

Kirklees Children's Services

Improvement Plan refresh

Creating the conditions for success



Department
for Education



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL



Kirklees
COUNCIL

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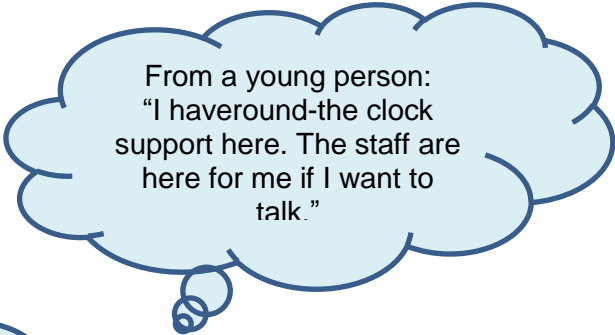
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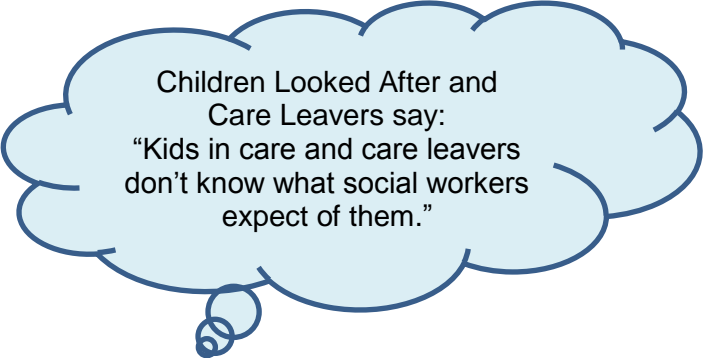
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Children Looked After and
Care Leavers say:
“Make sure you listen to
children and young people to
get their views.”



From a young person:
“I have round-the clock
support here. The staff are
here for me if I want to
talk.”



Children Looked After and
Care Leavers say:
“Kids in care and care leavers
don't know what social workers
expect of them.”

Foreword

Councillor Viv Kendrick

Our Improvement Partnership with Leeds City Council has been in place for over 12 months. During this time, progress has been made to address the failings raised by the 2016 inspection. We have completed the first stage of our improvements by responding to issues that required immediate and urgent action.

We have sought to improve our understanding of where things are not working across all the teams in Children's Social Care. We have used this learning to identify three crucial areas which underpin good social work practice. By focussing on these areas over the next 12 months we will see further improvements in keeping vulnerable children and young people safe. We call these 'our three obsessions'. They are Recording, Assessment and Planning.

Over the past year, the Children's Services Improvement Board has seen the improvements made across Children's Social Care and has heard first-hand the difference changes have made, not only to our staff but for young people as well. Listening to the voice of the child is embedded in the board's approach. Changes to management, staff and policies have provided stability, giving the service the time and space to work together better and to begin to build and embed better practice across all our work with children and families in Kirklees.

Investment in leadership, management and frontline staff is creating the conditions where good social work can grow. After a period of change there is now a permanent, settled senior team who work together promoting a shared vision and both a restorative culture and practice within the organisation.

There is still a great deal of work ahead; we are very realistic about the current position and we understand further improvements are needed to achieve the standards we expect for our work with children, young people and their families in order to achieve better outcomes for them.

Our work to deliver the strategic plan agreed with partners and the Department for Education (DfE) – the 10 point Improvement Plan - continues. The aim has been to create sustainable, strongly rooted change. Therefore shortcuts have not been taken. Given the position in 2016, we know this improvement journey will take time. This plan focuses on the next three years and reflects our current assessment of what we need to do. However, we recognise that we need to continually improve, learn and deal with emerging challenges to get things right for children and young people. In that spirit we will regularly revisit and check that we are having the impact we want and adjust our plans if needed.

The needs of children and young people run through everything we do; the way we work with partners is central to delivering better outcomes. We will continue to have conversations with partners and colleagues across the council on the values and principles that need to underpin our further improvement work. This plan has undergone a refresh to ensure it is relevant and focuses on the right priorities. This plan sets out the stages of improvement we will make to take us from where we are now to an embedded culture of practice where we, and all partner agencies, are consistently and confidently doing the right things for children and young people. Ensuring children get the best start in life is everyone's business and owned by all.

Councillor Viv Kendrick
Cabinet Member with Statutory Responsibility for Children's Services

Foreword

Eleanor Brazil

As the Commissioner appointed by the Secretary of State, I am pleased to endorse this refresh of Kirklees Children's Services Improvement Plan. I was appointed immediately after the Ofsted inspection in 2016 to help drive improvement.

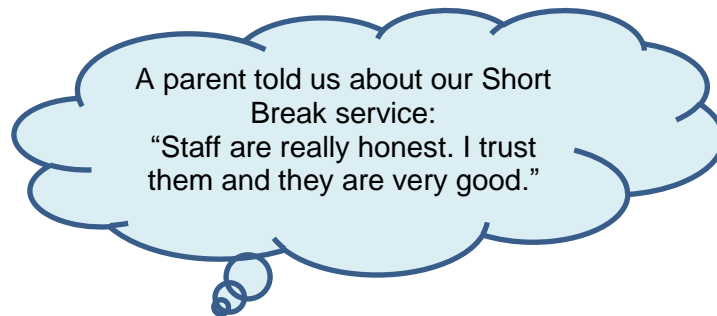
The first year was difficult, with too many changes in senior leadership, insufficient progress on recruitment and retention of good social work staff and managers, and a failure to address the key practice issues that were impacting on the quality of response for children and their families. This was evident in the feedback from the early Ofsted monitoring visits, which judged pace of improvement and progress to be too slow.

My recommendation to establish a formal partnership with Leeds to give Kirklees the support and capacity needed was agreed by the Minister for Children and Families, but it took time to put this in place. From July 2017 the Leeds DCS has also been the DCS in Kirklees and has led the delivery of the Improvement Plan.

As the lead member says in her foreword, since that time significant changes have taken place and we are now seeing more consistent and effective responses to children. I chair the Improvement Board and have seen real change in the quality of data, the knowledge about the service from good auditing, the improved morale of staff and the positive contributions from partner agencies. All of this is indicating real progress now, also seen by Ofsted. It is therefore timely to refresh the Improvement Plan, to reflect on what has been achieved, and what more is required.

Eleanor Brazil

Commissioner for Children's Social Care in Kirklees



Improvement journey

July 2017

July 2018

July 2019

July 2020

1. Responding

(12-month action plan)

Completing immediate and urgent actions

- Senior leadership in place as part of Partnership with Leeds City Council, Leeds DCS becomes DCS in Kirklees
- Improvement partnership endorsed by commissioner for Children's Social Care in Kirklees and DfE
- Improvement Partners seconded to Kirklees Council
- Assessment of underlying challenges and issues
- 10 Point Improvement Plan agreed with DfE and strategic partners
- Restorative Practice model launched

2. Strengthening

(Improvement Plan year two)

Designing and developing a stronger strategic approach

- Refresh Improvement Plan based on learning
- Ensure improvements are working and children are safe
- Manage risks as changes are made
- Strengthen underlying capacity, behaviours and capability
- Strengthen practice
- Strengthen performance management culture
- Ofsted monitoring visit
- Ofsted Inspection
- Begin planning transition of strategic oversight from Improvement Board to Kirklees Council and 'business as usual' corporate governance arrangements

3. Embedding and adapting

(Improvement Plan year three)

Delivering the approach and adapting it based on learning

- Refresh Improvement Plan based on learning and feedback
- Ensure improvements are working and children are safe
- Manage risks as changes are made
- Continue to strengthen underlying capacity and capability
- Ongoing review to check the planned outcomes are achieved

Our approach – how we are managing our improvement journey

The Improvement Programme agreed between Kirklees and Leeds recognises that whilst the child welfare system is complex, this does not mean the plan needs to be complicated. The plan is based on 10 priorities, with a plan on a page for each priority.

To ensure that the plan directly addresses the findings of our Ofsted inspection, actions are cross referenced to Ofsted recommendations, marked by an (O) for reference, and set out the aims, actions, the deliverables and how we will know whether we are making a difference.

In some areas of the plan we have identified the level of change anticipated – for example the reduction in the use of agency staff – but in other areas no numbers are identified – for example in relation to the safe and appropriate reduction in the numbers of looked after children.

This is to avoid the creation of ‘targets’ which replace outcomes for children and young people as the focus for interventions.

Keeping children safe (O1)

Embedding high quality social work practice to keep children safe is at the centre of our approach to improvement. The next phase of our journey focuses on strengthening our restorative approach to ensure we are ‘doing the simple things well’ with a continued focus on improving outcomes for children.

We will continue to use our Quality Assurance Framework and performance management systems to identify areas that need addressing.

This will help us to ensure that there is a clear line of sight from frontline practice to the Senior Leadership Team and Improvement Board, which we know is essential to our improvement journey and to keeping children safe.

