

Name of meeting: Cabinet

Date: 8 December 2017

Title of report: Update on Children's Services

Purpose of report: To update on the activities in Children's Services including (1) the proposed Strategic Partnership with Leeds, (2) the implications of the changes in Children's Services on the contract with the main IT provider for Children's Social Care and (3) a general update on discussions with the Department for Education and Ofsted.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Yes It may result in spending of £250k or more and may have an effect on two or more electoral wards
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	Yes
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> for Children's Services	Steve Walker 30 November 2017
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services?	Debbie Hogg 30 November 2017
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	Julie Muscroft 30 November 2017
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Erin Hill and Cllr Masood Ahmed Cllr Graham Turner and Cllr Musarrat Khan

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: Not applicable

Public or private: Public but with a private Appendix 2. Appendix 2 is recommended for consideration in private because the information contained in contains confidential information given to the Council by Government which cannot be disclosed until a later date [as well exempt information within part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 namely that the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information and providing greater openness in the Council's decision making.]

1. Summary

1.1 This report considers three main issues relating to Children's Services:

1.1.1 It provides an update on the activities in Children's Services relating to the Strategic Partnership with Leeds. It gives an update on progress in relation to discussions with Leeds and the Department for Education about the Strategic Partnership including the potential financial implications of that. It outlines the general terms of the Strategic Partnership including the governance arrangements, the Improvement Plan, what the arrangements will mean in practice for Kirklees and Leeds. It gives an update on the draft Direction from the Secretary of State. It requests delegation to the Chief Executive acting in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services to finalise the final details of the Strategic Partnership agreement and authorisation to the Service Director Legal, Governance & Commissioning to enter into the arrangements once concluded.

1.1.2 It considers the implications of the Strategic Partnership and the Improvement Plan on the current arrangements to implement the IT system. The Improvement Plan agreed with the Department for Education is likely to include the need to change the Council's approach to its social work practice. This will mean that a number of changes will need to be made to the processes being implemented with the IT system. The report provides a summary of what those changes mean and the financial implications of those.

1.1.3 It provides a general update on the visit from the Minister at the beginning of November and the visit from Ofsted.

2. Information required to take a decision

2.1 Strategic Partnership with Leeds

2.1.1 Members will be aware of the well documented matters within Children's Social Services. A number of reports have been received by Cabinet relating to this as follows:

Cabinet

24 May 2016 Children's Development Plan

<https://democracy.kirklees.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=230&Ver=4>

28 November 2016 Putting Children First

<https://democracy.kirklees.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=5221&Ver=4>

17 January 2017 Children's Services Findings Report

<https://democracy.kirklees.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=4982&Ver=4>

7 March 2017 Children's Improvement Plan

<https://democracy.kirklees.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=4985&Ver=4>

Councillor Hill has also given the following updates to Council since March 2016;

- 14 September 2016 (key discussion) – update on CSE
- 14 December 2016 (holding exec to account) – portfolio feedback - Ofsted inspection – next steps
- 15 November 2017 (key discussion) – update on Children's Services Improvement Journey

- 2.1.2 Members are referred to the background papers and history of decisions which are set out at paragraph 9 for more detail but briefly the next few paragraphs set out a summary of what has happened to date and what the Council anticipates will happen over the next few weeks when we anticipate that we will receive a Final Direction from the Secretary of State for Education and we will enter into a Strategic Partnership agreement with Leeds City Council.
- 2.1.3 Concerns about practice were first identified in the summer of 2015 and the then Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services took action to better understand what was happening in the service. This included a review of the role of the Kirklees Safeguarding Children's Board, the appointment of a new Assistant Director (interim) and the commissioning of Independent Reviews and Auditing. In addition a Development Board was established (which subsequently became the current Improvement Board). Additional resources were agreed by the Council and were used to bring in external auditing capacity and additional social work staff and managers.
- 2.1.4 An Ofsted inspection in the autumn of 2016 found that Children's Social Services in Kirklees were inadequate. The initial improvement work put in place was not felt to have had enough impact and a number of issues were highlighted relating to practice, leadership, difficulties in recruiting permanent staff leading to a high level of agency staff, delays in replacing case management systems (amongst other things) which required further attention. As a result of the inadequate Ofsted report the Secretary of State issued a Statutory Direction in November 2016 which appointed Eleanor Brazil as the Commissioner who was expected to take the following steps as follows:
- a) To make recommendations for the immediate improvement of Children's Social Care and to recommend any additional support required to deliver improvement;
 - b) To review the Council's leadership and management capacity and capability to drive forward the changes necessary to achieve the required standard;
 - c) To make a recommendation to the Secretary of State as to whether alternative delivery arrangements are the most effective way of securing and sustaining improvement, and if so, to recommend the form those alternative delivery arrangements should take. The Commissioner was asked to provide her report to the Secretary of State by 31 March 2017.
- 2.1.5 The report was completed by the relevant date in draft and had been submitted to the Secretary of State. Publication of the final draft was delayed however because of the calling of a snap General Election in June. As a result of that there was a delay in publication. The report was updated by Eleanor Brazil in August 2017 and was published on 14 September 2017.
- 2.1.6 In the intervening period steps were taken in line with the anticipated recommendation from Eleanor Brazil to work with Leeds as a neighbouring authority who were rated as 'good' across all Ofsted domains with 'outstanding' for leadership, management and governance. Leeds is also a partner in practice which means that they are able to offer support and share expertise and resources which are not available in Kirklees currently.
- 2.1.7 Kirklees has also appointed the Director for Children's Services of Leeds as its joint Director of Children's Services. This happened in June 2017. They have also seconded a senior social work leader and two service managers all fulltime to support Kirklees in a number of identified areas. In addition to this a number of staff are helping on an ad-hoc basis as required. They have also been working with Kirklees to

develop an Improvement Plan which is currently with the DfE in draft format for approval. The draft Improvement Plan is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

- 2.1.8 Eleanor Brazil also recommends that we enter into a formal Strategic Partnership agreement with Leeds and we are currently in the process of developing that. The Partnership Agreement will include the Improvement Plan in it.

The Council has also now received a draft Direction from the Secretary of State. This is attached at Appendix 2 and is a confidential appendix. It formally directs that we appoint the Leeds DCS as ours (which we have already done) and that we enter into a Partnership Agreement with Leeds. Kirklees, Leeds and the DfE are working together to finalise the wording of the Direction and the agreement including the form of the Improvement Plan which will be a substantial part of the agreement and by which we will be monitored by the Improvement Board and Ofsted/DfE to make sure that we are making appropriate progress. Kirklees and Leeds will be providing some comments to the DfE on the Direction before the 7 December 2017. An update on this can be given at the Cabinet meeting including when we expect to get the final Direction.

- 2.1.9 The intention is that Kirklees and Leeds will work together to build relationships confidence and skills in Kirklees in order to promote and sustain change and improvement which is secure and sustainable in the longer term. Kirklees will continue to retain accountability for Children's Services. Leeds will provide an agreed and defined programme of support and improvement. The agreement will be in place for three years but with regular reviews and monitoring with agreed milestones to measure our progress against. The intention is that Leeds will provide intensive support and input over the first 12 months with support reducing to a mentoring and advisory role once progress has been secured and a new local leadership team is in place. The programme of support is being finalised but will include the following which is a summary of what is included in the draft Improvement Plan:

- **Leadership:** Leeds Director acting as Kirklees DCS for an interim period and working across both authorities. Leeds Deputy Director providing additional input to Kirklees, with a lead responsibility for Leadership Development. One Leeds Head of Service and two Service Delivery Managers seconded to Kirklees to lead the social work service and other key services. Leeds will also provide wider support for leadership including a development programme and review of structures.
- **Partnership:** including work with Elected Members and key local services such as NHS and Police, multi-agency input in key areas such as the Front Door and development of the role of the Safeguarding Board.
- **Practice:** support and training for front line staff and work to develop and implement an improved practice model.
- **Workforce:** improve recruitment and retention through development of a career development framework and associated professional development
- **Performance, Quality Assurance and IT:** support implementation of a new case management system and alongside this put in place more robust arrangements for performance management and quality assurance, including strengthening the role of Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Chairs.
- **Children Looked After:** including review of residential provision and placements, developing new gateway panels etc.

- 2.1.10 Progress on the Improvement Plan will be monitored by the Improvement Board which will be chaired by Eleanor Brazil. The overall governance of the partnership will be overseen by a joint board which includes both Chief Executives, both Leaders of the Council and Portfolio Holders for Children's Services as well as the Director for

Children's Services (Steve Walker) (and any future DCS appointed by Kirklees as appropriate to work alongside Leeds). These governance arrangements will remain in place for the duration of the improvement journey until such time as the DfE is satisfied that the direction is no longer necessary.

- 2.1.11 The draft Agreement describes how Kirklees and Leeds will work together to make the improvements needed. It also contains details of how this will be managed and monitored and the governance arrangements. It also sets out details of how Kirklees will reimburse Leeds for the cost of their staffing. Leeds have separate funding in place with the DfE to support them in assisting Kirklees. Kirklees have also received an offer of funding from the DfE to help support some work. The detail of this is still to be finalised. The information is contained in Appendix 2.
- 2.1.12 Cabinet are being asked to agree to delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services to agree the final format of the Strategic Partnership Agreement (including the Improvement Plan) and any other documents associated with this including any funding arrangements with the DfE. In addition they asked to agree that the Service Director, Legal, Governance & Commissioning be given authority to enter into the appropriate Strategic Partnership Agreement with Leeds once it has been finalised as well as any other relevant associated documents.

