

**Update on Telford & Wrekin
'Getting to Good' Improvement Plan
January 2018**



THEME ONE: SCRUTINY OVERSIGHT AND ADVOCACY

G2G ACTION	OFSTED RECOMMENDATION	UPDATE AT 31.12.2017	IMPACT/ PERFORMANCE
1.1	Ensure that all social workers receive sufficiently regular and good quality supervision, oversight and direction from first-line managers to support consistently good practice. (OFSTED REC.1)	<p>2 Group Manager posts have been established in Child Protection and Family Support (CPFS) Service and Children in Care (CiC) Service.</p> <p>SDM capacity in CPFS has been increased to enable improved oversight and more support to team managers. We are receiving support on implementing systemic practice from Kensington & Chelsea under the DfE 'Partners in Practice' scheme. SDMs, AD, DCAS and some team managers attended systemic training delivered by them and this will continue during 2018.</p> <p>Standards and principles guidance has been published, as well as developments in policies and procedures, to help ensure staff are better aware of practice expectations.</p> <p>Protocol developments have been completed to enable better monitoring/reporting of supervision arrangements. Improvements against this recommendation have been impaired by some long term sickness absences and increasing demand across the system.</p>	<p>File audit scores for 'management oversight and decision making' show an improving picture over scores for the previous year. However audit scores for 'quality of case supervision' show that it is still an area for improvement.</p>

1.2	<p>Ensure that the IRO service provides sufficient scrutiny and drive to planning for children and young people. In particular, ensure that IRO's caseloads are in line with statutory guidance. (OFSTED REC.2)</p>	<p>A significant investment has been made in order to achieve improvements in this service. A full time Conference and Reviewing Manager post was established, and following difficulties recruiting a further investment was made in appointing an interim manager. A permanent manager joined the team in November. In addition, investment has been made in the team through 2 additional permanent full-time IRO posts and a 12 month temporary post. Investment was made in an interim IRO post to cover periods of sickness absence. All posts within the service area are now filled with permanent staff.</p> <p>The service has been reviewed and new arrangements put into place to increase effectiveness of service and communication with operational teams, e.g. a duty IRO system to provide advice and guidance and refreshed escalation process.</p> <p>Work is also being undertaken, informed by the Care Council ('VOICE'), to change the way CiC Reviews are delivered and improve participation of children and young people.</p>	<p>The average IRO caseload is currently 84 – however due to having some new staff whose caseloads are building up gradually, there is a variance across the team with the highest caseload being 96. The improved management oversight of the service has resulted in improved performance around timeliness of ICPCs (86%) (this was 94% but several ICPCs were cancelled in December due to heavy snow), RCPCs (96%) and CiC Reviews (96%) held in timescale, which are all achieving their targets.</p> <p>In addition, added administrative resource has improved the timeliness of distribution of CP minutes, with an average 90% of minutes distributed in timescale. File audit scores for 'IRO challenge and scrutiny are effective' were higher than the previous year but there is still need for an improvement in consistency.</p>
1.3	<p>Develop further the effectiveness of performance management so that it is more responsive to new priorities as they emerge and takes into account feedback from children, young people and their families. (OFSTED</p>	<p>The performance management system has been reviewed and a comprehensive, interactive dashboard developed to provide monthly performance data. One CSSSMT per month is used solely to discuss performance, understand the stories behind the performance and agree improvement priorities for each area of service, including the Conference and Reviewing Team.</p>	<p>Performance is being understood better and a whole systems approach taken to improving it. For example, a performance issue was identified re. plans for permanence at second CiC Review. Permanence arrangements were made more robust, including the</p>