Priority	Alignment to Ofsted inspection recommendations
1. Children Looked After	O18, O19,O20,O21 and O22
2. Care Leavers	O23, O24, O25 and O26
3. Early Support and Edge of Care	O17
4. Front Door	O12,O13 and O14
5. Workforce	O2
6. Practice	O9, O10, O15 and O16
7. Voice of the Child and Families	O4, O8, O10, O11 and O21
8. Leadership	Delivery of the Ofsted Recommendations
9. Partnership	Delivery of the Ofsted Recommendations
10. Performance and Quality Assurance	O3, O4, O5, O6, O7, O8, O14 and O27

Ofsted recommendations - Key 10 Point Improvement Plan actions delivered

- Strategic leadership for Children's Services in the interim and longer term improvement secured.
- DfE Improvement and Innovation fund secured. Priorities for investment agreed with implementation plan. (O17)
- Governance, process, multi-agency working and partnership at the front door (A & I -assessment and intervention) strengthened and improved. (O12,O13, O14)
- Restorative Practice social work model implemented, training for staff and partners completed.(O2)
- Multi-agency training for shared CIN and CP processes completed (O15)
- 'Doing Simple Things Well' practice training and development completed. (O9, O10, O15, O11, O26)
- Corporate Parenting Board Strengthened (O8)
- Workforce development programme in place (O2)
- New Performance and Quality Assurance framework in place, weekly reports on key areas of activity or issues such as caseloads, with detailed 'drill-down' information by team. Weekly reports are supplemented by evaluative monthly reports. (O4, O5, O6,)
- Multi-agency and collaborative oversight, assurance and challenge mechanisms in place through the KSCB.
- Successful recruitment campaign, substantive posts recruited across all levels, reduction of agency staff targets achieved.
- Staff engagement and Leadership sessions. As the senior team has become established, it has developed collaborative learning events on key issues to reflect on progress and practice and to develop shared improvement plans.(O2)
- Partnership led development of the Early Support Strategy; collaborative approach to early support, shared responsibility and vision (O17)
- Replacement IT system rollout underway (O7,O10)

Impact

We have focused on creating 'the conditions for success for social workers. This approach is making a significant difference in our ability to recruit and retain high quality staff, Kirklees is cited as an employer of choice for new starters joining our social work teams – a very different picture to where the council was in 2016-2017. Quality assurance has been strengthened through additional Child Protection Chairs and Independent Reviewing Officers. Frontline teams have benefitted from continued recruitment, with over 40 ASYEs joining the organisation and, importantly, the vital new addition of 12 new Advanced Practitioners that will lead practice improvement and mentor frontline workers.

Multi-agency working in the front door has improved significantly, greater assurance and better decision making has led to a sustained reduction in the contact to referral rate and subsequently on work flowing into the Assessment & Intervention teams. Investment in additional front line social workers has led to a reduction in caseloads. After a period of increased staff turnover late in 2017, caseloads have now entered a sustained path of improvement - in some teams a reduction of over 18% since the beginning of the year can be seen. Overall caseloads are now broadly in line with national and statistical neighbour benchmarks.

In frontline practice, restorative approaches are beginning to have more influence on everyday working. Staff are confident, passionate and know their children well. This was reflected in the July 2018 Ofsted monitoring visit. Staff reported to inspectors improved morale and increased trust in leadership. These improvements are mirrored in the corporate Staff Satisfaction Survey results, where the response rate from staff in Child Protection and Family Support and Early Support teams was nearly twice that of the overall council response. Results show huge improvements from the last survey in 2016, most notably around staff empowerment. The number of respondents who reported feeling encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things has jumped from 31% to 71% in 18 months.

For children, young people and their families, decision making and timeliness is much improved. We are better at working with children and families to ensure their thoughts, views and wishes are reflected in planning and taken into account. Stability of workforce has reduced the number of changes to social workers, children are able to build trusting relationships with their social worker.

Part 2: Ensuring delivery

Governance – ‘Working with’

Governance of the improvement programme has strong leadership and assurance mechanisms in place.

Support from the chief executive, elected members, partners and senior leaders ensures focus, drive and pace. The programme also has strong cross-party support, with clear commitment from all group leaders to support the improvement process.

Improvement Board

The Improvement Board is the key partnership body with ownership of the Improvement Plan and responsibility for its delivery. It is made up of strategic representation from partner agencies, working to agreed terms of reference.

The Improvement Board is chaired by the Children’s Commissioner who provides updates on progress to the Department for Education.

Children’s Scrutiny Panel

Undertakes the scrutiny of all Children and Families Services in Kirklees including monitoring and challenging the progress and implementation of the Improvement Plan.

Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board

Co-ordinates safeguarding across different

agencies and promotes the welfare of children in Kirklees

Corporate Parenting Board

Statutory responsibility to ensure looked after children and young people grow up having the same opportunities as their peers and to support children leaving care to live independent lives.

Partnership Governance Board

Responsible for strategic oversight of partnership arrangements between Leeds City Council and Kirklees Council including the effectiveness of partnership arrangements and monitoring the delivery of the improvement programme

Monitoring Performance and Quality

Using data and intelligence to monitor and improve performance and quality of practice will be key to the success of our improvement journey, and is a vital part of new ways of working across the council in the future.

Progress against the Improvement Plan will be reported to the Children’s Improvement Board. Reporting will include but not be limited to:

- A performance report including progress against key indicators linked to the Improvement Plan

- Audit activity including ‘deep dive’ quality audits to test quality assurance process and quality of practice
- audit areas of practice where performance measures have dipped to understand and respond as appropriate

Making a difference to children and families

Our approach is firmly focused on improving outcomes for children and families.

In addition to data and intelligence which shows how we are performing against key indicators, we are using Outcome Based Accountability to demonstrate the difference our improvements make to the lives of children and their families. Our 10 Priorities’ updates to the Improvement Board, will show through case studies and feedback from children, their families and partners the positive impact of changes we are making.

Glossary

Below is a list which provides short explanations of all the acronyms and professional terms in this plan.

Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)

The assessed and supported year in employment is a programme that gives newly qualified social workers extra support during their first year of employment. The programme aims to help them develop their skills, knowledge and professional confidence.

The ASYE programme for social workers who work with children and families is based on the statement of knowledge and skills for child and family social work.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Kirklees CAMHS promotes emotional well-being and delivers preventative services and treatment to children and young people with mental health problems.

Corporate Parenting Board (CPB)

The Corporate Parenting Board co-ordinates and oversees the work undertaken with looked after children in Kirklees to make sure that they are in appropriate placements and receive the same opportunities as their peers.

Daily Risk Assessment Multi-Agency Meeting (DRAMM)

A meeting to discuss medium and high risk domestic violence cases held within the Front Door.

Higher Education Insight partners (HEI)

This a social work teaching partnership between four local authorities and two universities in West and North Yorkshire.

The partnership is led by social work senior managers within local authorities. It brings together Principal Social Workers, workforce development leads, social work academics and researchers, frontline practitioners and young people and adults who have experienced social care.

Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)

Independent Reviewing Officers are experienced social work managers whose duty is to ensure the care plans for children in care are legally compliant and in the child's best interest. All local authorities have a duty to appoint an IRO to every child in care or child who is subject to a Child Protection Plan. IROs are required to oversee the child's care plan and ensure everyone contributing to the care plan fulfils their legal obligations to the child.

Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB)

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children requires effective co-ordination in every local area. It is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in each local area will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do.

Liquidlogic (LL)

Liquidlogic Children's Social Care System has been specifically developed by and for practitioners to allow case management and record keeping for children in need, looked after children, adoption

and child protection cases, as quickly and simply as possible.

Multisystemic Therapy Team (MST)

MST is an intensive family and community based intervention for children and young people, where young people are at risk of out-of-home placement in either care or custody due to their offending or having severe behaviour problems.

Duty and Advice Front Door (D&A)

Duty and Advice is a team of professionals including Children's Services social workers, police, Early Support, health and education which responds to initial enquiries regarding children and young people in Kirklees

Restorative Practice (RP)

This is the agreed model of practice in Kirklees. It involves providing high support and high challenge whilst working alongside people; doing with and not to.

Part 3: 10 Point Improvement Plan

Summary Plans

In this section you will find high level summary plans for each of the 10 improvement priorities

For each priority there is:

- A one-page summary setting out what actions we have delivered and where they relate to the Ofsted recommendations, what difference it has made and how we plan to monitor as part of 'business as usual'
- A one-page summary that explains why we are focused on the issue, what we plan to achieve, how we will do it, and how we will know when the changes we've made are working
- A table of the high level actions to be completed, with owners and timeframes*

(* timeframes use standard financial quarters, starting at Q3 2018/19 as it is September at the time of publication)

Note that for each of the 10 areas there is more detail contained in supporting operational project plans.

Priority 1: Children Looked After

Strategic Responsibility: Steve Comb – Head of Corporate Parenting; Julie Bragg - Acting Head of Children Looked After

This is the first priority of our plan because Children Looked After is everyone's shared responsibility as 'Corporate Parents'. Ofsted highlighted areas where our care needs to improve, from the way that legal proceedings are managed when concerns become serious to the quality of care planning to the way we organise placements for our Children Looked After.