2.2 Liquidlogic

- 2.2.1 As a result of the changes in senior management and the reshaping of Children's Services that have taken place since September 2016 Ofsted inspection and the adoption of a different approach to Social Work practice it is necessary to completely reconfigure the Liquidlogic Children's system and the timescale for doing that. This section of the report outlines the work that needs to be carried out by Children's Services before the implementation can be restarted including the new timescale and the resources needed to carry out the work.

Definition of Liquidlogic Children's system, Early Help Module, ContrOCC and Single View

- 2.2.2 The Liquidlogic Children's system (LCS) is a workflow based Case Management System which will replace the current CareFirst system. The system supports all aspects of social work with children, allowing practitioners to keep a complete and accurate case management record for children in need, looked after children, child protection cases and adoption. The workflow aspect of the system assists the practitioners to ensure that all the necessary information is correctly recorded and tasks are completed in the right order, with an emphasis on only having to record information once. Family working is central to the system supporting recording for groups of people whilst maintaining individual records.
- 2.2.3 The Early Help Module (EHM) acts as a general case management tool for children outside of Social Care. It will be used in conjunction with LCS and shares the same database. It can be used by all professionals, with appropriate access rights, both inside Kirklees and in external partner agencies. As well as case management and record keeping for children and families who do not reach social care thresholds, it also allows Early Help & Common Assessment Framework (eCAF) recording, referrals in and out of Social Care and provides the ability to set up a team around the child or family and coordinate all their activities.

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) module is also located in EHM and is fully integrated with LCS

- 2.2.4 The ContrOCC Financial Management system works alongside the Liquidlogic system to enable the true costs associated with a child and family to be understood and managed. All payments can be made and managed through ContrOCC, including foster carer payments. Budget monitoring and reporting are inherent in the solution and a workflow can be set up to manage authorisation.
- 2.2.5 The SingleView will provide a read only holistic view of the child drawing on information gathered from multiple systems. These will include LCS, EHM, Synergy Education and Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing (KNH) as well as potentially in the future a number of others. This will give practitioners a combined chronology and an overview of the child's professional involvements across agencies.

Background Information – the journey so far

- 2.2.6 Liquidlogic was awarded the contract to provide a replacement Children's Social Care Case Management system, on Tuesday 5th July 2016. The current proposed date for the implementation of the system is Q4 2017.

In the procurement process with Liquidlogic, the timescales that were provided were indicative of introducing a new system (off the shelf) and migrating a set of systems and databases that would be typical for running Children's Services. (Liquidlogic are the key provider of IT systems in the north and have a wealth of experience upon which to draw typical time frames).

In September 2016, Ofsted carried out an inspection of children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. As a result of that inspection, Children's services in Kirklees were Judged to be inadequate and systemically failing children and families in Kirklees. As a consequence, an Improvement plan was put in place and Children's Services have been and are currently still undergoing significant transformational change.

- 2.2.7 In March 2017, an Improvement Director and a new Assistant Director for Children's Services were appointed. In addition, in April/May 2017, Kirklees began partnership working with Leeds City Council. The new leadership team carried out a review of the Risk Sensible practice model and determined that there should be a different direction of travel for a social work model of practice for Kirklees Council. It was decided that the focus needed to be on compliance and improving outcomes for children and families and to use a more effective, culturally embedded and empowering practice model. The Local Authority has embarked upon the remodelling of the service, based upon the 'Improvement Plan'. A decision has been made to replace the Risk Sensible practice model and to move to a Restorative Practice approach. Restorative Practice is used by Leeds City Council. Service remodelling is ongoing and intrinsically linked to the sharing of good practice partnership arrangement being formalised with Leeds.
- 2.2.8 A decision was made by the new management team in April/May 2017, to remodel Children's services and to replace the Risk Sensible practice model with a Restorative Practice approach. Until that time the project was on course as per the project plan for a December 2017 go-live.
- 2.2.9 The consequence of this is that the system configuration activity will need to be reworded. The workflow will have to be significantly changed and the 'Risk Sensible' configured forms replaced. The workflow reconfiguration cannot take place until the service has fully completed the service remodelling.

2.2.10 Following consultation with the supplier, Liquidlogic, it has been determined that three further rounds of system configuration, user acceptance testing and data migration will be required to complete this work. Provided that the service redesign and workflow is agreed by December 2017, subject to Liquid Logic team availability, the system will go-live in October 2018.

Outline of work completed to date

2.2.11 Workshops to configure the workflows for LCS and EHM were carried out in November/December 2016 as per the Project plan. The workflow determines how and in what order work will move through the system, including which teams the work is passed to and the authorisation process. The workflows were configured based upon the Improvement Plan, which at the time included the use of the 'Risk Sensible' practice model.

In subsequent configuration rounds, which took place in February and May 2017, the individual forms used for all areas were configured to meet the requirements of 'Risk Sensible'.

2.2.12 Five rounds of data migration, copying data from the CareFirst system have been carried out. Four rounds of migration of data to the ContrOCC finance system have also been successfully completed.

2.2.13 The Early Help system has been configured and early engagement with external partner agencies has taken place.

2.2.14 Multiple system training courses have taken place and end user training preparation has been started.

2.2.15 The quality of data in CareFirst was found to be both incomplete and inconsistent. Beginning to improve this has been a significant, time consuming task that is ongoing.

2.2.16 Following each round of data migration user acceptance of the functionality and data has taken place.

2.2.17 Workstreams have been established for each area of the implementation, data migration, configuration, testing, training, performance reporting, communication, Early Help and Early Help Partners.

Information required to make a decision

- 2.2.18 Visits took place to Leeds City Council and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council to discuss their respective system implementations. In both cases, the stability of the senior management team, workforce, and practice, in addition to starting to make changes to the organisational culture were all in place prior to implementation beginning.
- 2.2.19 Working in partnership with Leeds and having learned from their experience of implementing a replacement case management system for Children's services, it became apparent that Leeds has experienced a similar journey to that of Kirklees. An inadequate OFSTED inspection in 2009 provided the impetus to change both social work practice and also the implementation of a new case management system.
- 2.2.20 A 'Statement of Process' to move from the Leeds internally developed system to CoreLogic's Framework-I system was produced in 2011. There was a significant amount of preparation before the project started. However once started, the project took just over a year to complete. There was a clear agreement that Leeds would stick to the best practice model provided by the system unless geographical or local processes determined otherwise. This was signed off at the highest level of management and adhered to. There was a really clear commitment to this and a clear sign-off for any changes that had to be made.
- 2.2.21 Prior to the project team being established and before the project implementation began significant preparation work was undertaken and there was a good degree of organisational stability. For example, the corporate team together with social work teams, spent approximately 6 months on mapping the 'as-is' business processes. There was an agreed model of the process for each area of the business. This ensured that the project team could then compare these to the best practice model (vanilla version) of the Framework-I system to identify and bridge any gaps and configure the workflow appropriately. This work has not yet been undertaken in Kirklees.
- 2.2.22 Leeds had a stable senior management team and the assistant DCS chaired the project board. Heads of Children's service chaired the quality data board which gave a clear commitment about decision making and resource provision. There was also a buy-in from the whole service regarding this.
- 2.2.23 Before the project in Leeds began, work was undertaken to stabilise practice, improve compliance and begin to embed a change of culture. Integral to this was the introduction and dissemination of Restorative Practice. Leeds is very clear that it was the introduction of Restorative Practice that made the fundamental difference turning Leeds Children's Services around from being 'inadequate'. They have introduced the Restorative Practice model throughout every aspect of Children's services and in every theme.
- 2.2.24 It became clear during discussions with colleagues at Leeds that the fundamentals required for a successful project are not yet in place in Kirklees. Leeds was very clear that the time they spent in discussion with and in the improvement of the service in advance of the project was time well spent.
- 2.2.25 Without clarity around priorities, governance, practice, workforce and management stability, it will be very difficult to implement a system that is fit for purpose.
- 2.2.26 Kirklees Children's services have experienced several changes in senior management over the last two years and currently have a very unstable workforce. The Ofsted visit in September 2016 has made matters more complicated because service restructuring

in order to improve practice is ongoing. The positioning of a commissioner and the uncertainty of how the service would look moving forward has compounded some of the issues in relation to improvement journey.

2.2.27 Implementing a replacement Children's Case Management system in this unstable environment is extremely challenging. In particular, the changes at senior management level have resulted in different approaches being taken to improving practice, each time complicating the system configuration and data migration process.

Additional costs

These are related to the additional input required by Liquid logic and the in-house support team. These are variable depending on the number of additional data migration rounds and development time with the range of £380k to £450k. In terms of funding it is proposed to capitalise these costs and using DCLG flexibilities apply capital receipts. These will be picked up in the budget report in the New Year.

2.3 Update on other issues

The Council received a visit from the Minister on 2 November 2017. The visit was a helpful and positive one. He was able to meet with relevant officers and Members and visit Number 11 to see some examples of excellent projects which Kirklees has introduced for children here. It was following that visit that he was able to issue his letter referred to in Appendix 2.

We also had a further visit from Ofsted on 8 and 9 November which identified some areas where changes were beginning to be seen. Ofsted will publish their conclusions following that visit over the coming weeks.

