

Portfolio: Children's Services

Report of the Assistant Director (Children's Specialist Services) to the Meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 8th March 2016.

Subject: BB

Updated Information for Members on the Workloads of Children's Social Care Services

Summary statement:

The report presents the most recent information on the workload of Children's Social Work Teams and updates Members on key pressures on the service. The workload analysis is based on activity up to 31st December 2015.

There have been no significant changes to the overall workloads of social workers, or pressures upon the service since the last report was presented. The report demonstrates that Social Work Services for Children & Young People in the District remain strong, robust and well managed.

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1 Summary

This report presents information on the workload of Children's Social Work Teams and updates Members on key pressures on the service. The workload analysis is based on activity up to 31st December 2015. Earlier reports presented to committee have confirmed strong, robust and well managed Social Work Services for Children & Young People in the District. Information within this report therefore examines any changes in workload and demand on resources since that date.

2 Background

- 2.1 Since Lord Laming's Report in 2003 into the death of Victoria Climbié there has been a clear expectation from Government for Elected Members to be routinely and regularly informed of the workloads for Children's Social Care Services. The Government requires that information as set out in this report be regularly presented to Members to ensure that the Council is fulfilling its statutory duties.
- 2.2 The second Laming Report (2009) sets out wide ranging recommendations following the death of Peter Connelly ("Baby P"). The impact of this case and subsequent child deaths in Doncaster and Birmingham resulted in increased demand for social care services in Bradford and nationally.
- 2.3 The Laming Report acknowledged that across the country there were serious pressures and demands on social workers, with some case loads being unmanageable and thus potentially putting the safety and welfare of children at risk.
- 2.4 Lord Laming also made clear that practitioners, teams and individuals should all have a mixed case-load of both child protection and children in need work. No social worker should handle only the more complex and emotionally demanding child protection cases. This report provides information to elected members that this recommendation has been put into practice in Bradford.
- 2.5 The most recent inspection of services for children in need, looked after children and care leavers within Bradford was conducted by Ofsted in February/March 2014. The outcome of this inspection was broadly positive with a small number of areas requiring improvement.
- 2.6 Information provided in this report is produced from information held on the Social Care Records System (ICS). Internal and external audits confirm that elected members can have a high level of confidence in the accuracy of information produced for this report. Bradford has consistently received the highest level of data confidence scores for the Department for Education's annual Children in Need statutory data return. There are minor adjustments to historical values presented to Committee in previous reports, as a result of delayed data entry within ICS; where there are significant variations, these are noted within the body of the report.

3 Report issues

3.1 Workforce/Workload Issues

- 3.1.1 The first section of this report presents workforce and workload information for care management services. This includes Social Workers and Community Resource Workers in the Area Offices in assessment teams, children and family teams, the specialist teams working with children with complex health and disabilities, the teams working with looked after young people and the statutory work of the Leaving Care Team. The workload analysis does not include agency staff.
- 3.1.2 There are 208 Social Workers (192 full time equivalents) in Children's Specialist Services directly employed by the Council. There are 52 Community Resource Workers (CRWs) or 43 FTEs.
- 3.1.3 At 31st December 2015 there were 11 agency Social Workers and 1 agency CRW being used within Social Work services.
- 3.1.4 Bradford has an experienced workforce. 48% of Social Workers are Level 3 workers with high levels of experience and training. However the numbers of level 3 Social Workers have fallen; at December 2014, 56% were at Level 3.
- 3.1.5 The average caseload per full time equivalent (FTE) Social Worker is 12.7 cases, a reduction from 16.2 in December 2014. Within the long term Social Work teams this figure rises to 15.4 cases per FTE. Social Workers take on a mixed caseload of child protection and children in need work. The average caseload per full time equivalent Community Resource Worker is 12.6 (a slight increase from 12.0 at December 2014). The most recent published figures from the DfE (2013-14) showed a national average of 16 cases per FTE social worker and a regional average of 13 cases; the average across our statistical neighbours is 15 cases.
- 3.1.6 50% of looked after children cases are held by a Level 3 social worker. The average number of LAC cases held by each FTE worker is 6.0, rising to 14.1 cases for the dedicated Looked After Children Teams.
- 3.1.7 35% of cases where a child has a child protection plan are allocated to an Level 3 Social Worker, a figure which is continuing to fall; growing numbers of Child Protections cases are being held by agency workers. Social Workers in the Children and Family Teams involved with Children with a Child Protection Plan hold on average 5.5 such cases, a reduction since December 2014 when it was 7.5; this reflects the corresponding fall in numbers of children on CP Plans (see section 3.2 below).
- 3.1.8 52% of public law proceedings cases are allocated to a Level 3 Social Worker. The average number of Public Law cases per FTE Social Worker is 2.42 (compared to December 2014 when it was 2.5).