Key improvement actions delivered

- Improved governance and legal processes— Permanence, Gateway and Adoption Decision Making panels in place, strengthened legal case manager process in place **(O18,O22)**
- Placement practice and protocols reviewed and improved.
- Improved quality of and effectiveness of residential homes by reduction in occupancy in residential homes and new statement of purpose agreed with Ofsted
- All placements with parents' orders reviewed plans to discharge where safe and appropriate executed. **(O19)**
- Staff have undertaken Restorative Practice training
- Children Looked After have access to an independent visitor when they need one **(O21)**
- Management capacity and oversight improved through recruitment to Head of Service and Service Manager posts
- Oversight and challenge of the Corporate Parenting Board improved through provision of improved performance data. Children's views influence the focus and decision making of the board **(O8)**
- Roles of Children in Care Council and Care Leavers' Forum developed and promoted.

What difference has it made?

The number of children in care is safely reducing, The Legal Gateway Permanence Panel continues to support consistency in decision making and planning around placement moves. Placement moves are also decreasing, the placement support team have implemented innovative solutions to support several placements. We have reinstated disruption meetings to identify when and what support placements require. This mean we have been able to work with families and foster carers early on to prevent placement breakdown. **(O22)**

Children and young people experience improved stability through the reduction in changes to social workers. The Improvement Board heard the impact multiple changes of social worker has on emotional health and wellbeing from care experienced young people. Improvements are resulting in social workers knowing their children well and understanding what is important to their children. Trusting relationships are being seen through the quality of work such as Life Story Books

Inspections outcomes for three mainstream residential homes inspected by Ofsted "Good Overall". Residential mainstream homes are now operating at occupancy of four beds rather than the previous six. Children say: "I have got round-the-clock support here. The staff are here for me if I want to talk".

Children with Disabilities residential homes are rated Outstanding or Good.

Performance will be kept in view through

Children Looked After weekly and monthly performance reporting

A weekly External Placement Review Panel with multi-agency clinical input is in place to provide better oversight of children who are not placed in council provision

Ofsted monitoring visits

Thematic audits

Children's Scrutiny Board reporting

Corporate Parenting Board

CQC inspections.

Business meetings with foster carers

Quality assurance role in placement teams.

Priority 1: Children Looked After

What we are aiming for:

- Plans for care and permanency will be SMART (O1, O22).
- Children are placed in safe, appropriate family type settings as close to their existing communities as possible (O20)
- Commissioned services will be quality assured and will evidence value for money and compliance with the council's financial and contract procedural regulations
- Improve the range, quality and cost-effectiveness of placements for Children Looked After including short breaks and respite provision for children with disabilities. (O19,O20)
- Compliance with statutory guidance on children who go missing. We will have an effective system in place to ensure children who go missing from care receive an independent return interview
- Improved support for returning home safely
- Children who are looked after feel safe and confident about their future, they are supported to achieve their goals and have the same opportunities to enjoy leisure and cultural activities as any other child





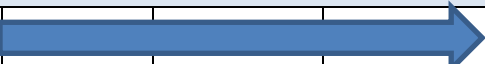



How we will do this:

- Staff will undertake training on strengthening practice with focus on recording, assessment and planning
- Production of Corporate Parenting Strategy, setting the strategic direction for Children Looked after in Kirklees
- Support Corporate Parent Board to act as a critical friend, through provision of LGA Corporate Parent training for all board members and newly elected councillors
- We will increase the number of foster carers by prioritising recruitment and retention, ensuring our approach encourages applicants with protected characteristic such as black, Asian minority ethnics (O20)
- Review external and out of area placements, plan and move children back into area only where this would achieve the best outcome for the child (O19)
- Agree and implement Sufficiency Strategy actions and work with the Specialist Accommodation project to plan and implement actions ensuring there are the right type of placements available locally at the right time for the right children (O20)
- Develop and implement quality assurance and contract management process for commissioned services such as spot purchases including provision of bank staff that is compliant with the councils financial and contract procedure rules
- Identify and review commissioned services to ensure arrangements comply with the council's contract and financial procedure rules, and that adequate contract management/quality checks are in place. Undertake remedial action such as competitive procurement exercises where necessary
- Develop and implement a reunification strategy to support safe and successful return to family or kinship carers
- Identify and implement actions to improve timeliness of return interviews including production of regular reporting to highlight themes to address

How we will know we are succeeding:

- Number of Children Looked After 0-17 including those with disability and/or additional needs. Good performance will show this reducing
- Proportion of children placed outside Kirklees due to lack of suitable placements. Good performance will show this decreasing
- Proportion of children placed with parents on a care order. Good performance will show this decreasing
- Independent return interviews for Children Looked After will be undertaken within 72 hours. Good performance will show this increasing
- Placement costs reduced.
- There is a reduction in the number of children who go missing
- Reduction in the number of repeat missing episodes.
- Reduction in placement moves.

PRIORITY 1 – CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER

What	Lead	Timeframe			
		Q3 18/19	Q4 18/19	Q1 19/20	Q2 19/20
Sufficiency Strategy					
Deliver actions needed to increase sufficiency, including the local offer for foster carers, reviews and action plans for internal and external fostering, residential & PWP	Steve Comb Tom Brailsford				
Fostering					
Undertake action planning, then deliver actions to improve the recruitment and retention of foster carers.	Steve Comb				
Commissioned Services					
Complete actions to identify and review commissioned services to ensure arrangements comply with the council's contract and financial procedure rules, and that quality assurance procedures are in place.	Laura Counce Matthew Bardon				
Looked After Children Missing process					
Review the missing process for Looked After Children, identify and implement actions to improve the timeliness of return interviews including production of regular reporting that highlights common themes to address.	Ophelia Rix KSCB				
Special Guardianship Orders					
Review and update the Kirklees Special Guardianship Order policy.	Julie Bragg				
Corporate Parenting Board					
Provide LGA Corporate Parent training to all board members and newly elected councillors	Steve Comb				
Produce a Corporate Parenting strategy	Tina Cooper				
Reunification Strategy					
Develop and implement a reunification strategy	Steve Comb				

Priority 2: Care Leavers

Strategic Responsibility: Julie Bragg – Acting Head of Children Looked After

Most young people are supported by their parents well into their twenties, so we need to consider how together as a partnership we can provide the same or better support for Care Leavers who face more challenges than most young people in their transition to adulthood.

As the basis of all support, we need to make sure we have the best personal advisors for all Care Leavers, and that they together agree a good clear plan to make a success of adulthood. In addition we need to make sure there is better help in place for those who need extra support with their mental health, and to support all Care Leavers into learning and work.

Key improvement actions delivered

- Pathway Plans assessed and audited for quality
- Management capacity and oversight improved through recruitment to Service Manager post
- Children in Care Council and Care Leavers forum strengthened.(O8)
- Professional development pathway for Personal Advisors agreed
- No 11 - A safe, one-stop place for Care Leavers to access support and services from the Leaving Care team and partner agencies (O23, O24, O25)
- Keep In Touch for Care Leavers safeguarding protocol in place
- Health Partners have invested in provision for the most vulnerable groups to provide support and interventions that are flexible and meet the needs of looked after children- those at risk of experiencing Child Sexual Exploitation and those in the Youth Offending Team system. There is multi-agency team comprising of a psychotherapist, psychologist and emotional health and wellbeing practitioner is embedded with our Children's Social Care Team. (O25)

What difference has it made?

- Themes and areas to focus improvement on identified - making plans SMART, Assessment, Planning and Recording and acting on the voice of the child
- Putting the voice of the child at the centre of everyday practice is resulting in it being better heard, Representative of Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum attend Corporate Parenting Board. They have influenced housing allocation policy, resulting in the ability to get tenancies in areas they consider more suitable, instead of estates with high deprivation and crime where they are more likely to be exposed to risk (O8)
- The innovation of No.11 has been recognised by the DfE. Through a partner approach Care Leavers have access to immediate/crisis support via a duty system including washing facilities and food. Improved access to a variety of support via partner agencies including: (O23)
 - Housing
 - Mental health support (O25)
 - Sexual health support
 - Substance misuse support
 - Benefits advice
 - Access to support and advice for young people post-21
 - Access to careers advice (O24)
- A wider group of vulnerable young people are having their needs met than was originally envisaged. Work is being undertaken with children in need as well as looked after children. The waiting time standard for vulnerable groups is consistently being met by their having treatment provided within 28 days (O25)

Performance will be kept in view through

- Thematic audits and audit reporting
- Monthly reporting – percentage of LAC who received a CAMHS intervention/assessment within 28 days. Good performance will show a decrease
- Corporate Parenting Board
- Children's Scrutiny Panel
- Health indicators
- Economic indicators
- Housing allocation reporting

Priority 2: Care leavers

What we are aiming for:





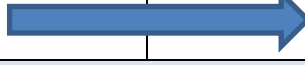

- An inclusive service where Care Leavers feel safe and confident about their future and are fully supported to achieve to the best of their abilities (O23)
- Care Leavers including children with disabilities experiences when transitioning and moving into independent living are improved (O23)
- Wellbeing and mental health needs for Care Leavers are recognised and support to access services is improved (O25)
- All Care Leavers (except those with exceptional circumstances) are in learning or work, or have a clear, well-resourced plan to help them into learning or employment (O24)

How we will do this:

- We will engage with care experienced young people to inform the local offer to ensure it is fit for purpose and meaningful. We will agree and communicate our local offer for Care Leavers
- All Care Leavers will have a personal advisor allocated from their 17th birthday (O23)
- All Care Leavers work with their own personal advisor to agree a high quality Pathway Plan that includes practical support and skills, takes into account and reflects their needs, views and goals, as well as accommodation and employment (O26)
- We will co-produce with Adults Services an improved transition pathway for disabled children. The current pathway will be reviewed with actions to improve identified and implemented
- Staff will undertake training on strengthening practice with focus on recording, assessment and planning to ensure the quality of pathway plans underpin high quality support packages (O26)
- Implement training and support programme for personal advisors. (O23)
- Trial use of IROs to monitor Pathway Plans in first year post care for those young people with additional needs (O26)
- Work with local colleges, schools and employers to agree additional support and opportunities for Care Leavers not in education or work. (O24)

How we will know we are succeeding:

- Number of Care Leavers with their own personal advisors. Good performance will show this increasing
- Proportion of Care Leavers involved in agreeing Pathway Plans – audits will show Care Leavers are involved in agreeing up to date, high quality Pathway Plans; their voice is heard and acted on. Good performance will show the proportion increasing and quality improving
- Children's health outcomes are improving across a range of measures, including both physical and emotional health and wellbeing
- Care leavers receive a CAMHS intervention/assessment within 28 days
- Increase in the proportion of Care Leavers in learning or work
- Keep in Touch figures

PRIORITY 2 – Care Leavers					
What	Lead	Timeframe			
		Q3 18/19	Q4 18/19	Q1 19/20	Q2 19/20
Care Leavers Local Offer					
Complete actions within agreed plan to finalise and launch the local offer for Care Leavers to be known locally as “Our commitment to Care Leavers”	Julie Bragg				
Continuing work with key stakeholders and partners to enhance the current offer					
Care Leavers Not in Education Employment or Training					
Undertake action planning, then deliver actions to improve the outcomes for Care Leavers and to increase the number that are ready to engage in or are in education, employment or training	Julie Bragg				
Trial use of IROs to monitor Pathway Plans in first year post care					
Identify the possible demand and level of interest in trialling the use of IROs to monitor pathway plans post 18. Review of cost and current service capacity to be undertaken.	Ophelia Rix				
Development of ‘No 11’ for Care Leavers in North Kirklees					
Produce an action plan for development and opening of space for Care Leavers in North Kirklees	Julie Bragg				
Support for Care Leavers who become parents					
Undertake action planning, then deliver actions to improve the support for Care Leavers who become parents.	Julie Bragg				

Priority 3: Early Support

Strategic Responsibility: Michelle Attmere – Head of Early Support

Early Support for children and families is more effective and less expensive than intervening when problems become entrenched. Even if Early Support cannot stop problems escalating, targeted and evidence based interventions for those at most risk can still make a difference and reduce the need for the high costs of social care involvement and taking children into care. These kinds of services are better for children and families but are also important to ensure that the local safeguarding system is sustainable.

Key improvement actions delivered

- Improvement and Innovation Fund for Kirklees created by the Department for Education (DfE) to invest and adapt Innovation Programme initiatives for edge of care and early support created by DfE (O17)
- Innovation fund implementation plan agreed
 - Multi Systemic Therapy (MST) Team
 - Family Group Conferencing (FGC)
 - Family Mental Health Service (FMHS)
- MST Information and engagement sessions held. Recruitment to posts underway.
- Community hubs and support in place
- Partnership engagement and events -Early Support Strategy agreed.
- Early Support roles and functions reviewed, Learning and Development Pathway agreed and launched
- Early Support team manager consolidated in duty and advice/front door
- Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board Decisions framework agreed

What difference has it made?

- FGC - The service has expanded from 3 to 12 posts which will enable up to 320 conferences to be facilitated per year. These voluntary meetings help families find their own solutions to problems
- FMHS -Team Manager and Stronger Families consultants are in post, Senior Practitioners will be in place shortly. Recruitment to additional posts has increased capacity to deliver services to families in Kirklees
- The 'working with' approach to developing the Early Support Strategy has strengthened partnership working; agreed values and principles have been created with the shared understanding that Early Support is not a single council service but is everyone's responsibility. Based on the Thrive model, an effective wrap around service for families is in place to get support when they need it without having to go to multiple agencies, improving co-ordination of support and the experience of families
- Collaborative conversations are developing in the hubs. Referrals to the front door are no longer the immediate response. Instead schools, social care, health and other partners are working together to plan and agree ways forward. In turn, this approach is reducing the number of referrals at the front door
- Family Support Service established providing additional capacity and accessibility through locality working.
- Shared understanding and principles of practice ensuring:
 - Cases are appropriately dealt with at an early stage
 - Unnecessary escalation to statutory services is avoided
 - Cases are de-escalated safely and appropriately

Performance will be kept in view through

- Monitoring reports to DfE
- Development of shared Outcome Based Accountability measures across the partnership

Priority 3: Early Support

What we are aiming for:

- To rebalance and strengthen the safeguarding system through developing better Early Support and preventative services, delivering collectively on shared agendas across health, education and social care (O17)
- To reduce pressures on statutory social work services through improved Early Support and community support
- An effective partnership approach to delivering Early Support across the district based on shared ownership, understanding, principles and values
- To improve the quality of frontline practice and develop a more relational model of support
- To strengthen community level partnership working around community and locality hubs which will include support to disabled children and their families
- An outcome based commissioning culture that uses evidence to inform service improvement






How we will do this:

- Strengthen our 'working with' approach to improve community Early Support arrangements, agree shared local action plans with partner agencies. Together we will develop a hub framework and a children's centre core offer through a unified not uniform approach
- Audit quality and impact of Early Support practice, agree and implement a development programme for frontline staff
- Implement action plan to deliver DfE Innovation Funded projects (O17)
- Develop with partners and implement an Early Support assessment that is relationship centred to make sure the right support at the right time is provided
- Agree and implement an Early Support service organisation development plan
- Research Early Support best practice using evidence to support analysis of district-wide Early Support and intervention activity. Work with the partnership including Integrated Local Partnerships - Community Plus and VCSE-Communities Kirklees Youth Alliance to understand impact on outcomes for children, young people and families of current offer. Put plans in place to commission evidence based interventions where gaps emerge. Agree and implement decommissioning processes if applicable
- Engage with relevant partners – KNH, health, police, Community Plus, VCSE etc - to understand Early Support and diversionary activities available, co-produce a marketing/communication strategy and implementation plan

How we will know we are succeeding:

- Number of CiN, CP or LAC good performance will show this decreasing.
- Proportion of newly configured teams providing effective Early Support. Good performance will show this increasing
- Number of children successfully supported to stay safely at home through MST interventions
- Number of cases where early intervention has prevented a social work intervention or child becoming looked after
- Proportion of local partners reporting high levels of confidence with locality Early Support services
- Proportion of local partners reporting high levels of satisfaction with locality Early Support services.
- Number of repeat referrals to Early Support decreases
- Number of repeat referrals to Front Door decreases

PRIORITY 3 – Early Support

What	Lead	Timeframe			
		Q3 18/19	Q4 18/19	Q1 19/20	Q2 19/20
Early Support Partnership Strategy					
Work with partner organisations to launch and embed the Early Support strategy across the authority.	Michelle Attmere				
Review of Early Support Assessment					
Consultation with partner agencies on current assessment form and referral process. Development and implementation of action plan following consultation to ensure that there is a fit for purpose process in place.	Michelle Attmere				
Implementation of DfE funded services					
Complete recruitment process and implementation of MST team and Mental Health in Families Team. Ensure systems are in place to monitor and measure impact of these services.	Elaine McShane Jo-Anne Sanders Michelle Attmere				
Children's centre core offer					
Development and delivery of actions to implement the children's centre core offer.	Michelle Attmere				
Early Support Launch					
Plan and deliver launch of the Kirklees Early Support offer across the partnership	Michelle Attmere				

Priority 4: Front Door

Strategic Responsibility: Charlotte Jackson – Head of Assessment and Intervention; Ian Mottershaw - Detective Chief Inspector, Kirklees Safeguarding, West Yorkshire Police

The 'Front Door' for social work services plays a crucial role in the safeguarding system in Kirklees – as the place where local people and services can access robust and well-informed advice, support and decision-making from social work professionals. Getting this right is vital for ensuring that every child gets the right support and protection at the right time, and getting this wrong can lead to both delayed help for children and unsustainable pressures for local agencies and the social work service, leading to a cycle of growing pressure and weakening practice.