3 Implications for the Council

3.1 Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP)

Early intervention and preventative services commissioned by or provided from Kirklees form part of the strategic agreement and will be considered as part of the improvement plan.

These services are critical to ensure that children and their families receive the most appropriate service at the right time in order to ensure that their needs are effectively met prior to more specialist and intensive services being needed. Their effectiveness ensures that only those children and families with the greatest need escalate to specialist services and as such those services have the capacity to effectively support them.

The structure leadership and practice in these areas will require attention in order to achieve the objectives above and Leeds will support Kirklees in achieving this based on their prior experience. In addition to this a request has been made to the DfE for funding to develop robust evidence informed services that seek to avoid the need for children to become looked after.

3.2 Economic Resilience (ER)

No specific implications to note here.

3.3 **Improving Outcomes for Children**

Children's outcomes are significantly improved when their needs are identified early in the life of the problem and effective support is provided to meet those needs. It is evident that when this does not happen the issues that children and families face become more serious and entrenched. It also means that specialist services are put under increasing pressure reducing their effectiveness and leading to poorer outcomes. It becomes more likely that children enter the care system and with increasing numbers of children in care the quality of provision can be compromised.

3.4 **Reducing demand of services**

As outlined earlier in the report it is critical to ensure that children and families receive the right support at the right time. As this begins to take effect the whole system becomes more balanced and services become more aligned with need. Ultimately this means that specialist services experience a reduction in demand. This is important because the individual cost for each child is much greater as their needs escalate. A balanced system means that many more children and families are helped earlier in the life of their difficulties making for better outcomes and greater efficiency.

3.5 **Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources)**

Legal and financial implications are set out in the report above. In relation to the Strategic Partnership Agreement we will be directed by the Secretary of State to enter into appropriate arrangements.

4. **Consultees and their opinions**

4.1 Cabinet have been informally updated on a regular basis in relation to these matters.

5. **Next steps**

5.1 Council will enter into the Strategic Partnership Agreement with Leeds once it is finalised and following receipt of the final Direction.

5.2 Officers will work with Liquid Logic to make appropriate changes to the relevant contractual arrangements in order to implement the changes required to reflect changes in social work practice.

6. **Officer recommendations and reasons**

6.1 To note the current position relating to the arrangements with Leeds to establish a Strategic Partnership Agreement with them.

6.2 To delegate to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the statutory Portfolio Holder for Children's Services to finalise the terms of the Strategic Partnership Agreement with Leeds (including the Improvement Plan) and any other documents associated with this including any funding arrangements with the DfE.

6.3 To authorise to the Service Director, Legal, Governance & Commissioning to enter into the Strategic Partnership Agreement (including the Improvement Plan) and any other documents associated with this including any funding arrangements with the DfE. In addition they asked to agree that the Service Director, Legal, Governance & Commissioning be given authority to enter into the appropriate Strategic Partnership

Agreement with Leeds once it has been finalised as well as any other relevant associated documents.

- 6.4 Note the contents of the letter from the Minister and the draft Direction in Appendix 2.
- 6.5 Note the proposed changes as set out in section 2.2 of this report relating to IT.
- 6.6 Having considered the contents of the report and appendices that Cabinet agrees to the proposal to extend the implementation timescale of the IT project from December 2017 to October 2018 at a cost of c£450k to be funded by applying capital receipts.
- 6.7 Note the information relating to the visit by the Minister and Ofsted.

7. **Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations**

- 7.1 None made.

8. **Contact officer**

- 8.1 Julie Muscroft - Service Director – Legal, Governance & Commissioning
Debbie Hogg - Service Director – Finance, IT and Transactional Services
Sal Tariq - Deputy Director – Children's Services

9. **Background Papers and History of Decisions**

9.1

Cabinet

24 May 2016 Children's Development Plan

<https://democracy.kirklees.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=230&Ver=4>

28 November 2016 Putting Children Frist

<https://democracy.kirklees.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=5221&Ver=4>

17 January 2017 Children's Services Findings Report

<https://democracy.kirklees.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=4982&Ver=4>

7 March 2017 Children's Improvement Plan

<https://democracy.kirklees.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=4985&Ver=4>

10. **Service Director responsible**

- 10.1 Julie Muscroft
Debbie Hogg
Sal Tariq

APPENDIX 1

Kirklees Council and Leeds City Council

Draft Proposal for Strategic Improvement Partnership

Section Two: Improvement Programme



Department
for Education



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL



The Kirklees Ten Point Plan: Creating the conditions for success



Section 1 – Context, Challenges and Opportunities

Context

An OfSTED inspection in 2016 found that, ‘Services for vulnerable children in Kirklees are inadequate, due to serious and widespread failures which result in some children not being protected or having their needs met’. The report acknowledged that ‘Although senior managers and councillors are aware of the inadequacies and have implemented an improvement plan, this has yet to result in sufficient improvements to the experience of vulnerable children in Kirklees’ (p2)

Following the outcome of the inspection the Secretary for State appointed a Children’s Commissioner to review the capacity of Kirklees Children’s Services to improve and to advise the Secretary of State on any further actions necessary.

The Commissioner found that although there was considerable support across all political parties, the Corporate Centre and from partner agencies for Children’s Services the pace of change was too slow and the authority did not have the capacity to improve without external support.

This judgement was reinforced by the OfSTED monitoring visit in July 2017 which found that the pace of improvement in Kirklees was too slow. Whilst inspectors noted improvement to leadership and practice they reported that this was not yet sufficiently robust or embedded and not consistent enough across all areas.

A key issue that has affected Kirklees is the lack of stable leadership for Children’s Services. In the nine months following the inspection the Director and Interim Head of Children’s Social Work have both left the authority. An interim Improvement Director and Service Director for Family Support and Child Protection were appointed, and have also subsequently left. These changes meant that, despite significant support from members, including an additional thirteen million in funding in 2016/2017, there was no strategic approach to improvement within Children’s Services, and the pace of change remained slow.

The Children’s Commissioner recommended to Kirklees that they enter into an Improvement Partnership with Leeds City Council. The Commissioner was aware of the long history of collaborative working between authorities in Yorkshire and that Leeds was a Department for Education ‘Partner in Practice’ authority.

Leeds City Council was keen to support Kirklees Council as Leeds had faced similar challenges in recent years. In 2010 Leeds Children’s Services were found to be Inadequate by OfSTED. However, as a result of a strategic approach to improvement by the council and partners, services for children in Leeds were judged to be ‘Good’ by OfSTED in March 2016, with ‘Outstanding’ Leadership, Management and Governance. This means that Leeds was well placed to support Kirklees Children’s Services on their improvement journey.

Since April June 2017 Leeds has been supporting Kirklees through its role as a Partner in Practice. In May 2017 the authorities agreed to enter a formal Improvement Partnership that would see Leeds develop and deliver an Improvement Programme to Kirklees Children’s Services.

In preparation for this agreement at Kirklees’ request Leeds agreed to their Director of Children and Families Services becoming the statutory Director of Children’s Services for both authorities. In addition to increase leadership capacity in Kirklees Leeds agreed to the secondment of an experienced Head of Children’s Social Work full time to Kirklees.

Challenges and Opportunities

In spite of the challenges facing the authority, the staff observed carrying out their work and those with whom inspectors spoke were child focused and motivated to improve children’s experiences. (OfSTED Monitoring Report, July 2017)

The OfSTED report of 2016 was a difficult but necessary critique of the way that the local child welfare and safeguarding system in Kirklees had become weakened and underperforming. The report raised a number of major and urgent concerns in key areas. The full list of recommendations is set out below:

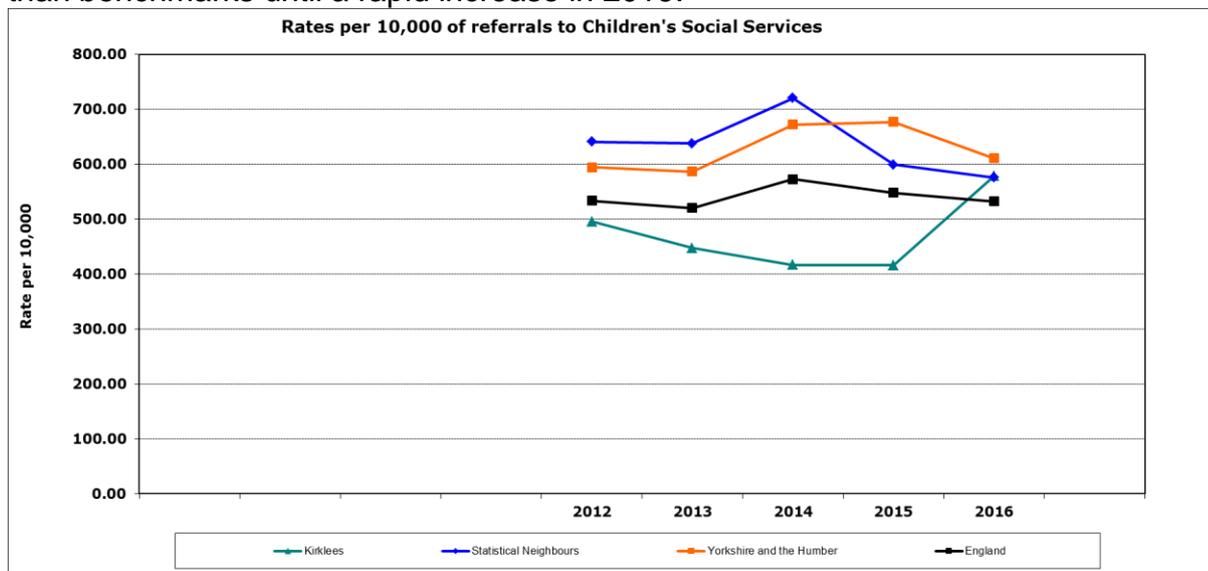
1. Take urgent action to ensure that all children currently being provided with a service are safeguarded and their welfare is promoted.

