people and parent carers.

The Improvement Board continues to pick up and discuss areas of work with operational improvements being delegated to the newly establish Multi-Agency Improvement Development Board. Additionally, there are structured forums to discuss live issues with key partners such as Police and Health.

Maximise staff engagement through a range of approaches

The Trust continues to hold weekly all staff calls, and Monthly joint Local Authority and Trust drop-in sessions. The Trust also continues to send out weekly newsletters, hold a regular Staff Reference Group, send out staff surveys and undertake engagement sessions, such as around the business plan and values.

Our Next Steps are:

- Launch the Business Plan with the Trust workforce.
- Develop the associated service plans in line with the Business Plan and share across the workforce.

A sufficient and stable workforce

An ongoing high quality recruitment campaign that builds on the Bring Heart brand and provides an excellent on-boarding experience

Within this reporting period:

- Focusing on social media platforms and encouraging colleagues to repost articles and job adverts is starting to gain some traction and improving the candidate experience through early contact with potential candidates and simple processes
- Launched the 'job' section of our Linked-In account, with three roles on there permanently – social worker, team leader and service manager.
- Recruitment process reviewed and guidance provided to recruiting managers.
- Continue to hold targeted conversations with our agency colleagues about permanent roles
- Strengthen the relationship with agency providers ahead of a contract retendering process

Our next steps are

- Review and plan for a new recruitment Campaign in 2024 to refresh current approach (planned for March)
- Improve the candidate experience with key roles being handled personally by the new recruitment team
- Reviewing our core offer and looking for ways to enhance the employment/development offer, together with focusing on more flexible ways of working

Implementing International Recruitment

Our next steps are:

- The final appointments are being made and inducted
- Review the impact once fully implemented and assess the potential to repeat

Working with local universities to increase number of social workplaces and develop and implement proposals to attract those students to work in Bradford –

- Successful workforce members have commenced their MA programme at Bradford University.
- Developing a workforce plan that focuses on growing our own as part of the Trust's new People and Culture Strategy.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	First 8 months of the Trust (April to November 23)
Increase in the number of new starters	High	47 New Starters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Service Managers, 3 Practice Supervisors, 17 Social Workers Level 3 • 7 Social Workers Level 2, 18 ASYE
Decrease in the number of leavers	Low	40 Leavers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Service Manager, 8 Team Managers, 3 Practice Supervisors, 11 Social Workers Level 3, 14 Social Workers Level 2, 3 ASYE

A constant focus on practice improvement and agreed practice model

Implement Restorative Practice training and development programme and capacity to embed restorative practices.

Within this reporting period:

- Leeds Relational Practice Centre continue to deliver their Restorative and Relational Practice programme with senior leaders as well as in some discrete areas of the Trust such as child protection and independent reviewing.
- Plans have been made to roll out Restorative and Relational Practice introduction sessions to the Trust workforce and partners beginning February 2024.
- A bespoke program is being provided for all middle managers in social care focusing on relational and restorative approaches to working with children young people and their families-to begin January 2024.

Our Next Steps are:

- Introduce restorative and relational approached to partners jointly with the Bradford Safeguarding Partnership via a partnership development day in 2024.

Increase shared multi-agency workforce development opportunities e.g., Trauma Informed Practice, Professional Curiosity etc.

Within this reporting period:

- From November, the trust commenced delivery of the six obsessions (case recording, case summary, chronologies, voice of the child, effective working relationships with parents, carers and professionals and assessments) which then informs focused areas of discussions with partners in the Multi-Agency Improvement Development group – this will be repeat until it is fully embedded in daily practice and our audits tell us practice is good in the area.
- Updated the Learning and Development Prospectus to include training offered by the safeguarding partnership.
- Ran a number of multi-agency training sessions which includes Trauma Informed Practice, Professional Curiosity and Perplexing Presentations and nonmobile babies.

Develop additional Academy Faculties for specific social care roles.

Within this reporting period:

- Business Support Academy has made significant progress and is developing progression and career paths which include 'grow your own' for those that are interested in progressing into a social care career.
- The Leadership Academy has mapped out modules for all new managers/leaders and they will be linked to the Academy on employment.

Our Next Steps are:

- Commence further Academies in 2024 for Community Resource Worker, Social Worker and Practice Supervisors (current recruitment campaign underway).

Increase presence of social work specialists on social work courses as part of Teaching Partnership

Within this reporting period:

- Through the Teaching Partnership there is a steering group which looks at the increased involvement of practitioners from the Trust jointly delivering teaching to social work students so that this is embedded in our joint working practices. The Principal Social worker and practitioners from the Learning and Development service are regularly involved in relevant lectures/activities and some of our most experienced practitioners have also been asked to be guest speakers.