(Refer to Appendix 1 - a) Workforce and b) Case Load analysis)

3.2 Child Protection

3.2.1 The overall trend in the numbers of children who are the subject of a child protection plan has been falling since July 2014 following a long period since October 2012 when the numbers rose sharply; there were 484 at December 2015 compared to 575 in December 2014.

The numbers of children who became the subject of a plan has seen a similar fall over the same period, with 498 plans starting in the year to December 2015 compared to 639 in the previous year.

At the same time, continuing high numbers of children's plans are ending, with 570 plans closed in the year to December 2015. All of the above continues to demonstrate the effectiveness of the work being carried out to reduce the high numbers of Child Protection plans.

- 3.2.2 The proportions of children becoming subject to a CP plan under each of the four defined categories of abuse/neglect has remained fairly steady over the year except for a decrease in the numbers under the category of Neglect. Quality assurance through 'challenge panels' indicates that reasons for a child requiring a child protection plan are accurately and consistently recorded.

 The proportions of children subject to plans under each category at 31st December 2015, are: Physical abuse 10%; sexual abuse 8%; emotional abuse 51%; neglect
 - 2015 are: Physical abuse 10%; sexual abuse 8%; emotional abuse 51%; neglect 32%.
- 3.2.3 Relatively there are now fewer children subject to a plan in Bradford than nationally, The current rate of children subject to a child protection plan is 34.8 per 10,000 child population (at 31st December 2015) whereas the most recent published national rate is 42.9 per 10,000 (at 31st March 2015).
- 3.2.4 During the year to 31st December 2015, 4.4% of children had become subject to a plan for a second time within 2 years, an improvement on the previous year when it was 5.2%. Ofsted considers the percentage of children becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time to be an important indication of the appropriateness of earlier interventions. A high rate is viewed as indicative of unsatisfactory outcomes to earlier plans.
- 3.2.5 The percentage of Child Protection Plans lasting for 2 years or more has also improved over the last year, with 3.7% in the year to 31st December 2015; this compares to 4.9% in the year to 31st December 2014.
- 3.2.6 All children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan have an allocated Social Worker.
- 3.2.7 As at 31st December 2015 there were 251 children and young people identified as being at risk of CSE.

(Refer to Appendices 2.1 - 2.4)

3.3 Looked After Children

- 3.3.1 The number of looked after children continues to fall from the highest point in September 2015. The number of children being looked after is 864 at 31st December 2015 lower than the figure of 874 in December 2014. This equates to 62 children being looked after per 10,000 child population; this is higher than the national rate of 60 per 10,000 (for 31st March 2015) but below the latest known rate for combined statistical neighbour average of 77.5 per 10,000 (at 31st March 2015) (appendix 2.5).
- 3.3.2 Strong permanence arrangements have been a contributing factor behind reducing the upward trend of LAC, along side closely monitored care proceedings cases and timely discharges of care order. There were 73 adoptions and 40 Special Guardianship Orders in the year to 31st December 2015, compared to 78 adoptions and 56 Special Guardianship Orders in the year to 31st December 2014. 200 Looked After Children are in Family & Friends foster placements.
- 3.3.3 The long term stability of Looked After Children has fallen in the last year. 72% of children who had been looked after for two and a half years or more had been in the same placement for at least 2 years (compared to 75% the previous year). This is slightly better than the most recent national average of 67% (March 2014).
- 3.3.4 All Looked After Children have an allocated worker; most have an experienced Social Worker. Currently 127 cases are allocated to Community Resource Workers; much of which is work with young people preparing for moves into independent living.
- 3.3.5 The number of children subject to Public Law Care Proceedings cases has remained fairly steady. At 31st December 2015 there were 131 cases in Public Law Care Proceedings (there were 124 at 31st December 2014).