2. Ensure that all staff, including agency staff, are supported to have more consistent relationships with children and to deliver high-quality services through manageable caseloads, induction, supervision and training.
3. Ensure that concerns identified in the dispute resolution process are dealt with promptly and comprehensively, including by independent reviewing officers and child protection chairs.
4. Improve the timeliness and quality of response to complaints from children and their families, including disseminating the learning.
5. Ensure that robust performance data drives improvements in the service.
6. Fully embed the quality assurance framework across children's services.
7. Ensure that the procured electronic recording system is fit for purpose and supports improved practice across the whole service
8. Improve the oversight and challenge of the corporate parenting board by ensuring the availability of robust performance data, and that children's views influence the focus and decision making of the board.
9. Ensure that all assessments and plans focus on reducing risk and improving children's outcomes, with clearly defined timescales for actions, responsibilities and regular review.
10. Ensure that assessments consider the needs of all children in a household and that records of this work are unique to each child.
11. Ensure that the children and young people are visited within the timescales identified in the plans and that, when appropriate, children are seen alone.
12. Ensure that all partner agencies are sufficiently involved in the multi-agency safeguarding hub information sharing and decision making, and that thresholds are consistently applied.
13. Ensure that the services for children who are subject to domestic abuse give robust consideration to safeguarding issues. This is to include consideration and recording of risks identified in multi-agency risk assessment conference meetings.
14. Ensure that child protection strategy meetings involve relevant agencies, that plans are made together and that actions are recorded.
15. 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.
16. Ensure that the responses to pre-birth concerns are timely and robust.
17. Develop edge of care services and ensure that timely support is available in a crisis.
18. Ensure that, when children need to become looked after, this is actioned promptly, to include improving the quality of pre-proceedings letters to parents, clear contingency planning and ensuring robust monitoring of cases in pre-proceedings.
19. Review all arrangements when children are placed with parents to ensure that these are appropriate and that children are not unnecessarily made subject to a care order.
20. Increase the availability of local placements to ensure that children and young people do not need to be placed at a distance from their communities.
21. Ensure that children looked after have access to an independent visitor when they need one.
22. Continue to improve adoption services for children, to include improving the timeliness of decision making, recording a clear rationale for decisions made and using the learning when adoption placements breakdown.

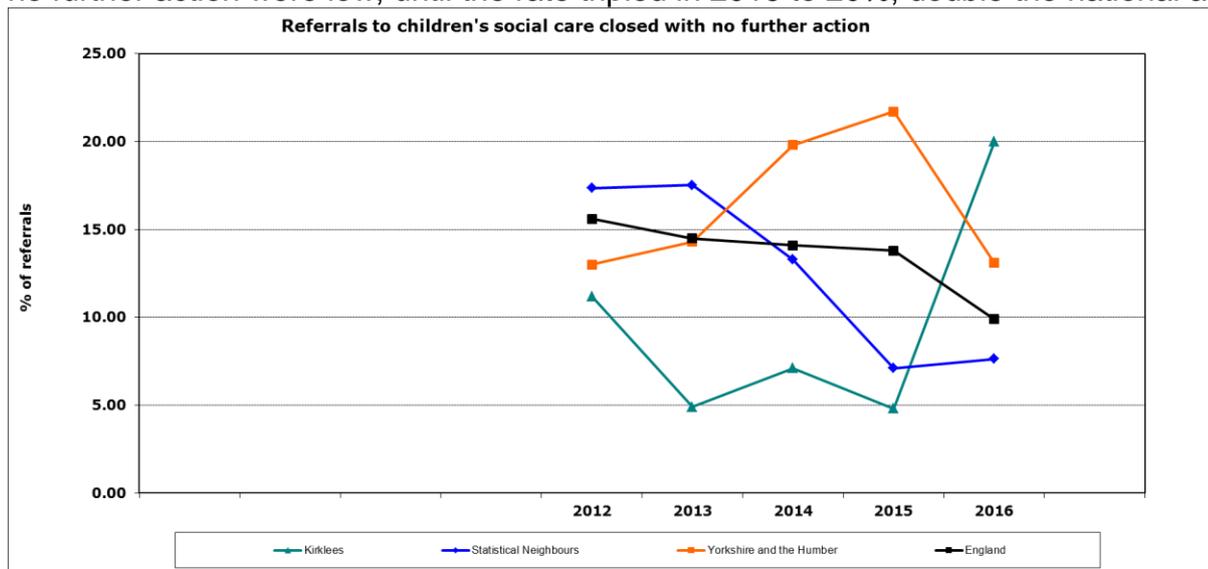
- 23. Improve care leaver support, through ensuring that children all have a personal advisor from their 16th birthday and that they have sufficient support to live independently.
- 24. Robustly address the high rate of care leavers who are not in employment, education or training.
- 25. Improve access to therapeutic and mental health support for children looked after and care leavers.
- 26. Improve the quality of pathway plans to ensure that they underpin high-quality support packages.
- 27. Ensure that there is a robust needs analysis to underpin strategic planning and commissioning of services for children.

The breadth of concerns highlights that the problems do not lie with a single service but are systemic – the overall system has become unbalanced and ineffective. This can be seen through an analysis of some of the key data on children’s services in Kirklees.

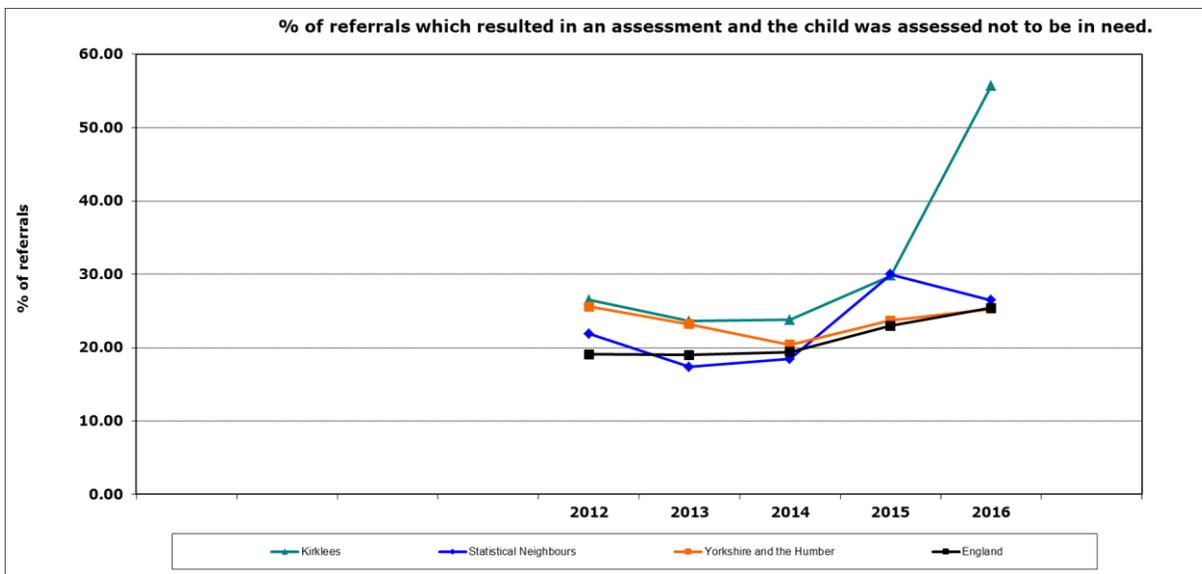
As can be seen in the graph below, referral rates in Kirklees were generally markedly lower than benchmarks until a rapid increase in 2016.



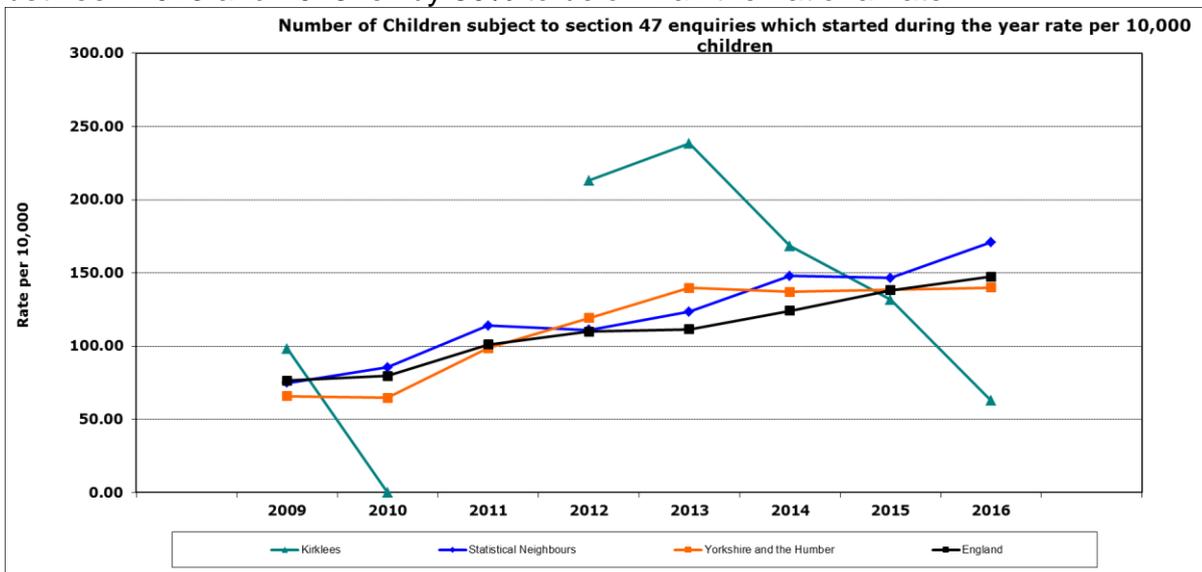
Decisions on these referrals has been unstable – until 2016 the proportion judged to require no further action were low, until the rate tripled in 2016 to 20%, double the national average.