	<p>REC.3)</p>	<p>Team managers attend extended CSSSMT performance meetings quarterly. In addition, separate performance reports are provided weekly and monthly to SDMs and Team Manager to enable closer 'real time' scrutiny of performance and demand within the system.</p> <p>Feedback was sought from 'VOICE' about ways of improving children and young people's experience of CiC Reviews, and is being used to inform changes in the way reviews are arranged.</p>	<p>implementation of a permanence panel. The new arrangements were briefed out at a series of staff briefings early this year. This has resulted in a significant improvement in performance regarding the proportion of CiC with a permanence plan (including twin tracking) at second review.</p>
<p>1.4</p>	<p>Ensure that that the support of an advocate or independent visitor is available for all children and young people who could benefit from this. (OFSTED REC.11)</p>	<p>The Rights and Representations Team have implemented an ongoing awareness raising program with social work teams and children and young people in care. They have attended all team meetings to provide advice about the service they offer, and also about the jointly commissioned Independent Visitor Service. In addition to this, the team sent out information about VOICE, rights and representations and the Independent Visitors Service to all children in care of 4 and over. They also send information out to all new children and young people as they come into care. Although the team raised awareness of the provision of advice and information to children subject to CP procedures, and the children's letters about child protection conferences contain contact details for them, uptake for advocacy in this area of their work is proving slow to develop.</p>	<p>The Rights and Representation Team provided advocacy for 12 formal complaints 2016-17 of which 9 (75%) were resolved at stage 1, 1 still active at stage 1, 1 still active at stage 2 and one resolved by ombudsman 48 potential complaints were resolved with R&R representation without recourse to formal procedures. In the period April – Dec 2017 48% of CiC over 4 attended their CiC Reviews (against a target of 70%). Although 95% of CiC actively contributed in some way, and there is a small improvement regarding numbers attending over performance for 2016-17, more needs to be done. Work is being undertaken to make CiC Reviews</p>

			<p>more child and young person friendly, informed by work with VOICE. Although this will take time to achieve the stretch target we set ourselves, we are anticipating some improvement during the next few months.</p> <p>6 CiC are currently matched with Independent Visitors (IV).</p> <p>Going forward: The IV provision is currently commissioned jointly with other West Midlands Authorities, and is undergoing a tendering exercise in preparation for the contract with the current provider ending in March 2018</p>
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THEME TWO: QUALITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF FRONT LINE PRACTICE

<p>2.1</p>	<p>Support improved outcomes for children and young people by making sure that plans contain clear details, actions and timescales and are informed by timely assessments that contain clear analysis. (OFSTED REC.4)</p>	<p>'Strengthening practice' training in assessment and planning was commissioned and delivered to practitioners. In addition, a 'Frontline' consultant social worker has been appointed, and as well as supervising our 4 new 'Frontline' practitioners she will be refreshing and reinvigorating the case management 'pods'. In addition, 2 clinical consultant social worker posts have been established to support teams to progress systemic working.</p>	<p>Although file audit activity since April 2017 identified an improving picture, particularly regarding the quality of assessments, there is more to do around quality of plans. Going forward: The QA Framework has been developed and published alongside practice standards and principles, and the case audit system has been overhauled to enable more audits to be undertaken directly with social workers in preparation for new Ofsted inspection framework (ILACS). This followed a workshop on case tracking delivered to team managers and SDMs by our Ofsted Regional Lead Inspector. A major piece of work will be undertaken to improve document templates which will support improvements in the quality of assessments and plans.</p>
<p>2.2</p>	<p>Ensure that an appropriate range of agencies are engaged and share information within child protection strategy discussions. (OFSTED REC.5)</p>	<p>Family Connect have re-negotiated with health colleagues in order to promote more consistent attendance. Police already have consistent attendance. This had led to some improvements but there are still some issues re. consistency of attendance by health due to capacity issues within their services. CPFS were having difficulty to securing consistent health attendance at strategy meetings and negotiated with health in order to be able to use the health</p>	<p>In Family Connect 69% of strategy meetings April – December 2017 had at least three agencies in attendance against a target of 80% Performance in CPFS was 34%. However arrangements with health staff in Family Connect enabled a significant improvement in</p>