- Whilst the involvement of practitioners at the Trust is more developed with the University, participation has become more regular with the College also; the College are part of the steering group so there will be a shared approach to joint lecture opportunities. Involvement from the Trust in social work lectures ensures that there is a link between the social work theory and how this links to practice.
- Practitioners continue to be part of the social work admission interviews for the University and College; this is embedded in practice.
- Our Young people have been involved in the admission of our apprenticeship and MA students as an employer led process, but we also want to see more increased use of young people on all social work admission interviews and the Teaching Partnership, of which all parties are part of, is committed to this.
- The new Participation Co-ordinator has been in role for some time now and is committed to young people having more involvement in the internal recruitment process through young person interview panels and, in the social work admission process.
- The new audit process has been in place for the past 2 months; this encourages auditors to involve children, young people, and their parent/carer to have more involvement with the audit process; there is an expectation that the auditor will speak to them about their experiences of receiving a service from the Trust.
- Participation co-ordinator has linked in with the team and met with Teaching Partnership to look at how we can work together to include our children and young people more in our practice development.

Our Next Steps are:

- Consider the recommendation to involve children and young people in all social work recruitment activity including social work admission.

Implement an approach to ensuring workforce development opportunities taken up where required and identified.

These are picked up within all workstreams where a Learning and Development Service is represented on each.

The quality and effectiveness of supervision to staff at all levels by managers and leaders

Within this reporting period:

- Leeds Relational Practice Centre continue to deliver their Management Oversight and Reflective Supervision programme to Team Managers.

Strong collaborative partnership

[Establish Bradford Children's Improvement Board and develop a quality Improvement Plan](#)

The Improvement Board continues to run and is chaired by Steve Walker, commissioner. Recent Improvement Boards have been focusing on the turning the curve programme and sufficiency.

[Establish multi-agency platforms for joint working and practice improvement](#)

Multi-agency Improvement Development Group (MAID) continues to run and is chaired by the Chair of the Bradford Safeguarding Board, recent focuses have been around:

- Further embedding the conversations-based approach along with partners
- Strengthening strategy meetings
- Crime reporting relating to children
- Serious Youth Violence
- Inspection preparation

We continue to forward plan on the areas of improvement work and we have put forward the below which have been accepted by the group:

- Multi-agency attendance and report submission to child in need meetings, core groups and child protection meetings
- Raising awareness of Private Fostering

We continue to hold 3 weekly meetings with key partners such as Police and Health to resolve live issues.

[Address the local recommendations from the National Panel review report.](#)

The recommendations and actions identified from the Practice Review have been embedded into the improvement plan. The learning has been shared across the service and the impact will be scrutinised and reviewed as part of the Children's Safeguarding Performance subgroup.

Buildings, IT, HR, Finance, Business Support and equipment that support quality practice

Agreeing and implementing refreshed and tailored support arrangements for HR, IT, Finance, Business Support, IG, and Commissioning. implementing a workforce development approach for managers for HR, IT, Finance, Information Governance etc. Currently under review, planning and development under the new Trust arrangements.

Identifying opportunities for co-location of multi-agency services for families e.g., early help with social work and other partners where possible. Ensuring that Children's social care office bases are child and family friendly and in locations that promote multi-disciplinary workings. Discussions continue with estates around identifying suitable accommodation in the localities for East and South.

Securing suitable Business Support Services and Support capacity to ensure key processes are met, particularly those that are statutory.

Within this reporting period:

- Recruitment – Business Support have recently completed an 8-week recruitment drive to provide a stable workforce and improve wrap around support services. We have been successful in recruiting to 32 business support posts including Senior Business Support Officers, Childrens Advisors, Specialist Minute Takers, Finance Officers, Business Support Officers, and Personal Assistants.
- Development and launch of Business Support Academy – The Academy offers a positive and strong induction into statutory children's services, becoming part of a culture in which, you are valued, respected, recognised, listened to, supported, and developed. We aim to grow our own talent pool and harness knowledge and experience whilst ensuring robust service specific support services across the trust.
- All 32 new recruits have now successfully completed the first business support academy cohort December 2023 in partnership with learning and development.
- Induction – Reviewing and redeveloping the induction process with dedicated business support pathway in relation to processes and systems aiding service improvements, particularly within the early help arena and in the completion of mandatory training
- Training and Development – Investing in continuous professional and personal development programme to help fulfil staff potential. The BS academy builds on expertise, best practice, and recent improvements and to give further opportunity we have increased our mandatory/CPD training matrix for Q3/Q4 to deliver a programme across business support workstreams to include both service wide and individual continued progression pathways:
- Coaching, Leadership and Management, Customer Service Accredited Training in partnership with Shipley College and Digital Training Eagles in Partnership with Barclays. All business staff have undertaken workshops on key topics including Early Help, Prevention and Transformation, Start for Life, FYI.
- Financial Sustainability – Increased BSO resource for reviewing high-cost finances; external placements for individual children; transport, S17.
- Improved Commissioning & Contract Management process in conjunction with Procurement Lead implemented Contracts Panel and progress Trust Contract Standing Orders (CSO's) ensuring robust scheme of delegation and increased financial sustainability. Six-month programme Q3/Q4 has commenced with training rolled out and completed Oct 23 for all BS managers and finance officers involved in the cycle.