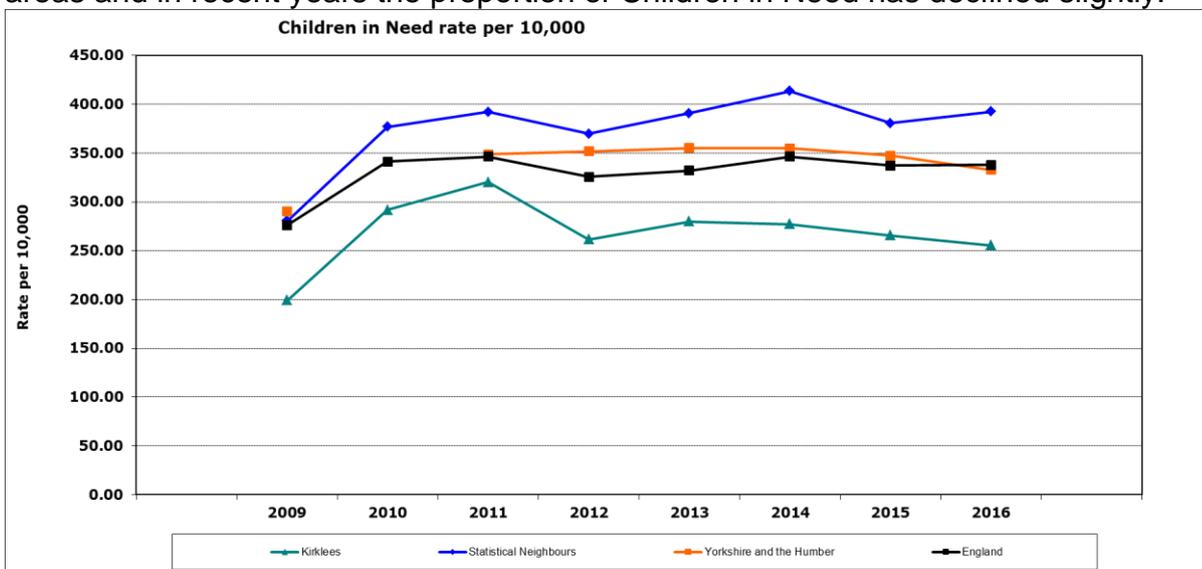
Further instability is evident when cases were referred on for social work assessment. Until 2015 Kirklees was similar to benchmarks but then saw another sharp rise, with the proportion of cases assessed then closed as the child was judged to not be in need nearly doubling to over 55%, the second highest rate in the country.



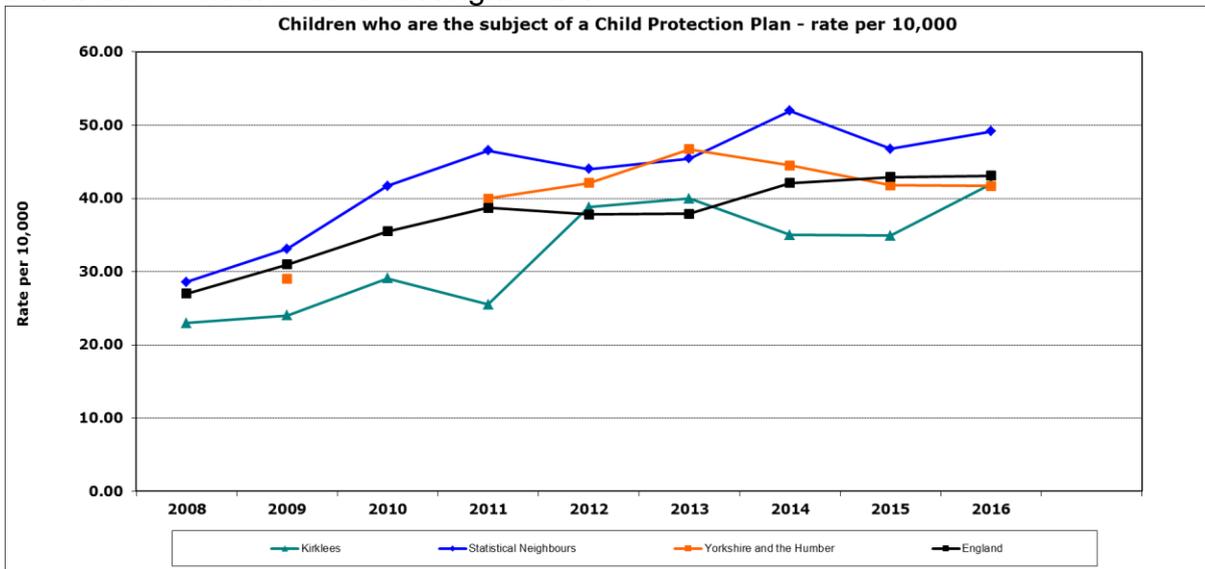
Further concerns can be raised about the treatment of cases judged to require section 47 enquiries for significant harm. The rate had been very high, well above benchmarks then between 2013 and 2016 fell by 80% to below half the national rate.



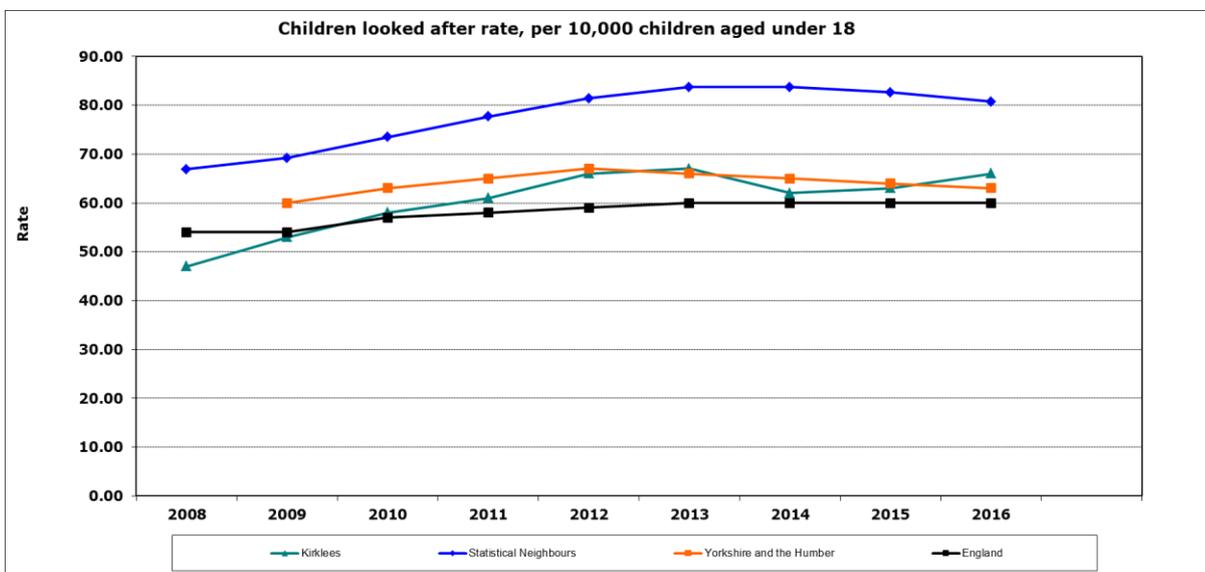
Imbalances can also be seen in the composition of social work cases. The proportion of Children in Need has been consistently relatively low, below that seen nationally or in similar areas and in recent years the proportion of Children in Need has declined slightly.