3.4 Referrals and Assessments

- 3.4.1 The number of referrals received by Social Care Services has reduced slightly to about 420 per month over the last year, compared to about 450 per month for the vear before.
- 3.4.2 The number of assessments being undertaken by Social Workers is also high. About 640 assessments are carried out each month (this includes assessments in the long term teams), indicating a continuing high volume of in depth assessment work being undertaken.

3.5 Children in Need

3.5.1 The total number of children being included within the CIN census in 2014-15 was 8362, compared to 8146 for the previous 12 months, indicating that an increased number of children are in contact with social care services compared to the previous year. There were 3737 children's cases open as at 31st December 2015.

3.6 The Ofsted Improvement Plan

3.6.1 The child protection and looked after service was inspected as part of a three year rolling programme by Ofsted in February and March 2014. The action appendiced at 3 sets out for the committee the improvement actions taken and progress to date.

4 Options

There are no options for consideration.

5 Contribution to Corporate Priorities

The work of Children's Social Care contributes to the Council priority of keeping children safe.

6 Recommendations

That the Committee consider further reports in the 2015-16 work programme to ensure the continuation of safe workloads and practice into the future given the current financial climate.

7 Background Documents

None.

8 Not for Publication Documents

None.

9 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Workload & Caseload Analysis

Appendix 2 – Workload Pressures

Appendix 3 – Departmental Sickness Monitor

Appendix 4 – Ofsted Inspection 2014 Improvement Plan

Appendix 1:

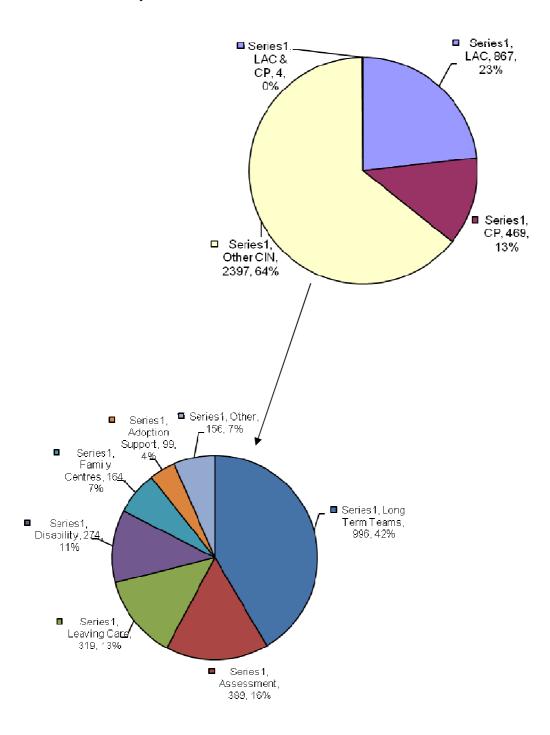
a) Workforce/ Workload Analysis

		31st Dec 2014	31st Mar 2015	30th June 2015	30th Sept 2015	31st Dec 2015
	Total number of Social Workers in post	191 FTEs	196 FTEs	192 FTEs	210 194 FTEs	208 192 FTEs
	Total number of Level 3 Social Workers	106 FTEs (56%)	105 FTEs (54%)	95 FTEs (49%)	104 93 FTEs (48%)	102 93 FTEs (48%)
Workforce Profile	Agency Social Workers as a proportion of total Social Workers	2.1%	4.1%	6.8%	3.6%	6.2%
	Total number of Community Resource Worker's (CRW's) in post	46 FTEs	45 FTEs	41 FTEs	49 44 FTEs	52 43 FTEs
	Agency CRW's as a proportion of total CRW's	2.2%	2.2%	2.4%	-	2.3%
	Average number of cases per FTE Social Worker	16.2 (20.4 in Long Term Teams)	14.2 (18.1 in Long Term Teams)	13.8 (16.2 in Long Term Teams)	13.1 (15.5 in Long Term Teams)	12.7 (15.4 in Long Term Teams)
	Average number of cases per FTE CRW	12.0	12.5	13.4	12.0	12.6
Workload	Average number of LAC cases (including cases in proceedings) per FTE LAC case holding worker	6.2 (14.8 for LAC teams)	6.6 (14.8 for LAC teams)	6.1 (14.4 for LAC teams)	6.0 (14.1 for LAC teams)	6.0 (14.1 for LAC teams)
	Average number of CP cases per FTE CP case holding worker	7.5	7.2	5.8	5.7	5.5
	Average number of cases in Public Law Care Proceedings per FTE PLCP case holding worker	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.2	2.4
	Percentage of LAC cases allocated to a Level 3 Social Worker	58% (500 cases)	55% (475 cases)	53% (446 cases)	52% (430 cases)	50% (406 cases)
Utilisation of Resources	Percentage of cases where a child has a Child Protection Plan allocated to a Level 3 Social Worker	53% (303 cases)	48% (238 cases)	47% (185 cases)	46% (173 cases)	35% (137 cases)
	Percentage of Public Law Proceedings Cases allocated to a Level 3 Social Worker	67% (84 cases)	64% (77 cases)	64% (70 cases)	59% (64 cases)	52% (68 cases)

b) Caseload Analysis

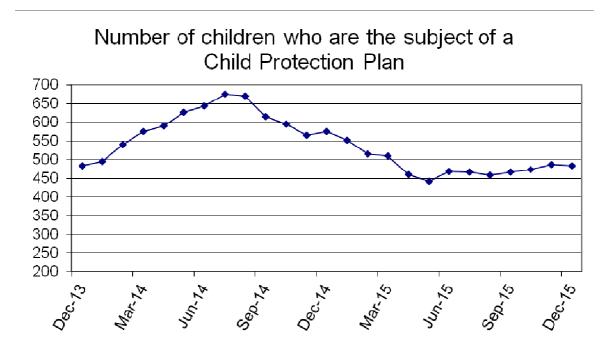
Active cases held by Social Workers and Community Resource Workers working in Care Management Teams at 31st December 2015.

Of the 3737 active cases held by Children's Social Care: 23% were looked after children (867), 13% were children who were the subject of a Child Protection Plan (469) and 64% were other Children in Need. There were an additional 4 children who were Looked After and also the subject of a Child Protection Plan.

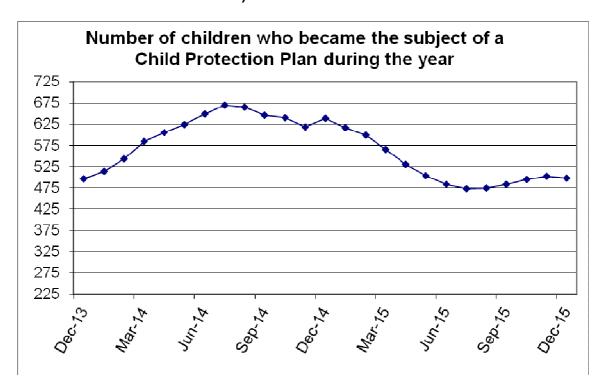


Appendix 2: Workload Pressures

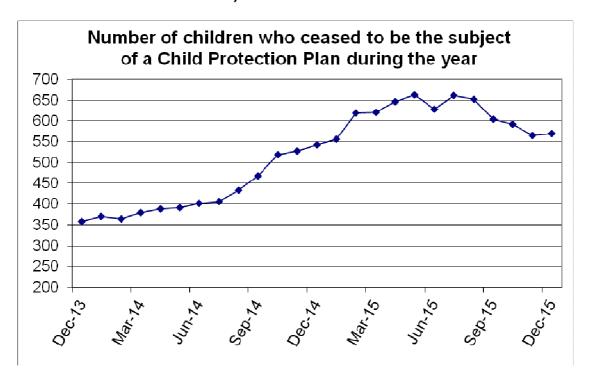
2.1 - Total number of children who are the subject of a Child Protection Plan (December 2013 to December 2015)