Key improvement actions delivered

- Substantive senior and operational leadership in place
- Multi-agency Strategic Duty and Advice Board and Duty and Advice Operational Groups in place
- Multi-agency Assessment and Intervention improvement plan agreed and implemented covering leadership, staffing, professional development and support, decision-making and 'thresholds' (O12, O14)
- Multi-agency review of domestic violence procedures and actions – Operation Encompass implemented. (O13)
- Multi-agency plan for improving consistency and quality of input to initial child protection strategy meetings agreed and implemented. Additionally in Duty and Advice, minute and note taking training has been provided to the relevant staff in order to improve the quality of strategy meetings and plans (O14)
- Review and quality assurance processes in place monitoring decision making in the Front Door (O5)

What difference has it made?

- Stability, capacity and clear processes have led to a sustained reduction in caseloads Assessment and Intervention caseloads have reduced by 18% since January 2018
- Restorative training, support and clear agreed processes have given the team the space and opportunity to grow confidence in decision making. All staff have received training
- Working with partners to change perceptions has led to a shared understanding of the Front Door's purpose. There is a sustained reduction in the contact to referral rate. This means work coming through the Front Door and subsequently into Assessment and Intervention has decreased; contributing to reducing caseloads, and increased timeliness and quality of practice
- Multi-agency weekly referral meetings are providing assurance that improved decision making is ensuring children are receiving the right level of service by the relevant agency. Cases are appropriately escalated where it is the right action to take (O12)
- Partners welcome their involvement and now believe their skills, experience and perceptions are being appreciated. This collective participation has provided some improved ownership of the front door through the partnership though it is still regarded as the property of Social Care (O14)
- The presence of the DRAMM has provided an opportunity to assess Domestic Abuse cases where children are linked in a timely and effective manner ensuring correct action is undertaken. Police have located a Missing Person Coordinator with the Social Care Missing Team to improve information sharing (O12, O13)

Performance will be kept in view through

- Weekly referral meetings,
- Daily meetings
- Weekly and monthly performance reporting
- Case and thematic audits

Priority 4: Front Door

What we are aiming for:




- Greater collective ownership, consistency and accountability of the Front Door; strengthening and embedding partnership working, processes and governance (O12, O14)
- An environment that encourages a culture of challenge across the partnership, where appropriate, and healthy dialogue is welcomed
- Response to risk is appropriate and consistent at all times
- To rebalance the proportion of referrals and assessments leading to no further action
- Planning and actions from child protection strategy meetings are in line with National Good Practice guidelines
- To continue to strengthen local multi-agency working for children and families affected by domestic violence, CSE, CCE and missing (O13)

How we will do this:

- Work with wider community based staff and agencies e.g. Housing who as part of their role and interactions are likely to encounter families, children and young people who may be at risk of significant harm to ensure there is understanding of statutory duties, the Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board decisions framework and compliance with the agreed Front Door process and procedures
- Review, consult, agree and publish the eligibility criteria for receiving a service from the Children's Disability Service giving consideration to adopting the Child Health and Disability (CHAD) model
- Bring in line Children's Disability Service referrals with the Duty & Advice process
- Review practice, process and roles in the Emergency Duty Service to ensure risk is appropriately identified and managed and the service is effective and fit for purpose, aligning with wider service and corporate Front Door policies.
- Align missing and vulnerability resources to the Front Door
- Staff will undertake training on strengthening practice with focus on recording, assessment and planning (O9)

How we will know we are succeeding:

- Number of contacts and referrals to Front Door are reduced
- Proportion of referrals safely closed with No Further Action or closed from assessment are reduced
- Review and audit show strong and improving decision-making practice
- Children with a Child Protection Plan reduced
- 24hr decision making on social care referrals
- Proportion of initial Child Protection Conferences within 15 working days.

PRIORITY 4 – Front Door					
What	Lead	Timeframe			
		Q3 18/19	Q4 18/19	Q1 19/20	Q2 19/20
Emergency Duty Service					
Review and redesign the Emergency Duty Service	Stefan Chapleo Paul Harris				
Align missing and vulnerability resources to the Front Door					
Risk & Vulnerability team members to be located within Front Door	Ophelia Rix Sara Miles	Complete			
Children’s Disability Service					
Review, consult, agree and publish the eligibility criteria for receiving a service from the Children’s Disability Service	Christine Bennett				
Children’s Disability Service					
Alignment of Children’s Disability Service referrals with Duty & Advice process	Christine Bennett				

Priority 5: Workforce

Strategic Responsibility: Ophelia Rix – Head of Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Principal Social Worker; Paul Harris – Programme Manager

Ofsted have observed the child focus and commitment of frontline staff. These values, and our Children's Services workforce, are vital to our improvement plans. We need to create the conditions for success – putting in place the right respect, support, training and development that staff need and deserve.

Key improvement actions delivered

- Capacity and sustainability of workforce addressed through revision of leadership structure and recruitment to permanent roles across the service from strategic to frontline roles. Full complement of staff across CP & FS in place by Sept 2018 including investment in non-caseholding Advanced Practitioners to support learning and development of AYSEs. Targets for reduction in use of Agency staff met ahead of plan
- Children with Disability Service aligned under Family Support and Child Protection directorate
- Career development framework developed and implemented in consultation with staff and unions (O2)
- Leadership Development monthly sessions implemented.
- Refreshed Learning & Development pathways for social workers and Early Support staff launched (O2)
- Regular staff engagement sessions -Support for staff and working conditions reviewed and issues addressed.(O2)
- Teaching Partnership in place with HEI partners
- Social Work Health Check undertaken
- Induction, supervision and appraisal process refreshed and implemented (O2)

What difference has it made?

- There is a stable leadership team in place whose consistency of approach to improvement, communications and expectations of social work has provided clarity and high support to the workforce. Staff have said through inspection monitoring visits, the Corporate Staff Satisfaction Survey and the Social Work Health Check that management, support and training has improved significantly
- Staff turnover has reduced. Recruitment of permanent staff has improved quality and consistency of practice due the reduction in use and turnover of agency staff. By September 2018 we will have recruited to all posts across the service. Children and families are able to build better relationships with social workers as changes to social workers has reduced
- Noted by Ofsted, morale, confidence and job satisfaction of staff have improved. Feedback from the staff focus group has said “going forward we have an even better direction of nurturing and retaining staff and people have a clear understanding of the pathways for progression. There is a good balance of learning, development and progression for the right reasons”
- Caseloads have reduced across the service. Protected time allows staff to keep case records updated in a timely manner
- Practice Education Consultants have supported better placement learning for students and improved standards of Practice Education to support the students during placements
- An increased number of placements and an increased number of newly qualified staff applying for social work posts
- Access to a range of masterclasses and other CPD programmes through our partner universities – Huddersfield and York
- High Calibre professional development for newly qualified social workers
- Strong partnership working and a more structured approach to development of a wide range of national social work initiatives

Performance will be kept in view through

- Monthly and weekly performance reporting on caseloads
- Annual temperature check via corporate staff satisfaction survey and annual social work health check
- Supervisions and appraisals
- Staff turnover and sickness levels
- Ongoing dialogue with trade unions
- Staff engagement sessions and workshops
- Workforce monthly monitoring

Priority 5: Workforce

What we are aiming for:

- A flexible, confident and capable workforce that understands how their work contributes not only to the success of their service but to the wider corporate plan and Kirklees Outcomes and adapts accordingly to changing situations and priorities (O2)
- A stable workforce that feels valued and is supported to have a healthy work-life balance.(O2)
- Children and families experience fewer changes in social workers, enabling positive and trusting relationships to be built and outcomes to be achieved

How we will do this:

- Career progression framework will be updated in preparation for the national assessment and accreditation system. We will continue to promote and raise awareness of the opportunities the teaching partnership has to offer(O2)
- Strengthen our approach to locality working and locality based assessment and intervention teams, building relationships with agencies and community assets which will enable us to work closer to families in environments they are more likely to feel at ease in
- Managers meeting will monitor and ensure all relevant staff benefit from and receive protected time
- We will ensure that development opportunities for managers maximise use of development opportunities across the council, regionally and nationally as well as refocusing our local offer to meet priority needs through our Strengthening Practice Leadership Programme
- Further develop the induction process, ensuring there is a shared understanding and consistency of application across all teams, including a process for internal moves and handing off work in progress/caseloads (O2)
- Strengthen appraisal, supervision and management oversight embedding the three obsessions of assessment, planning and recording. Observation of supervisions and feedback conversations will ensure opportunities for development and training are identified (O2)
- Further development and training will be delivered focusing on Strengthening Practice, recording, assessment and planning

How we will know we are succeeding:

- Proportion of social workers and Early Support staff who report happy in job
- Proportion of staff who report their skills and behaviours are recognised by my manager/supervisor
- Proportion of staff who report feeling support at work with their mental health
- Proportion of staff feeling supported in having a healthy work-life balance
- Improvement in staff retention
- Reduced use of agency staff
- Reduced days of sickness absence
- Number of staff who have regular supervisions
- Number of staff who have had an annual appraisal