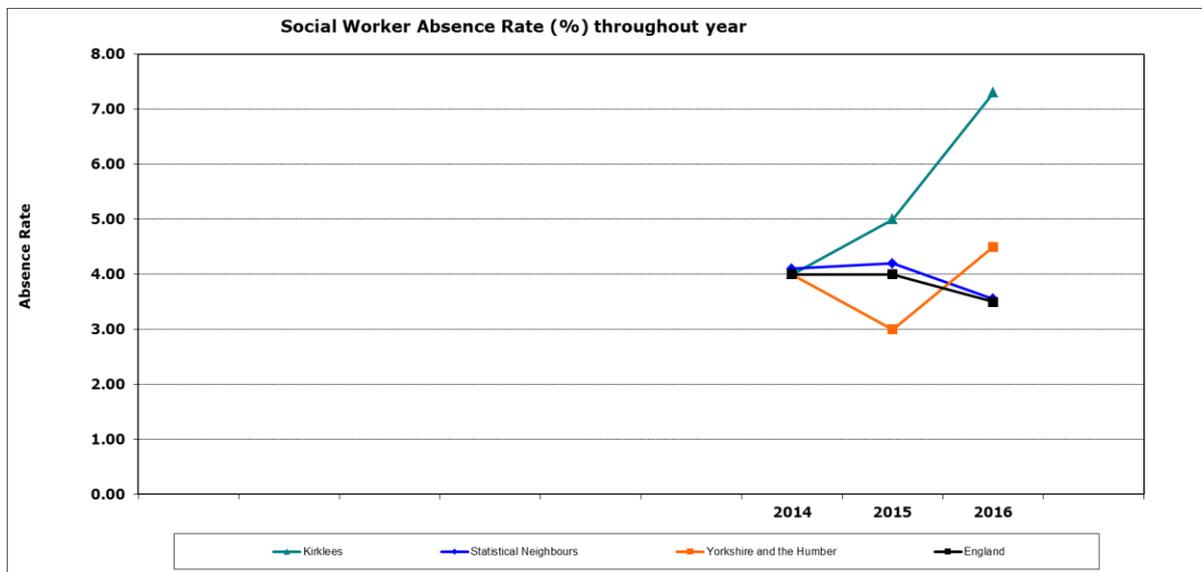
The proportion of children subject to a Child Protection plan is closer to national norms, but below that seen in Statistical Neighbours.



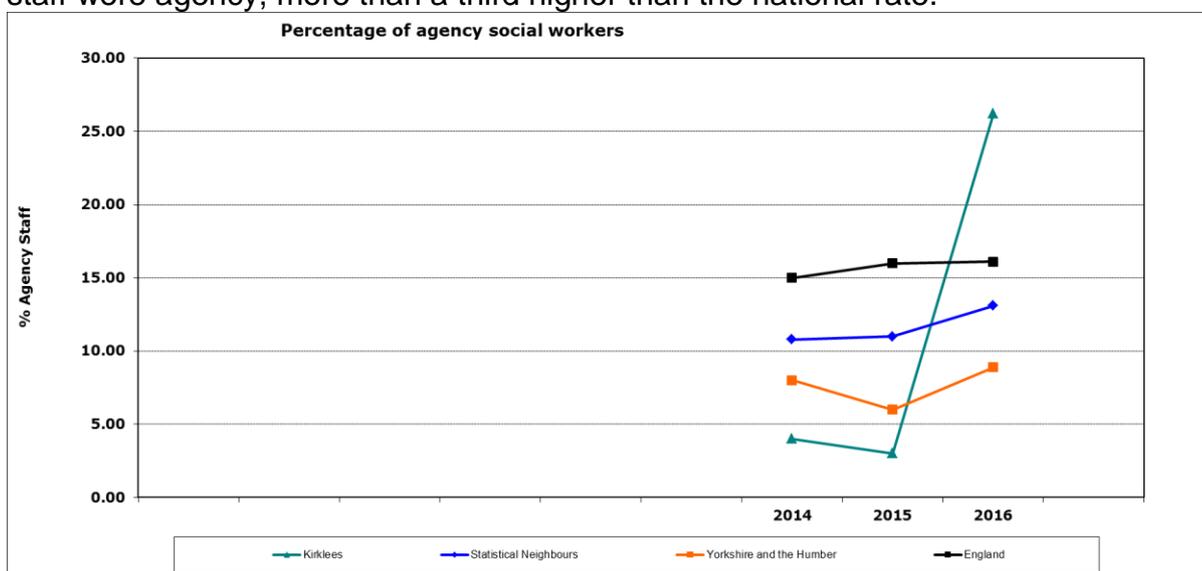
The proportion of children who are Looked After is more broadly in line with national and Statistical neighbour averages, as can be seen in the graph below. However an analysis of wider data shows causes for concern in care management and placements. The number of admissions to care has increased by 52% from 2012/2013. Kirklees has a relatively low rate of children placed in family type settings and relatively high rates in residential settings. The proportion of Kirklees Looked After Children in fostering placements is below the national average (68% to 74%). The proportion of children placed in residential and secure settings is 50% higher than the national rate (17% to 11%). Lastly, the proportion of children placed with parents is double the national average (10% to 5%).



The impact of these pressures within the local safeguarding system can be seen in data on staffing – absence rates for social workers in Kirklees have nearly doubled in the past two years and are now double the national average.



Even more marked is the impact on agency staffing – which, whatever the skills and qualities of the individuals, offers less consistency for children and higher costs for the Council. The proportion of agency staff rose more than five-fold from 2015 to 2016. In 2016 a quarter of staff were agency, more than a third higher than the national rate.



The high use of agency staff and the high proportion of children placed in residential and secure is placing significant pressure on the local authority budgets. Children’s Services overspent by thirteen million pounds in 2016/17. The Council increased the base budget of the service by seven million in 2017/18, however the already projecting a significant overspend. This level of expenditure is not sustainable into the future.

However, there are also significant positives in Kirklees that can be built on:

- The is cross party support for Children’s Services and commitment from the Council to improving outcomes for children and young people;
- Children’s Services staff are child focused and committed to innovation and improvement;
- Partnerships in Kirklees are strong. Partners are committed to working with Children’s Services to improve outcomes for children and young people;

An Agreed Approach to Improvement

Using the analysis set out above and informed by Leeds experience of improvement work the authorities have worked together to develop an agreed approach to improvement.

It recognises that what is required is cultural change and clear focus on outcomes for children and families rather than systems and processes. The Kirklees is committed to becoming a child friendly authority where services and outcomes for children and young people are at the heart of what the Council does.

Leeds has worked with Kirklees to develop an agreed programme of support that will see Leeds deliver a programme to improve existing services and, based on Leeds experience of innovation and improvement, to implement a range of evidence based interventions that will deliver better outcomes for children and young people in Kirklees. This focus on evidence based approaches and outcomes is deliberate, 'The local authority has taken a thoughtful and methodical approach to improvement and has followed the child's journey. Firm foundations underpin the effectiveness of services. Leeds has placed a considerable emphasis on creating an environment where good quality social work can flourish' (OfSTED inspection of Leeds Children's Services 2015). Getting the outcomes right for children and young people has significantly reduced expenditure on Children's Services in Leeds. The number of children and young people looked after in Leeds has reduced by fourteen percent since 2011 and the number of children in external residential placements has more than halved from one hundred and ten (2011) to fifty one and use of agency staff has reduced from between 20 and 25% (2011) to less than 5%. As a result expenditure on placements for looked after children in Leeds has reduced by twelve million and agency costs have reduced by over five million.

It is anticipated that getting the outcomes right for children and young people will also achieve reductions in costs over time. However, it is anticipated based on experience in Leeds and in other authorities that it will take two to three years to fully realise these savings. 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 ten priorities, with a plan on page for each priority.

1. Children Looked After
2. Care Leavers
3. Early Help and Edge of Care
4. Front Door
5. Workforce
6. Practice
7. Voice of the Child and Families
8. Leadership
9. Partnership
10. Performance and QA

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.

Section 2: Action Plans

Children Looked After

Rationale:

This is the first priority of our plan because Children Looked After are 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 Looked After Children. We

Aims:

- Improve social work practice with Children Looked After
- Improve speed and rigour of decision making and legal processes so no child is left at risk
- Ensure more children are placed in family type settings and as close to their existing communities as possible
- Improve the range, quality and cost-effectiveness of placements for Children Looked After
- Improve support for returning home safely
- Strengthen the role of Corporate Parenting Board

Actions:

1. Audit and review care planning and implement a new care planning model
2. Support and training for staff, managers and IROs for new care planning model
3. Review internal residential provision
4. Review Fostering service and recruitment strategy
5. Case review of all external placements and all placements with parents and implement action planning to move children on where safe and suitable (O19)
6. Develop and agree a Medium Term Sufficiency Strategy (O20)
7. Implement improved decision making governance to include a Gateway Panel, a Permanency Panel and improved Adoption Decision Making (O22)
8. Implement stronger legal case management processes
9. Develop a reunification strategy to support safe and successful return to family or kinship carers
10. Review and implement improvements for Independent Visitor Scheme (O21)
11. Strengthen Corporate Parenting through improved involvement of children and young people and better data to inform their work.
12. Develop role and influence of Children Looked After Council

Deliverables:

- Care planning model developed and agreed by Apr18. Training complete for all staff by Jul 18
- Sufficiency Strategy including reviews and action plans for internal and external fostering, residential and PWP, reunification in place by Jan 18
- Local Offer for Foster Carers in place by Apr 18
- Improved governance and legal processes– robust Permanence, Gateway and Adoption Decision Making panels in place by December 17, strengthened case manager support and review
- New support arrangements in place for Corporate Parenting Board by Jan 18

Success measures

- Proportion of children placed outside Kirklees is reduced safely and appropriately. Indicative target of 50% by March 19.
- Proportion of children placed with parents is reduced safely and appropriately. Indicative target is 25% reduction by March 18, 50% reduction by March 19
- Increase in timeliness of independent return interviews for Looked After Children that have been missing. Target 80% within 72 hours by March 18, 100% by March 19.
- Placement costs reduced. Targets TBC once review of placements completed

Care Leavers

Rationale:

Care Leavers are a high priority for this plan because as Corporate Parents our responsibilities continue into adulthood. Most young people are supported by their parents until the age of 25 so we need to consider how we can, as the Council and its partners, provide the same or better support for Care Leavers who face more challenges than most in their transition to adulthood. Whilst a lot of our support is good, we know from OfSTED and our own data and reviews that there is much more to do. 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 with need extra support with their mental health, and to support all Care Leavers into learning and work.