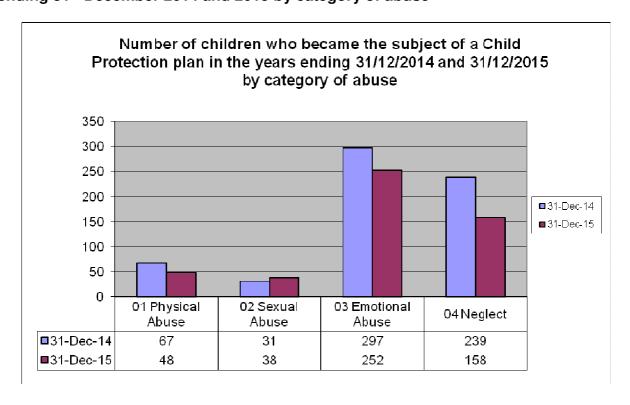
2.2— Children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan (December 2013 to December 2015)



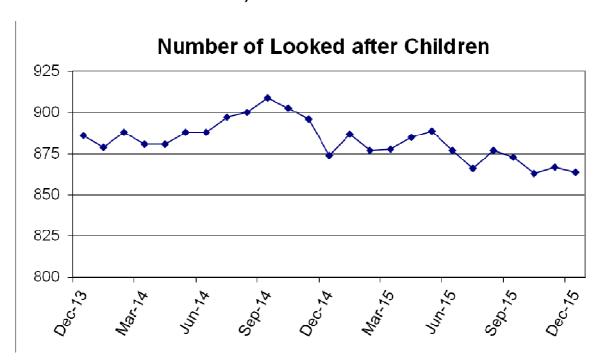
2.3 – Children ceasing to be the subject of a Child Protection Plan (December 2013 to December 2015)



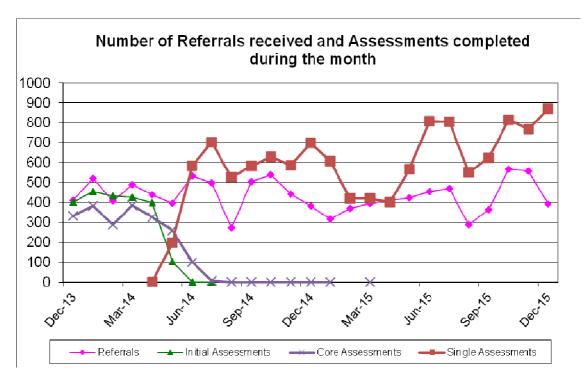
2.4 – Number of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan in the years ending 31st December 2014 and 2015 by category of abuse



2.5 – Number of Looked after Children (December 2013 to December 2015)



2.6 – Referral and Assessment Activity (December 2014 to December 2015)



Appendix 3: Departmental Sickness Monitoring Report October-December 2015

Dept/ Service	Section	Sub- Section(s)	Number of staff by end of December 2014	Average Number of Working days lost 1 July 2014 - end of September 2014	-	Number of staff by end of December 2015	Average number of working days lost 1 Oct 2015 - end December 2015	Performance compared with previous year Arrow up = improvement Arrow down = decline
Children's Specialist Services			885.00	4.54	_	859.73	5.76	
	Child Protection	Childrens Safeguarding Administration Reviewing Team	43.86	3.18	-	42.66	5.64	
	Safeguarding Children's Board		4.30	13.18	-	4.30	8.11	
	Social Work Services	Leaving care Teams Disability Team & Family Centres Looked After Children Springfield Management Integrated Assessment Team Rooley Management Keighley Management Childrens Specialist Services	396.73	3.61	-	303.61	5.36	
	Prevention/ Resources	Prevention & Family Support Teams Adoption & Fostering Residential Management Fostering Residential Management	482.20	1.78		436.11	6.49	
	Families First	Court Team Youth Offending Families First Community Resources	60.01	5.32		72.05	2.44	1