Our Next Steps are:

- Financial Strategy
 - Increased BSO resource to support scheme of delegation, further develop mechanisms to monitor spend and savings in line with trusts overarching aim to ensure resources are adequate to support outcomes for children and families.
 - Continued support for focus on Placements with smarter and more effective systems, process and decision making.

- Review of P-card holders and assessment of spend levels aligned to SoD
- Supporting focused and effective commissioning and procurement
- Mapping processes across organisation to evidence compliance with financial controls:
- Training and Development – Continue to deliver Q4 programme across business support with Advanced Minute Taking, Trauma Induced Training and Adult Mental Health First Aid already planned Jan/Feb 24
- Performance – Progress performance metrics across Business Support including workflow system within LCS and quality assurance measures
- Wellbeing and Resilience – Further develop our wellbeing offer within Business Support with increased wellbeing champions, training and opportunity for mindfulness services,
- Communication and Engagement – Build on effective communication and engagement mechanisms offering a safe space for colleagues to be open and honest, bring ideas/feedback to support improvements and share as much information as we can as early as possible.

Promoting staff wellbeing and emotional support.

Within this reporting period:

- Over a hundred staff have participated in the Mindfulness sessions to aid reduction of stress; enhance self-care, compassion, and wellbeing; manage emotions; increase compassionate framings of families in challenging situations; and increase reflection and reflexivity.
- Positive feedback has been received including:
 - 96% stating that their ability to manage stressful or difficult situations is somewhat or much better – 41% stating much better
 - 91% stating their ability to concentrate somewhat or much better
 - At three month follow up, 89% (n37) reported higher levels of positive affect and 67% of staff reported lower levels of negative affect
 - 84% (n51) reported lower levels of stress following the course. 51% had improved from high > mod or mod > low.
 - 100% would recommend the course to colleagues
 - 97% said the course gave them something of lasting value
 - 83% felt the length of the course was just about right/14% felt too short
 - 96% would find refresher sessions helpful
 - Consistently positive feedback on approach of the teacher – in context of ‘in-house’ delivery model

Our Next Steps are:

- Build a Champion network
- Introduce Mindfulness, leadership, and emotional intelligence module
- Hold a Winter Wellbeing gathering
- Pilot team mindfulness approach
- Explore the development and delivery of a foster carer course

The below areas are to be scoped out and planned into at the end of 2023 / start of 2024

Engaging staff in reviewing and reducing bureaucratic burdens that get in the way of social work with families.

Children’s Portal utilised to its full potential

Delegation Portal utilised to its full potential across the partnership

Insight – learning and improving through performance manage and quality assurance

Ensure the quality of audits through follow up on recommendations and sharing learning in teams.

Within this reporting period:

- Since August 23, audits are now completed directly on the child’s record and includes feedback from children and families.
- Delivered training and promote compliance with managers to better inform recommendations and shared learning.
- A quarterly QA and learning report has been developed.
- Common threads have been identified and these have formed the thematic audit framework that commenced in September 23 to include:
 - Children are seen
 - Safety arrangements are in place
 - Children have an up-to-date assessment
 - Children have a plan
 - Children’s plans are reviewed
 - Children’s voices are influencing their plans
 - Supervision is reflective and of good quality
 - Decision making and evidencing practice
- The above also links to the 6 obsessions that also launched in September 23 to include:
 - Case Recording
 - Case Summaries
 - Chronologies
 - Voice of the Child
 - Effective working relationships with parents, carers and professionals
 - The importance of working relationships with our colleagues in various agencies to support children and families to be safe and well.
 - Assessments

Our Next Steps are:

- Continue to review and strengthen the auditing process to enable improved engagement to increase the number of audits returned but also to reflect on how learning is shared and cascaded so that the wider workforce is able to understand what is happening and why this is important for learning and development. This includes reviewing the audit report format through a restorative approach to support high support and high challenge.
- Strengthen and widen the moderation process to include newly appointed Assistant Directors in the Trust.
- Develop learning circles and the quality assurance activity outside of the monthly auditing arrangements to strengthen and drive engagement.

How will we know we have been successful?	What good looks like	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sept 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23
Increase in the number of audits completed	High	26	15	24	24	23	11
Decrease in the number of Inadequate audits	Low	11	1	7	5	4	5
Decrease in grade change at moderation	Low	16.67%	63%	60%	43%	63%	18.18%