Aims:

- All Care Leavers work with their own Personal Advisor to agree a high quality Pathway Plan
- Care Leavers mental health needs reviewed and priority access to mental health services secured
- 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

Actions:

1. Audit quality of assessments and plans in Pathway Plans and agree and implement improved model and process for Pathway Plans (O26)
2. Review Care Leaver Service and put in place plan to improve caseloads, leadership, retention, training and support (O23)
3. Agree and implement training and support programme for Personal Advisors. (O23)
4. Trial use of IROs to monitor Pathway Plans in first year post Care for those young people with additional needs (O26)
5. Work with local colleges, schools and employers to agree additional support and opportunities for Care Leavers not in education or work. (O24)
6. Work in partnership with local NHS providers to review mental health needs of care leavers and implement improved access to CAMHS and wider support. (O25)
7. Develop local offer for Care Leavers to include free/discounted access to leisure services, apprenticeships and work experience, possible reductions to Council Tax, business/partner offers
8. Strengthen role and influence of Care Leavers Council

Deliverables:

- Care Leaver service reviewed and improvement plan in place by Dec 17
- Audits of practice complete by Dec 17
- New Care Leaver Practice Model agreed and in place by April 18
- Training and Support Programme for Personal Advisors in place from Jan to July 18
- Local Offer for Care Leavers in place from Apr 18
- Improved priority access to mental health support for all Care leavers by Apr 18
- Partnership Plan for Care Leaver learning and work agreed and implemented by Apr 18

Success measures

- Care leavers are involved in agreeing up to date, high quality Pathway Plans (25% April 2018; 50% Sept 2018 100% Dec 2018)
- Sustained reduction in waiting times for CAMHS. Waiting times to be below 28 day target each month from Dec 17

- Increase in the proportion of Care Leavers that are in learning or work (60% in education or work by Sept 2018, 70% by September 19)

Early Help and Edge of Care

Rationale:

Early help for children and families is more effective and less expensive than intervening when problems become entrenched. Even if early help 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. Without enough early help and targeted support pressures on social work can become too high, reducing the quality of decision making and practice and raising costs. Thus, in summary, effective early help is better for children, better for the local safeguarding system and better for the public purse.

Aims:

- To rebalance and strengthen the safeguarding system through developing better early help and preventative services
- To reduce pressures on social work services through improved early help and community support
- To increase the number of children and families supported through early help
- To improve the quality of front line practice and develop a more relational model of support
- To strengthen community level partnership working around Early Help Hubs
- To raise the confidence and satisfaction of local partners in the effectiveness of early help
- To promote a culture of innovation and evidence informed improvement

Actions:

1. DfE to create a £1.2 million Improvement and Innovation Fund for Kirklees to invest and adapt Innovation Programme initiatives for edge of care and early help (O17)
2. Review community early help arrangements and agree shared local action plans with partner agencies
3. Audit quality and impact of Early Help practice and agree development programme and support for front line staff
4. Engage all local partners in developing shared Early Help strategy
5. Kirklees Partnership to develop and agree priorities, co-financing and investment plan (O17) to include:
 - MST team
 - Family Group Conferencing team
 - One multi-agency Hertfordshire Family Safeguarding Model team
 - Problem solving court
6. Review overall range and quality of citywide Early Help services
7. Develop and agree an Early Help Strategy

Deliverables:

- Audit of practice and Early Help arrangements complete by November 2017
- Innovation and Improvement fund in place and priorities agreed by December 2017
- Innovation and Improvement funded services to be in place from April 2018
- Early Help Strategy agreed and in place by March 2017
- Local action plans agreed for all Early Help hubs by April 2018
- Early help staff development programme in place by March 2018

Success measures

- Independent evaluation shows new teams providing effective early help (March 2019)

- Independent evaluations shows new teams and wider early help services reducing number of children requiring social work intervention and becoming looked after (March 2019)
- Local partners more confident and more satisfied with locality Early Help (April 2018)

Front Door
<i>Rationale:</i>
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. The OfSTED report and data highlight problems with the Front Door in Kirklees – growing referral numbers, lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities, limits to partnership working and large rises in the number of referrals and assessments leading to no further action.
<i>Aims:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To strengthen the professional leadership, practice and decision-making of the MASH Front Door service • To improve partnership working, governance and multi-agency input into the MASH • To rebalance the proportion of referrals and assessments leading to no further action • To strengthen local multi-agency working for children and families affected by domestic violence
<i>Actions:</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthen professional leadership of MASH through secondment of experienced Leeds manager 2. Undertake structured review of MASH using regional ADCS peer review model (O12) 3. Agree and implement multi-agency plan for MASH improvement including: leadership; staffing; professional development and support; decision-making and 'thresholds' (O12) 4. Institute stronger review and quality assurance processes for decision-making around the Front Door 5. Review multi-agency processes and governance for responding to domestic violence, including MARAC (O13) 6. Agree and implement shared plan with Police, NHS and other key partners for improving domestic violence decision-making, processes and support. (O13) 7. Engage with key local partners and agree shared plan for improving consistency and quality of input from relevant agencies to initial child protection strategy meetings (O14)
<i>Deliverables:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim management arrangements in place and effective by September 2017 • MASH Review completed and action plan agreed by October 2017 • Multi-agency review of domestic violence completed and action plan in place by December 2017 • Decision review processes in place by October 2017
<i>Success measures</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of contacts and referrals to Front Door are reduced (25% March 2018; 50% March 2019) • Proportion of referrals closed with No Further Action or closed from assessment are safely reduced to benchmark norms – indicative target – NFA – 10% by March 18, Closed from Assessment – 45% by March 18, 35% by March 19 Increased skills, knowledge and morale of MASH staff (October 2017)

- Review and audit show strong and improving decision-making practice (March 2018)
- Increase in timeliness of key Child Protection meetings – Initial Child Protection Conferences within 15 working days to 70% by July 2018, 90% by March 2019;

Workforce

Rationale:

As OfSTED have observed, the child focus and commitment of front line staff continues despite the change and challenges of recent months. These values, and our children's services workforce are vital to our improvement plans. However, the impact of a dysfunctional system are clear – staff morale is low, absence is high and rising and use and cost of agency staffing has spiralled in recent years. This means that children and families face changes to their worker and instability and limits to the support they need, staff feel too pressured to produce their best work and the costs of agency staffing reduces the money available for investing in improvement. We need to 'create the conditions for success' – making sure we put in place the right respect, support, training and development that staff need and deserve.

Aims:

- Morale, confidence and job satisfaction of staff improved
- Staff report improved management, support and training
- Recruitment and retention of staff improved;
- Use and cost of agency staff will decrease
- Improved stability of social worker for children and families

Actions:

1. Career development framework will be developed in consultation with staff and unions and implemented (O2)
2. A professional development offer will be developed aligned to the Career development framework (O2)
3. In consultation with staff and unions undertake a review of staff support and working conditions including: pastoral support, IT systems; administrative support; offices and communication. (O2)
4. Agree and implement programme of work to improve staff working conditions and support (O2)
5. Develop and implement improved arrangements for appraisal and management supervision (O2)
6. Implement new arrangements for monitoring staffing issues including: staff satisfaction; caseloads; training absence, recruitment and retention (O2), including annual process for assessing work and views of workers through Social Work Health Check
7. Engage with local Teaching partnership to maximise support from HEI partners
8. Undertake renewed programme of recruitment for key staff groups

Deliverables:

- Career development framework agreed with staff and unions and in place by April 2018
- Professional development offer agreed with staff and unions and in operation from April 2018
- Review of staff support and working conditions complete by January 2018
- Action plan for improving support and working conditions implemented from March 2018
- Improved supervision and appraisal arrangements in place from January 2018
- New monitoring arrangements in place by January 2018

Success measures

- Improved morale, confidence and skills of social workers and early help staff
- Reduced use of agency staff (25% reduction by March 2018; 50% September 2018; 75% March 2019)
- Reduced sickness absence (25% reduction by March 2018; 50% September 2018)

Practice

Rationale:

The quality of front line practice is key to improving the lives of children and families in Kirklees. Whatever the systems, processes and governance within the city 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. It is proposed that the underpinning values and model are relational practice as this is an approach that has worked well and driven rapid improvement in other local areas such as Leeds and West Berkshire. This approach has both a strong emerging evidence base and a strong moral foundation as it emphasises building on strengths, and empowering children, families and communities through stronger relationships. Adopting this approach will provide an opportunity for additional support and expertise through the DfE Innovation Fund supported 'Leeds Relational Practice Centre'.