Area of Practice	Area for improvement	Ofsted Expectation	Required Outcome	Performance Measure	Progress points	Timescales
Social Work: Child Protection Strategy discussions	Social workers and their managers do not regularly hold strategy discussions with the police before starting to carry out a child protection investigation. In addition, where the police are not involved, the recording of the discussion is not sufficiently detailed.	Ensure that all strategy discussions include the police as a minimum standard. The outcome of the discussion and agreed actions must be clearly recorded in a child's case file.	Strategy meetings are timely, accurately recorded and always involve both the Police and Social Care.	Selective Case File Audit. Initial Child Protection Case Conference minutes	1. A dedicated Police Officer is allocated to the Integrated Assessment team. 2. Strategy discussions take place before a child protection investigation. 3. Written guidance to staff on the requirement to record this discussion in detail on the file.	(1) Completed 26.3.14 (2) Completed 3.3.14 (3) Completed 3.3.14
Child Protection Unit Initial Child Protection Case Conferences	In over two thirds of cases, there has been unacceptable delay of up to six weeks in holding initial child protection conferences.	Take actions to increase and sustain sufficient capacity in the child protection conference service to meet service demands. Ensure that initial child protection conferences are held in a timely way that minimises risks to children and meets statutory guidance.	The Safeguarding & Reviewing Unit provide timely case conferencing and reviewing. There is a Business Process Review which reaches its half way point 21.8.14. This will produce a more efficient streamlined service. The current number of conferences held on time is at 72.9% with capacity for further improvement.	CS_N15a: ICPC's held within 15 working days of the start of the S47 enquiries. CS_N15b: Average working days between start of S47 enquiries and ICPC. Additional checks are being made to ensure this indicator is being counted in the correct manner.	1. Agency staff in place to increase capacity for case conferencing. 2. Recruit two additional minute takers and Conference Chairs. 3. Complete business process review and implement improved minute taking and timetabling. 4. Work with partners through the Safeguarding Board and improved preparation for Case Conferences.	(1) Completed March 2014 (2) Recruitment completed September 2014 (3) 3 Jan 2015 4 Jan 2015
Protection Case	Where conferences have been delayed, managers decided that children should be visited by their social worker every week to help protect them. This has not happened in every case	Until improved performance in holding timely initial child protection conferences is demonstrated, ensure that all children have a robust plan, monitored by managers to minimise risk, and that they are seen at least weekly by their social worker.	Children whose ICPCC is delayed have a robust plan and are visited at least weekly by their Social Worker.	Selective Case File Audit CS_N15a: ICPC's held within 15 working days of the start of the S47 enquiries. CS_N15b: Average working days between start of S47 enquiries and ICPC.	Written practice guidance issued to all staff regarding the requirement. 2. Adherence to weekly visiting quality assured by Team Manager.	Completed April 2014
rofessionals and he role of the Local authority	When allegations are made that professionals may have harmed children, cases are not progressed quickly enough on all occasions. There are delays in progress and management oversight in some cases.	Ensure sufficient capacity within the service, so that allegations against professionals progress in a timely way and there is management oversight of all cases.	The Safeguarding & Reviewing Unit provide the LADO interventions and professional checks. Additional staff will increase capacity allowing additional oversight of cases. Processes for LADO work have been reviewed and finalised 28th July 2014.	Selective Case Audit around "Turn Around" time for progessional checks. Timeliness reports via ProBase to bench mark performance. Comparison timeliness against performance of regional partners.	Agency Staff in place to increase the capacity of the LADO service. 2. Written guidance given to staff on timeliness and management oversight on all case closured. 3. Recruit two additional staff for the child protection unit to undertake LADO work and conse conferencing.	(1) Completed March 2014 Completed April 2014 Completed Jan 2015
Social Work: Statutory Assessment	In a very small number of cases social workers did not see children promptly enough.	Ensure all children identified as requiring statutory assessment are visited swiftly following receipt of the referral which identifies the concern.	Children are promptly seen upon statutory assessments commencing received	Local PI measuring time from 'trigger' event to end of assessment. Periodic Case File Audit	Practice Guidance issued to all staff and Assessment Managers	Completed April 2014
Social Work: Children suffering neglect	A very small number of cases demonstrate delays in escalation for children who are experiencing chronic neglect and emotional abuse.	Social workers and their managers must decide to take stronger action more quickly in every case. ie: Where plans to reduce the impact of chronic neglect are not progressing sufficiently swiftly, ensure that assertive action is taken to escalate all such cases to a higher level of intervention.	Appropriate action is undertaken in situations of chronic neglect	Selective Case File Audit. Child Protection Co-ordinators to quality assure the court process	Practice guidance issued to all staff. Family Justice Review & revised Public Law Outline embedded, with Case Manager appointed to track and quality assure plans and feedback on any undue delay. 3. Neglect refresher training by the BSCB Sept-December 2014	(1) Completed July 2014 (2) In place (3) Completed by December
•	However, some staff in assessment teams report supervision is not always regular. The overall quality of supervision records need to better reflect challenge and to evidence reflective discussions.		Supervision is appropriately challenging, recorded and audited on a regular basis.	Selective Case File Audit	Mandatory refresher 'Reflective Supervison Training' delivered for all Child Protection Team Managers. 2. The Departments Supervison Policy is revised setting clear practice standards.	(1) Completed Sept-Decemble 2014 (2) Completed July 2014