PRIORITY 5 – Workforce

What	Lead	Timeframe			
		Q3 18/19	Q4 18/19	Q1 19/20	Q2 19/20
Update the Career Development Framework in preparation for the national assessment and accreditation system	Ophelia Rix				
Ensure that development opportunities for managers maximise use of development opportunities across the council, regionally and nationally as well as refocusing our local offer to meet priority needs through our Strengthening Practice Leadership Programme	Ophelia Rix				
Further develop the induction process ensuring there is a shared understanding and consistency of application across all teams, including a process for internal moves and handing off work in progress/caseloads	Ophelia Rix				
Strengthen appraisal, supervision and management oversight embedding the three obsessions of recording, assessment and planning. Observation of supervision and feedback conversations to ensure development and training are identified	Ophelia Rix				
Undertake programme of training and development focusing on strengthening practice in recording, assessment and planning	Ophelia Rix				

Priority 6: Practice

Strategic Responsibility: Ophelia Rix – Head of Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Principal Social Worker

The quality of front line practice is key to improving the lives of children and families in Kirklees. It is the way that our staff work with children and families that will, in the end, make the difference and build the relationships, skills and confidence to make change. Effective practice needs shared values, a good theoretical model, good skills and knowledge from staff and the right training, support and supervision from managers. We have implemented a restorative approach which has both a strong evidence base and moral foundation which emphasises building on strengths, and empowering children, families and communities through stronger relationships.

Key improvement actions delivered

- Improved frontline practice in social work and Early Support through training and development for all staff, delivering restorative practice and 'Doing simple things well' (O9, O10, O14, O15, O17, O18, O22)
- Restorative practice training available and accessed by partners
- Audit sampling of cases completed, targeted training programme developed from audit findings. Revised pre-birth policy and pathway approved at Kirklees Safeguarding Board (O16)
- Multi-agency training and development programme for shared CiN, CP Conferences and Core groups in place (O12, O13, O14, O15)
- Leadership development programme in place, monthly development sessions, mentoring and coaching in place

What difference has it made?

- Senior leaders work closely with frontline managers to develop their management practice and quality assure their work – for example service managers now observe team managers and discuss the learning in a reflective review
- In frontline practice restorative approaches are beginning to have more influence on everyday working. Feedback from a staff focus group told us: *"We have been able to be really open and say 6-12 months ago things weren't so good, things weren't positive and we didn't feel valued but now the general feeling is that morale is much better and there is much more of a stronger team ethos."*
- Better joint working and decision-making within social work are improving the response to pre-birth concerns. This can be seen in data from the Front Door. An improved policy and better shared understanding of practice is leading to fewer contacts, and better decision-making about risk at the Front Door is leading to less contacts and fewer referrals to social work and assessments
- Quality of assessments and plans has improved due to reduced caseloads and the engagement and effort from social workers towards learning and improvement. Evidence from audits, reflective supervision, CP chairs and IROs suggests most assessments and plans are adequate, and a growing proportion show the rigour, depth and analysis to be judged good or better

Performance will be kept in view through

- Monthly and weekly performance reporting on caseloads
- Annual temperature check via corporate staff satisfaction survey and annual social work health check
- Supervisions and appraisals
- Staff turnover and sickness levels
- Ongoing dialogue with trade unions

Priority 6: Practice

What we are aiming for:

- Consistent application of practice standards; all cases will evidence high quality assessments, plans and recording (O9, O10,)
- Statutory timescales for conferences, meetings and decisions are met and exceeded, drift and delay is eliminated (O14, O15)
- All staff receive monthly supervisions which are reflective, highlight good practice and identify learning and development needs and opportunities (O2)
- All staff receive a high quality annual appraisal (O2)
- Shared values and model of practice in place across Kirklees Children's Services
- Improved staff and management confidence, skills and knowledge
- Improved multi-agency working in key activities for children in need of help and protection (O16)
- Children, young people and their families receive the right support and service at the right time to meet their needs









How we will do this:

- Deliver a Strengthening Practice programme which builds on the previous training and learning of 'Doing simple things well'. We will focus on three key themes (obsessions) – recording, assessment and planning - ensuring ethnicity and diversity is clearly recognised in assessment and care planning, enabling the lived experience of the child and cumulative risk to be identified
- Continue to develop practice leadership for social work managers through the restorative learning sets for service and team managers
- Identify, evaluate, agree and implement training for relevant staff to increase quality of child protection strategy meeting recording, eg ABE training (O14)
- Undertake Initial Child Protection Conference process mapping to identify opportunities to improve timeliness of meetings being undertaken
- Undertake further work with partners to refine pre-birth process and pathway
- Work with KSCB to support the development of a training programme and business plan which improves delivery, governance and oversight of Working Together training, Core Groups, CiN meetings and CP conferences (O15)
- Work with the transition team to strengthen and improve transition planning for children with disabilities and their families
- Work with partners to strengthen and improve CETR and SENACT pathways and processes

How we will know we are succeeding:

- Proportion of (a) Kirklees staff and (b) partner staff trained in restorative practice and Strengthening Practice training
- Proportion of those training who report high quality and impact of training
- Audit shows increasing quality and timeliness of assessments and planning
- Proportion of Child in Need reviews completed within 6 weeks
- Proportion of core groups completed within 20 days
- Proportion of children with a protection plan visited in the last 4 weeks
- Proportion of children with child protection plan visited within 2 weeks
- Proportion of children with child protection plan seen alone
- Outcome of SEND Inspection

PRIORITY 6 – Practice

What	Lead	Timeframe			
		Q3 18/19	Q4 18/19	Q1 19/20	Q2 19/20
Deliver a Strengthening Practice programme which builds on the previous learning focusing on the three obsessions- recording, assessment and planning - ensuring ethnicity and diversity is clearly recognised in assessment and care planning, enabling the lived experience of the child and cumulative risk to be identified	Ophelia Rix				
Continue to develop practice leadership for social work managers through restorative learning sets for service and team Managers	Ophelia Rix				
Identify, evaluate, agree and implement training for relevant staff to increase quality of child protection strategy meeting recording, eg ABE training	Ophelia Rix				
Undertake Initial Child Protection Conference process mapping to identify opportunities to improve timeliness of meetings undertaken	Ophelia Rix				
Undertake further work with partners to refine pre-birth process and pathway	Charlotte Jackson				
Work with KSCB to support the development of a training programme and business plan which improves delivery, governance and oversight of Working Together training, Core Groups, CIN meetings and CP conferences	Ophelia Rix				
Work with transitions team to strengthen and improve transition planning for children with disabilities and their families	Christine Bennett				
Work with partners in health and education to strengthen and improve CETR and SENACT processes and pathways (links to longer term Integrated Commissioning)	Christine Bennett				

Priority 7: Voice of the Child

Strategic Responsibility: Ophelia Rix – Head of Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Principal Social Worker

Research and reviews from Laming to Munro always emphasise the importance of the voice of the child in ensuring children are effectively supported and protected. Children's Services need to build the right relationships and trust with children and young people to enable them to voice their concerns, share their views and be involved in agreeing the support and plans that are right for their needs. Children's Services, and Kirklees as a whole, will have better services, better outcomes and a better future if children's voices are at the heart of everything we do. This needs to become a shared value and a central element of practice, process and partnerships across Children's Services. Ofsted's recent inspection highlighted a range of concerns around how effectively we currently work with children, from frontline practice such as visits and assessments to how children and young people were involved in leadership and partnership planning.

Key improvement actions delivered

- Task and finish group set up across Children's Services, undertaking review of how the council engages with children and young people across Kirklees
- Timeliness and quality of response to complaints from children and their families has improved, with learning taken on board by managers. Managers and the wider service have been trained in improved complaint resolution. A Children's Rights service is readily available to support children to make complaints and to advocate on their behalf (O4)
- Care experienced young people from the Care Leavers Forum and Children in Care Council attend the Corporate Parenting Board and are beginning to influence strategic planning.(O8)
- 'Total Respect' training delivered by care experienced young people to staff

What difference has it made?

- Ofsted inspectors report that families have told them their contact with children's social care has been improving
- Senior managers now have oversight of complaints, which is facilitating complaint resolution at an earlier stage and lower level. 100% of child complaints responded to within 10 days; a reduction in the overall average response time and an improving trend in the complaints resolved within statutory timescales. 96% of complaints are now resolved informally, and there has been a sharp reduction in higher stage complaints and Ombudsman cases (O4)
- Housing and Allocation policy has taken into account the experiences and challenges faced by children leaving care and have written into policy changes which will improve housing options for care leavers (O4)

Performance will be kept in view through

- Proportion of complaints processed within agreed standards
- Complaints monitoring and annual report
- Children's Rights advocacy monitoring.