		<p>representatives within Family Connect for strategy meetings in CPFS. If issues continue then this will be raised with TWSCB.</p>	<p>December 2017, where performance in CPFS was 69%</p>
2.3	<p>Strengthen and speed up permanence planning for those children and young people who achieve permanence through routes other than adoption. (OFSTED REC.10)</p>	<p>A considerable amount of work has been completed to improve in this area and reduce delay in children and young people achieving permanence. A refreshed permanence strategy was agreed and briefed out to staff. In addition, a permanence panel meets regularly to monitor progress on permanence planning and ratify plans, to reduce drift and ensure all children and young people have a permanence plan (including twin track plans) by their second CiC review. The Fostering strategy has been updated to include an increase in focus on long term placements to achieve permanence. Developments are underway in the implementation of an innovative North Midlands Regional Adoption and Permanency Partnership with Stoke, Staffordshire and Shropshire.</p>	<p>At the end of July 97.5% of children in care had a permanence plan (including twin track) in place by their second CiC Review. This is an improving picture and reflects the work completed by the permanence panel in improving oversight of permanence planning.</p>
THEME THREE: OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES			
3.1	<p>Improve work to identify children and young people who are privately fostered and assess their welfare, so that arrangements are fit for purpose and compliant with statutory guidance. (OFSTED REC.6)</p>	<p>Major improvements have been made in the arrangements for privately fostered children. A project team was set up to improve management arrangements and oversee the improvement requirements, and a part time lead officer identified to monitor the implementation of the project plan. A range of awareness raising activities have been delivered with members of the public, partner agencies and internal staff, and publicity materials have been refreshed and disseminated. Additional support is being provided to Private Foster carers, children and young people in those arrangements.</p>	<p>We currently have 9 privately fostered (PF) children and young people</p> <p>Between April and December 2017:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ We had 18 PF notifications ➤ 100% initial PF visits were in timescale ➤ 93% stat PF visits were in timescale ➤ 67% PF assessments in timescale

		A Private Fostering monthly subgroup is in place chaired by the SDM for CIC & Fostering to ensure closer management oversight in relation to awareness raising, training, assessments, visits, support and discussion of permanence.	
3.2	Ensure that return home interviews for children and young people who have been missing from home or care are all carried out in a timely manner. (OFSTED REC.7)	<p>A review of arrangements regarding children and young people who go missing was completed at the beginning of this year and a number of improvements have been implemented. This includes system improvements so that practitioners receive alerts when children and young people on their caseload go missing or are found, and team managers receive alerts if return home interviews are not completed. Staff briefings and managers learning meetings were used to raise awareness of responsibilities to undertake and record return home interviews.</p> <p>In order to improve the quality of service to young people who are not currently open to children's services, a part time post was created with responsibility for completing and recording return home interviews, particularly for those young people thought to be at risk of CSE,</p>	<p>All children who have been missing are offered a RHI where appropriate for their individual situation. Although this shows improvement over the previous year, there is further improvement to be made, particularly around timeliness of RHIs.</p> <p>Going forward: The service offered by early help in undertaking RHIs where there is no open involvement has been successful, and will be extended to cover all missing episodes. This will help achieve timescales as well as offering greater independence.</p>
3.3	Strengthen arrangements for supported and supervised contact, so that children looked after do not experience the cancellation of contact sessions due to a lack of resources.	<p>Although the contact team was fully staffed, the consistency of the service was compromised by fluctuating demand due to rising numbers of children in care and levels of contact in care plans. Investment was made to increase the capacity of the team by one full time post and recruit additional contact workers.</p> <p>A system was also set up to monitor the reason for contact being cancelled. This is being further developed within our 'protocol' recording system.</p>	<p>In the period April – December 2017:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 9% of contact sessions which were cancelled were cancelled for service reasons (staff illness etc) <p>We have a nil target for this so it is still an area for improvement.</p> <p>Going forward:</p>

	(OFSTED REC.8)	In addition, contact was moved from an office building to a dedicated contact centre and feedback from parents has been positive.	The contact team was restructured to enable higher levels of cover at peak times (such as after school), and to provide a service at weekends
3.4	Increase the availability of suitable housing, including emergency accommodation, for homeless 16- and 17-year-olds and care leavers. (OFSTED REC.9)	<p>Work is ongoing to review and strengthen the sufficiency strategy to increase the range of accommodation available for 16-18 year olds and care leavers. A pilot project (established between the Council's Housing, Children's social care and <i>My Options</i> teams) commenced in June 2017 to provide 24/7 support to young people aged 16 to 24 years old who are vulnerable homeless or care leavers who live in the council's temporary accommodation at Dodmoor Grange. The Council's <i>My Options</i> team provides the 24/7 housing support. This pilot project was initially to run for 12 months and due to the successful outcomes achieved for young people using the service, it has been recently agreed that the project can continue.</p> <p>It is recognised that accommodation in unsupported Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) is not appropriate for many young people, and we have appointed an accommodation officer who is able to work with staff and young people to explore all other options before one of these are used. We have also ensured that care leavers are able to utilise the same day referral scheme to access supported accommodation which is reducing the need to use unsupported HMO's in an emergency.</p>	<p>In the period April – December 2017</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ no care leavers were recorded as homeless on 'in touch' records ➤ 1 care leaver was placed in in Bed & Breakfast by housing dept. for 3 days