Aims:

- Improved front line practice in social work and early help
- Improved management and supervision to support and improve front line practice
- 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

Actions:

1. Train all Kirklees staff in Restorative Practice
2. Provide training for key partner agency staff and leaders in Restorative Practice
3. Develop, agree and implement practice model – first stage 'Doing simple things well', second co-produced with academic theoretically based, evidence informed model of outcomes focused practice
4. Audit sample of cases and institute a targeted training and development programme for staff and managers on assessment and planning (O9), including additional focus on :pre-birth assessment best practice (O16); capturing the voice and experience of the child (O10); and culturally appropriate practice
5. Implement training and support programme for staff and partners on practice and planning of key multi-agency activities such as CIN meetings, CP conferences and core groups (O15)
6. Develop practice leadership and management programme for local social work managers
7. Review current service staffing and leadership structures and recommend on new structures in consultation with partners
8. Implement intensive programme to introduce new supervision model, practice and training

Deliverables:

- All staff trained in Restorative Practice by Mar 18
- Key partner agency staff and leaders trained in Restorative Practice by Mar 18
- Practice Model – stage 1 in place by October 2017. Full new model in place by April, training programmes from October 2017 for stage one, from April 2018 for stage two.
- Targeted training and development for assessment and planning in place from November 2017
- Multi-agency training and development programme for shared CIN and CP processes in place from November 2017
- Structure review and options appraisal completed by February 2018

Success measures

- Proportion of (a) Kirklees staff and (b) partner staff trained in Restorative Practice – Kirklees staff 100% complete basic training by March 2018, 25% complete 'deep dive' training by March 2019. Partner staff , including other Departments

within the Council – 200 staff completed introductory training by Mar 2018 over 500 by December 2018 over 750 by March 2019

- Positive feedback on quality and impact of training
- Audit shows increasing quality and timeliness of assessments and planning. 65% Assessments complete within 45 days by July 2018, 85% by March 2019. Quality target to be agreed after baseline audits complete
- Increase in timeliness of key Child in Need and Child Protection meetings Child in Need reviews within 6 weeks increased to 50% by July 2018, 75% by Mar 19. Core groups completed within 20 days increase to 65% by Mar 18, to 85% by Mar 19

Voice of the Child

Rationale:

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 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 front line practice such as visits and assessments to how children and young people were involved in leadership and partnership planning.

Aims:

- To strengthen arrangements for involving and empowering children and young people across children's services
- To ensure practice, processes and planning properly engage, involve and reflect the voice of each child and young person in Kirklees
- To strengthen the role of children and young people in Kirklees' partnership arrangements

Actions:

1. Undertake a review led by care-experienced young people of arrangements for involving children in strategic partnership and planning and agree and implement an improvement plan, with particular focus on Corporate Parenting Board (O8), advocacy arrangements; Children's Trust Board, LAC Council and Care Leaver's Council. Review to be led by care experienced young people.
2. Agree and implement an action plan to improve the quality and timeliness of complaints and feedback procedures for children and families (O4)
3. As part of practice training and development programme, provide tailored training on promoting children's voices in front line practice, to include: ensuring effective social work visits (O11) and including the voice of the child in assessments, plans and reviews (O10)
4. Strengthen and promote the Kirklees Independent Visitor service and its support for children and young people (O21)
5. Review arrangements for involving and empowering families involved in child welfare system.
6. Agree and implement action plan to strengthen involvement of families.

Deliverables:

- Review of children's voice in strategic partnership and planning completed by Mar 2018
- Voice improvement plan implemented by April 2018
- New arrangements for Corporate Parenting Board in place by April 2018
- Complaints procedures revised by December 2017
- Training on voice and practice completed by July 2018
- Independent Visitor scheme improvement plan completed by December 2017

Success measures

- Improved timeliness and quality of statutory visits: proportion of children with Child Protection plan visited in past four weeks increased to 85% by March 18, proportion of children with Child Protection plan visited within two weeks increased to 85% by March 19. Proportion of Children Looked After visited to practice standards increased to 85% by March 18. Targets for % seen alone TBC with baseline data

- Young people led review follow up identifies improvements to processes and impact of involving young people. Actions to address areas for improvement agreed Mar 18, completed by Mar 19
- Timeliness and satisfaction rates for complaints improved (50% September 2018)

Leadership

Rationale:

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. As described above, 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.

Aims:

- To secure strong strategic leadership for children's services both in the interim and to support longer term improvement
- To nurture and support confident and effective front line and middle leadership in children's services
- To develop a shared, child-focused culture across children's services and wider partnerships in Kirklees

Actions:

1. Leeds to provide interim DCS and Head of Social Work, Family Support and Child Protection
2. Leeds to second experienced senior managers to lead work around MASH and SW practice
3. Engage all local partners and staff in developing a clear shared culture, vision and strategy for children's services in Kirklees
4. Implement a leadership development programme for Kirklees children's services managers
5. Agree and implement a training and development programme for key partnership leaders including: Elected Members; Children's Trust members; KSCB leaders and key managers in NHS and Police
6. Review current leadership structures and agree plan for longer term leadership
7. Develop programme of ongoing mentoring and coaching for Kirklees leadership team from successful and experienced leaders in Leeds
8. Leeds managers to work with Kirklees colleagues to lead a review of commissioned services

Deliverables:

- Interim leadership in place from Summer 2017
- Leadership structures reviewed and future model agreed by Kirklees Council by March 2018
- Longer term leadership team in place by Summer 2018
- Review of commissioned services complete by March 2018
- Leadership Development Programme completed by March 2018
- Mentoring and coaching arrangements in place by April 2018

Success measures

- Local leaders in Council and key partner agencies report satisfaction and improved confidence in children's services leadership (December 2108)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved Leadership and decision making (recruitment and retention rates improved; quality of practice – see above) • Positive feedback from leaders for quality and impact of leadership development •
Partnership
<i>Rationale:</i>
<p>Success and change in children’s services needs 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. Particular focus will be directed to areas identified by OfSTED as creating pressures within the system such as the Front Door and joint working around domestic violence.</p>
<i>Aims:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed shared culture, values and vision across Kirklees children’s services • Agreed shared priorities and strategy across Kirklees children’s services • Collective investment across services in shared priorities and plans • Improved understanding, confidence and skills in key safeguarding issues such as ‘thresholds’ across all children’s services and local partners • Clear improvement plan and good progress for strengthening role of Children’s Trust Board and Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board
<i>Actions:</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with Elected Members and partners to re-energise CFTB with clear vision and strategy, including measurable outcomes to evaluate effectiveness 2. Agree and implement range of input to the improvement plans of the KSCB 3. Work with partners on developing and strengthening ‘Hub’ arrangements and develop and implement strategy for early help 4. Specific work with partners on thresholds – clear shared understanding of levels of need and suitable response 5. Develop and agree improved partnership arrangements in key areas, particularly for children with particular vulnerabilities e.g. DV, CSE, Missing 6. Agree and implement a training and development programme for all partners on new Kirklees values and vision, restorative practice and Outcomes Based Accountability
<i>Deliverables:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Children and Young People’s Plan developed and agreed by all local partners, to include visions, values, culture and investment plan by March 2017 • New Early Help Strategy agreed by March 2017 • Improvement plan in place for KSCB and good progress made by June 2018 • Review of partnership arrangements complete and new arrangements in place by April 2018 • Multi-agency improvement plans agreed for key vulnerable groups including domestic violence, CSE and missing children.
<i>Success measures</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

Performance and Quality Assurance

Rationale:

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 is it making in the lives of children and young people.

Aims:

- Developing a shared culture of reflection, learning and improvement
- Regular, high quality performance reports
- Managers report more useful, positive high support and high challenge
- Accurate information available to front line teams and strategic management
- Regular audits undertaken, used to inform practice improvement at all levels and informing staff

Actions:

1. Review current plans for implementation of Liquid Logic system and agree and implement revised, robust and costed programme plan
2. Develop and implement strong, single framework for performance and QA with a focus on learning and improvement (O6). To include: restorative and 'managing upwards' approaches to performance; learning from complaints (O4); dispute resolution processes (O3)
3. Implement new arrangements for shared case audit and learning (O6)
4. Agree an improved programme of regular performance reporting and analysis for key stakeholders (O5) to include: (a) Front line managers (b) Senior Managers (c) Corporate Parenting Board (O8), (d) KSCB, (e) Children's Trust Board, (f) Key KC Boards, (g) locality partnerships
5. Develop learning and improvement culture and role and impact of key teams for performance and QA including training and support for : IROs and CP Chairs (O14); performance and data teams; Reg 44 visitors; voice and complaints officers; workforce development
6. Provide training and support for front line and senior managers in performance, quality assurance and improvement.
7. Implement use of Outcomes Based Accountability at partnership, strategic and team level as approach to support and inform shared prioritisation, learning and improvement
8. Undertake a robust strategic needs analysis to support and inform planning and commissioning of local services over the medium term. (O27)

Deliverables:

- Strategic Needs Assessment complete by January 2018
- Performance and QA framework agreed and implemented by December 2017
- Performance and QA training programme and development programme agreed and implemented from January 2018
- Costed programme plan finalised for full implementation of IT system and training for staff
- OBA approach pilots complete by December 2017

Success measures

- Performance Management information used at all levels of the organisation (April 2018)
- Local staff and managers report improved satisfaction and confidence in IT, performance and QA (April 2018)
- Outcomes Based Accountability being used across services and partnership to inform Service Improvements (Jan 2018)

- Quality Assurance Information used routinely to review quality and impact of services and inform improvement (April 2018)
- systems Liquid Logic programme implemented successfully (September 2018)