Priority 7: Voice of the Child

What we are aiming for:

- To strengthen arrangements for involving and empowering children and young people and their families across Children's Services, ensuring every child has a voice
- The voice of the child will be central to all we do; practice, processes and planning properly and consistently to engage, involve and reflect children's and young people's needs, views and goals (O11, O10)
- To strengthen the role of children and young people in Kirklees partnership arrangements (O8)




How we will do this:

- Via the Voice of the Child task and finish group we have worked with partners across Kirklees including CPFS, Learning and Education and the Democracy service to understand how, across Kirklees, children and young people are engaged as individuals and as a collective, what tools are used, where there is duplication and where gaps are. Our next steps are to work with partners to take this information and develop a framework which sets out a cohesive approach to engagement and involvement. The output of the Voice of the Child task and finish group will be used as the basis of our voice of the child improvement plan. The plan will be agreed, implemented and will set out how we are going to empower and strengthen the involvement of families
- Restorative practice training already delivered will be embedded and built on via the Strengthening Practice development programme. 'Total Respect' training is part of the ASYE learning and development pathway during their first 12 months. This training is delivered by care experienced young people and aims to help social workers engage better by sharing their experiences of what we do, how we do it and how it makes them feel. We will review take up and effectiveness of this training, identify and implement actions to improve. In addition we will agree a training programme about the voice of the child as part of the learning pathway, to be undertaken in the first three months (O10, O11)
- In order to get a better understanding of the impact and experience of our services on young people and their families, we will undertake a regular programme of analysis that captures feedback from young people throughout their journey, from Early Support to Front Door and all the way across the service

How we will know we are succeeding:

- Audits will show improvements in reflecting and recording the needs, views and goals of children and young people in assessment and planning
- Children achieve the outcomes agreed in their plans
- Data development – how do we show success for empowering and strengthening family, children and young people involvement
- Data development - As a partnership, how do we show success for strengthening the role of children and young people across Kirklees
- Quarterly audit
- Feedback from young people, children and families including those with additional needs and PCAN

PRIORITY 7 – Voice of the Child

What	Lead	Timeframe			
		Q3 18/19	Q4 18/19	Q1 19/20	Q2 19/20
Voice of the Child task and finish group to produce a Voice Improvement Plan which incorporates a cohesive framework about engagement and involvement of children, young people and their families, both as individuals and as a collective	Ophelia Rix				
Agree and implement a voice of the child training programme as part of the learning pathways	Ophelia Rix				
Establish and implement a regular programme of analysis that captures feedback from young people throughout their journey, from Early Support to Front Door and all the way across the service	Ophelia Rix				

Priority 8: Strategic Leadership

Strategic Responsibility: Director of Children's Services

Research and inspection in Children's Services has shown the importance and impact of high quality leadership. Ofsted's annual report in 2016 focused on the key role of leadership in driving change and improvement. As the HMCI Sir Michael Wilshaw put it: 'Ofsted has seen effective leadership transform the quality of work with children: leaders with a firm grip on practice at every level, who make sure vulnerable children don't have to wait for help and that frontline professionals have enough time to work with every family on their caseload'. Children's Services leaders need to focus on 'creating the conditions for success' – ensuring there is a strong culture of child focus, learning and improvement, clear direction and support for professionals and the right partnerships and resources in place to support services. Kirklees has had too many changes to leadership and Ofsted were critical in their inspection in 2016. The approach to leadership used in authorities like Leeds, West Berkshire and Stockport – a focus on relationships and whole system change - has been shown to have a big impact leading to rapid improvement. This approach will be adopted in Kirklees and will benefit from additional support and expertise from the DfE-funded Leeds Relational Practice Centre.

Key improvement actions delivered

- Strategic leadership for Children's Services both in the interim and to support longer term improvement in place. Recruitment has taken place for permanent DCS following positive feedback from the DfE
- Leadership structure reviewed and implemented, leadership team in place
- Restorative practice model shared with wider partnership, access to training made available for key partners
- Leadership development programme in place for Children's Services managers
- Access to coaching and mentoring in place

What difference has it made?

- As reported in the most recent monitoring visit, the senior leadership have a comprehensive shared understanding of where the service is, how improvements are progressing and where focus needs to be going forward. As the senior team has become established, it has developed collaborative learning events on key issues to reflect on progress and practice and to develop shared improvement plans
- The clarity, cohesion and restorative approach of the senior team has resulted in staff reporting improved morale, feeling supported and listened to and, most importantly, they are engaged with a strong sense of empowerment. Staff feel they are encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things. Due to its successful implementation in Children's Services, the restorative approach is being rolled out across the organisation (see Corporate Plan)
- There are restorative action learning sets and regular leadership sessions in place. Supervisions are taking place with improved emphasis on reflective supervision. Audits show this is having a positive impact on quality, although there is still a way to go to achieve consistency across the piece. Good practice is being highlighted as well as areas for development. This needs further improvement and is picked up in Practice

Performance will be kept in view through

- Children's Scrutiny Board reporting
- Corporate Parenting Board
- Recruitment and retention rate
- Proportion of local leaders and key partner agencies who report improved confidence in Children's Services leadership
- Performance managements of senior leadership team - appraisals for example

Priority 8: Strategic Leadership

What we are aiming for:

- A leadership with a clear vision of the direction in which it wishes to travel and the standards of service it wishes to deliver
- Leadership that creates the conditions for the Kirklees vision for children and young people on a sustainable basis and engages key stakeholders
- Work to create an environment where good quality social work and safeguarding can flourish. Focuses on achieving consistency and quality in practice across the borough
- Ensuring clear priorities for Children's Services are articulated and shared across the partnership and roles and accountability are clear
- Ensuring that the commitment to
 - *Working with people*
 - *Making a difference*
 - *The voice of the child*is at the heart of relationships and practices in Kirklees

How we will do this:

- Work with the chief executive and Portfolio Holder for Children's Services to provide strategic and collaborative leadership of services that impact on children, young people and their families, converting policy, direction and statutory plans into strategy and action
- Work collaboratively to ensure multi-agency response and approach is child centred in order to support delivery of the best outcomes
- Oversee the strategic framework and ensure the development of policy to support the best possible services for children and young people, appropriately balancing improving outcomes with statutory responsibilities
- Work with the management team to deliver an effective workforce plan, management culture and practices for Children's Services reflecting the council's behaviours
- Take shared responsibility for the effective corporate management and transformation of Children's Services, developing a strong positive local, regional and national presence to represent outcomes for children in Kirklees

How we will know we are succeeding:

- Delivery against Corporate Plan and Priorities
- Outcome of full inspection and monitoring visits
- Annual social work health check
- Annual corporate staff survey
- End of partnership arrangements – substantive DCS in place and withdrawal of support from Leeds
- Ceasing of Improvement Board due to confidence in Kirklees Children's Services and leadership from Ofsted, members and key partners

Priority 9: Partnership

Strategic Responsibility: Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board – Sheila Lock

Success and change in Children’s Services relies on strong and effective partnership working – children and families need joined up working between all local services and these services need to be shaped and funded collectively if they are to succeed. Many of the issues raised by Ofsted and the problems identified in Kirklees have related to the effectiveness of partnership working in recent years. There is a strong commitment by partners and a key aim of the Improvement Plan must be to make best use of this to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Key improvement actions delivered

- Shared culture, values and vision across Kirklees Children’s Services agreed.
- Shared understanding across Children’s Services and partners of level of need, thresholds, referrals and suitable response through the development and rollout of the KSCB Decisions Framework
- Senior managers attend KSCB, there are regular meetings with the chair and board manager and Children’s Services
- Work with partners on developing and strengthening ‘hub’ arrangements and development of the strategy for Early Support
- Improved partnership arrangements in place for key areas, Operation Encompass (domestic violence)
- Improved information sharing and communications across the partnership

What difference has it made?