Bradford Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) Improvement Plan

Private Fostering	There has been no formal oversight of private fostering (PF) arrangements or of children living out of area during this period.	Implement routine oversight of arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of privately fostered children, including work aimed at raising professional and public awareness of chldren who may be priviately fostered.		Data set: PF notifications, PF assessment, PF arrangements in place. Selective Challenge Panel completed and outcomes presented to Performance Sub-Group	Revised data set, including PF data approved bysub group 2. Regular reporting to inform BSCB challenge. 3. Challenge Panel to test inter-agency practice. 4. Revised promotional materials disseminated.	Completed; (1) Sept 2014 (2) Sept 2014 (3) Dec 2014 (4) June 2015
Multi-agency Data Set	Not all data and performance are monitored systematically and routineley. This means that BSCB is not always able to respond as quickly as it otherwise could. The development of a multi agency data set is ongoing	The BSCB should accelerate development of multi-agency data set and clearly record any challenge to areas of poor performance and the impact of the this challenge.	Revised multi-agency data set to be developed by Sept 2014. Working with other Yorks &Humber LSCB to explore the option of regional data set to assist benchmarking. Monitoring of challenge and impact to be better incorporated into BSCB minutes and reports.	Regular board scrutiny of data set and other performance information, challenge partners based on data set and follow through to impact	populated and reported to sub group & full Board 3. Demonstrate and record	To be completed; Oct 2014 Dec 2014 March 2015
Education Representation on Safeguarding Board	The absence of Head Teacher and FE College representation on the Board means that schools and colleges do not have sufficient opportunity to contribute to and influence the partnership at this level.	The BSCB should review the engagement of schools and FE colleges to ensure that they are fully represented on the Board.	Bradford Partnership currently seeking Head Teacher representation for full Board. Seeking single FE representative for Bradford, Shipley and Park Lane (Keighley) Colleges.	Representatives in place by October 2014 meeting of BSCB. More evidence of engagement of schools and FE colleges in safeguarding agenda.	Agree representatives with primary & secndary partnerships and FE Colleges. 2. Agree mechanisms for dissemination & feedback	Completed June 2014
Learning & Improvement Framework	The local learning and improvement framework is under-developed, and ongoing work will strengthen capacity to improve the co-ordination of this work.	The BSCB should complete the implementation of a comprehensive local learning and improvement framework.	New comprehensive Learning & Improvement Framework to be agreed and implemented.	New Learning & Improvement Framework (LIF) accepted by BSCB in June 2014. Implementation monitored via learning & Development Sub-Group. LIF to be reviewed by December 2015.	New LIF agreed by BSCB 2. Full implementation and review of LIF.	Completed June 2014 Completed by December 2015
Multi-Agency Training	Multi-agency training in the protection and care of children is effective and evaluated regularly for impact.	The BSCB should evaluate the impact of safeguarding training on the quality of frontline pratice and outcomes for children as part of a comprehensive training needs analysis.	Revised Learning & Development Strategy to include mechanisms and measures for training evaluation. Use of on-line evaluation tool to be piloted.	Participants evaluation of training. Evidence	Publish new Learning & Development Strategy. 2. Pilot on line evaluation tool. 3. Report to Learning & Development Sub group on new impact measures	Completed by February 2015