- Partnerships and multi-agency working are improving. Better leadership and communication from Children’s Services at an area and locality level is helping to rebuild relationships and encourage co-operation and engagement from key partners. This is having an impact at both a strategic level - such as policy changes for pre-birth assessments agreed through the Safeguarding Board - to day-to-day practice, as seen in improved involvement from key partners such as the police, NHS and schools at the Front Door and in key processes such as core groups
- In partnership with KSCB, restorative practice has been made available to key partners, in conjunction with the improved Front Door Duty and Advice process and the KSCB Decisions Framework. There is evidence that more quality conversations between professional and social workers are taking place

Performance will be kept in view through

- Improvements to practice in key areas of joint working – CP processes, domestic violence, Early Support
- KSCB Board
- Children’s Scrutiny Board
- Children’s Improvement Board

Priority 9: Partnership

What we are aiming for:

- Children getting the best start in life is everyone's business. Children's Services and partners consistently and confidently do the right things for children, young people and their families
- A shared approach and collective understanding of contextual safeguarding, which includes child sexual exploitation, peer on peer violence and abuse, modern day slavery, harmful sexual behavior, peer on peer violence and abuse including gangs and groups, criminal exploitation
- To inform local service provision and share good practice, enabling appropriate support, intervention and protection to children, young people, parents, carers, friends and communities via a multi-agency child-friendly, child centred, whole-family approach - empowering children and communities to better protect themselves
- To prevent children being vulnerable to harm and abuse from going missing and to prevent children experiencing or continuing to experience exploitation, peer on peer abuse and modern day slavery by reducing vulnerability and proactively responding to information and intelligence shared about individuals
- Clear Improvement Plan and good progress for strengthening role of Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board
- Collective investment across services in shared priorities , commissioning and plans

How we will do this:

- A Risk and Vulnerability Strategy and action plan will be developed and implemented by the KSCB. The strategy will include the strategic objectives of the West Yorkshire Contextual Safeguarding Strategic Group which aims to support local partner agencies, through common working arrangements, training and development opportunities and intelligence gathering and analysis, to aid working together more effectively
- Establish comprehensive and accurate 'Profiles' to ensure identification of individuals or groups, locations and patterns and trends across borders, to inform local partnership understanding and enable swift, co-ordinated multi-agency responses to effectively safeguard children and prevent, divert or prosecute those who facilitate and/or seek to exploit and abuse
- Use information intelligently to inform successful prevention, diversion and prosecution of those who seek to facilitate and/or perpetrate the exploitation, abuse and harm of children and young people and, where any offences relate to young people, ensuring that children are responded to, supported and if necessary prosecuted, with a child-centred approach
- Further work with partners to refine pre-birth process and pathway. We will expand the scope to include how we can work together to improve outcomes for women who experience multiple removals (O16)
- We will jointly work with KSCB to review and refresh if appropriate their Improvement Plan, ensuring there is correlation and shared direction between both Children's Services and KSCB Improvement Plans
- Build on existing collaboration to improve commissioning through the Integrated Commissioning Strategy

How we will know we are succeeding:

- Partners report improved satisfaction and confidence in partnership arrangements and joint working
- Partners report improved confidence and knowledge of key local safeguarding policies and services including 'thresholds' and local hubs
- Audit and data show improvements to practice in key areas of joint working including CP processes, domestic violence and CSE

PRIORITY 9– Partnership					
What	Lead	Timeframe			
		Q3 18/19	Q4 18/19	Q1 19/20	Q2 19/20
Repeat Removals					
Design and implement a Kirklees model of support to parents who have had multiple children removed at birth					
Risk & Vulnerability					
Develop and implement a Risk and Vulnerability Strategy and action plan by the KSCB	Ophelia Rix Sheila Lock				
Integrated Commissioning Strategy *					
Develop Community Hubs, providing a vehicle for the delivery of a broad range of place-based children and family services by bringing together and making the most of all the resources in an area that support children and families	Tom Brailsford				
Develop service model to deliver the Thriving Kirklees programme for children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing, covering the whole spectrum of agencies/services, eg Home-Start, Family Nurse Partnership, CAMHS/LAC/CSE, and Nurturing Parents, ensuring a continuum of support to improve outcomes	Elaine McShane Jo-Anne Sanders				
Develop the model to ensure that children and young people who have an Education, Health and Care Plan receive integrated, seamless support covering the whole spectrum of services, eg educational support, therapy services such as physio and speech and language, mental health services, personal budgets, ensuring a continuum of support to improve outcomes	Rachel Spencer Henshall				
Review current commissioning teams/arrangements for children/adult commissioning across health and care	Helen Severns				
<i>* Integrated Commissioning Strategy is not in scope of Children’s Improvement Plan to deliver. However it does have linkages and dependencies on outcomes for children, young people and families and therefore is in view</i>	Simon Baker Matthew Bardon				
KSCB Improvement Plan					
Review and refresh the KSCB Improvement Plan, ensuring there is correlation and shared direction between both Children’s Services and KSCB Improvement Plans	Ophelia Rix Sheila Lock				

Priority 10: Performance and Quality Assurance

Strategic Responsibility: Ophelia Rix – Head of Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Principal Social Worker

The focus of Children's Services must be on improving outcomes for children and young people in Kirklees. It is important that practitioners and managers at all levels are able to access and use information on the level of service or activity; the quality of service or activity and, critically, what difference it is making in the lives of children and young people.

Key improvement actions delivered

- A refreshed Performance and Quality Assurance framework implemented, covering learning and improvement, restorative practice and doing the simple things, learning from complaints and dispute resolution process (O3, O4, O6)
- Through consultations with teams, an improved programme of regular and high quality performance reporting has been rolled out. This includes analysis for key stakeholders including front line managers, senior managers, Corporate Parenting Board, KSCB, and Children's Improvement Board (O5, O8)
- Outcome Based Accountability framework adopted for performance reporting and quality assurance
- Liquidlogic has been developed to ensure it is fit for purpose going forward, E-Learning and classroom training is in place, as well as support on the ground when the system goes live. Additional resource has been committed to support the critical transition phase (O7)

What difference has it made?

- The new Performance and Quality Assurance framework has enabled a shift towards a shared culture of learning and improvement, with frontline staff and managers having influenced the learning audit and performance reporting framework. This highlights the success our restorative approach is having
- New case audit system – all families subject to child protection plans have been audited in recent months. All managers are supported and engaged in the process, and this is evident in discussion where all managers refer to the findings and insight of their recent audit activity
- Regular and accurate information is available to frontline teams and strategic management which informs practice improvement and learning. Refinement of regular, extensive performance reporting – weekly reports on key areas of activity or issues such as caseloads, with detailed 'drill-down' information by team. Weekly reports are supplemented by more evaluative monthly reports. Performance reporting is used to help managers get a grip on drift and delay
- Outcome Based Accountability in both strategic and frontline performance reporting is creating a culture that puts the child and family at the heart of the service by understanding the 'so what' of our interventions and actions – what difference we are making. There is further work needed to embed this
- Liquidlogic implementation is on track. Practitioners are familiar with the timetable for implementation and understand what is required for a smooth and successful transition

Performance will be kept in view through

- Monthly and quarterly audit reports
- Doing the simple things well reports
- Supervision and supervision audits
- Direct observation
- Recording and monitoring of compliments and complaints
- Annual Quality Assurance report
- Dispute Resolution process monitoring

Priority 10: Performance and Quality Assurance

What we are aiming for:

- Outcomes focused quality assurance is systematically embedded across the service and has a direct impact on practice and outcomes for children and their families (O3, O4, O6)
- Effective review, challenge and scrutiny of the council's overall performance as Corporate Parent. Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Chairs will ensure concerns highlighted are resolved in a timely way so every child in care and every child subject to a child protection plan has their wishes, views and feelings recognised and acted on (O3)
- Ensure that all child protection conferences are held to statutory timescales and that planning meetings, including core groups and child in need meetings, are held as required (O15)
- High quality data reports that enable reflection, learning and improvements (O5)
- A restorative learning culture is embedded where practitioners and managers feel comfortable and confident to give and receive high support and high challenge
- Practitioners and managers are skilled and confident in using Liquidlogic to enhance their practice
- A shared culture of reflection, learning and improvement






How we will do this:

- Revision and strengthening of Doing the Simple Things Well report in consultation with the management team to ensure there's a shared understand of the importance and benefits proactive performance management brings in tackling drift and delay and to promote good practice and reflection
- Enhanced restorative practice training for Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Chairs
- Strengthen use of performance data by Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Chairs to challenge drift and delay
- Undertake process mapping with Child Protection Chairs to identify opportunities to improve planning practices, for example setting core group dates at Initial Child Protection Conference
- Further work with teams to analyse complaints, to promote a more family focused and restorative approach to complaints management as well as embedding the use of learning outcomes
- Strengthen audit reporting to enable improved understanding of learning outcomes
- Implement Liquidlogic training programme, accommodating a range of learning styles, with ongoing structured support in the lead in, implementation and post go-live period

How we will know we are succeeding:

- Proportion of learning audits completed and completed/returned on time
- Proportion of Doing the Simple Things Well reports completed
- Proportion of audits achieving Outstanding and/or Good
- Proportion of complaints answered within service standards
- Liquidlogic success measures
- Dispute resolution process monitoring

PRIORITY 10 – Performance and Quality Assurance

What	Lead	Timeframe			
		Q3 18/19	Q4 18/19	Q1 19/20	Q2 19/20
Revise and strengthen Doing the Simple Things Well report in consultation with the management team to ensure there's a shared understanding of the importance and benefits of proactive performance management in tackling drift and delay and to promote good practice and reflection	Ophelia Rix				
Undertake enhanced Restorative Practice training for Independent Reviewing Officers and CP Chairs	Ophelia Rix				
Strengthen use of performance data by Independent Reviewing Officers and CP Chairs to challenge drift and delay	Ophelia Rix				
Undertake process mapping with CP Chairs to identify opportunities to improve planning practices, for example setting core group dates at Initial Child Protection Conference. Implement improvements	Ophelia Rix				
Undertake further work with teams to analyse complaints to promote a more family focused and restorative approach to complaints management, as well as embedding the use of learning outcomes	Ophelia Rix				
Strengthen audit reporting to enable improved understanding of learning outcomes	Ophelia Rix	