



Central Bedfordshire Council Children's Services

Post Ofsted Inspection Action Plan

November 2017 – September 2018

Introduction

Central Bedfordshire Council is committed to ensuring that all children are happy, healthy and safe so that they get the best start in life. We are working with our partner agencies to further improve the services we provide to children, young people and their families.

This Post Ofsted Action Plan has been developed in response to the Ofsted Inspection that took place between 12 June and 6 July 2017. The Ofsted Inspection concluded that Children's Services in Central Bedfordshire are good and made nine recommendations. The Inspection considered:

1. Children who need help and protection – Good
2. Children looked after and achieving permanence – Requires improvement to be good
 - 2.1 Adoption performance – Good
 - 2.2 Experiences and progress of care leavers –Good
3. Leadership, management and governance – Good
4. Local Safeguarding Children Board - Good

The Action Plan is informed by the nine recommendations in the Ofsted Inspection report published on 25 August 2017. The inspection report can be found [here](#). This Action Plan has been co-produced with managers and practitioners in Central Bedfordshire Council Children's Services, led by the Director of Children's Services. This Action Plan does not cover the work of the Local Children Safeguarding Board which is independent.

The Action Plan will contain SMART objectives with detailed actions to be carried out. Monitoring of the Action Plan are as follows:

- Monthly monitoring of the plan by the Director of Children's Services with the Directorate Team for the first three months then quarterly thereafter
- Local Safeguarding Children Board on a quarterly basis
- Overview and Scrutiny on a quarterly basis
- Frontline management team on a quarterly basis
- Annual Report to the Corporate Leadership Team

The Action Plan will be updated monthly and provide evidence of progress against timescales. This will form the basis of regular monitoring. A data set and summary report will be prepared quarterly by the Deputy Director of Children's Services that will summarise progress and evidence how the identified actions are improving the service and the difference this is making for children and families in Central Bedfordshire. This will be submitted to the groups identified above to form the basis of the quarterly programme of review.

OFSTED RECOMMENDATIONS –Single Inspection Framework (SIF) 2017

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale	Lead	Progress Update	RAG
1	<p>Improve the effectiveness of frontline managers, Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Chairs in ensuring that children’s assessments are updated in response to changes, plans are progressed and drift is prevented.</p>	<p>1.1 Action</p> <p>A first line leadership and management programme will be developed for frontline managers, Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Chairs so that effective supervision, management and leadership is provided to practitioners. This will include all first line managers undertaking appropriate supervision training.</p> <p>Outcomes</p> <p>Effective supervision will be evidenced in audits.</p> <p>Frontline managers will evidence increased skill, confidence and effectiveness through self evaluation and evaluation by practitioners and managers.</p>	April 18	Head of Learning and Development	A first line leadership programme is in development. A learning needs analysis is currently underway.	Yellow

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		<p>1.2 Action</p> <p>The procedural guidance and practice standards for the completion of assessments will be reviewed, and practitioner and manager awareness promoted.</p> <p>A thematic audit on the quality of supervision, planning and review will be completed, and an improvement action plan devised. The impact of the action plan will be reviewed through audit in June 2018.</p> <p>Outcomes</p> <p>Performance data will show that all children's assessments are updated in compliance with practice standards.</p> <p>Audits will show that children's assessments are updated in response to change and that planning and review practice results in timely interventions for children.</p>	June 18	Head of Professional Standards	<p>A review of guidance and practice standards in respect of assessment practice was completed in November 2017.</p> <p>A thematic audit on supervision, planning and review was completed in November 2017 and an improvement action plan will be implemented from February 2018.</p>	

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		<p>1.3 Action</p> <p>Best practice in assessments learning events will be delivered to practitioners and managers by Consultant Social Workers and Audit Managers.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>Impact will be evidenced through a thematic audit.</p>	May 18	Head of Professional Standards	Best practice in assessments learning events began in November 2017.	
		<p>1.4 Action</p> <p>Child Protection Chairs will ensure that plans are progressing for children between review meetings, with a particular focus on children who have been Subject of a Child Protection Plan for +9 months and children who are subject of the Public Law Outline process.</p> <p>Bi-monthly review meetings will take place with the Family Support Practice Managers and Conference and Review Practice Manager for all children who are Subject of a Child Protection Plan for +9 months so that additional challenge and oversight will be provided to prevent drift.</p>	April 18	Head of Professional Standards	Bi-monthly review meetings for children who are Subject of a Child Protection Plan for +9months are underway.	

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		<p>Outcome</p> <p>Case file audit will evidence that effective and timely action is being taken for children.</p>				
		<p>1.5 Action</p> <p>The Independent Reviewing Officer Dispute Resolution process will be strengthened.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>Consistent recording of evidence of resolution of the issue of concern and collated learning and updates to managers on the successful completion of any required remedial action will be evidenced.</p> <p>Examples of good practice will also be shared with practitioners and managers to support learning about what good looks like.</p> <p>Compliance and impact will be reviewed through case file audit.</p>	February 18	Head of Professional Standards	A revised Dispute Resolution process has been implemented from September 2017.	

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		<p>1.6 Action</p> <p>Social workers and managers will be provided with additional guidance and support to produce consistently high-quality reports for Looked After Children Reviews, to ensure sufficient information about the child's progress is understood and consider where their needs have changed. A series of learning events led by the Consultant Social Worker and Head of Service are planned and will be delivered to all practitioners in Corporate Parenting by February 2018.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>The impact of the learning events will be evaluated through feedback from workshop attendees, their managers and an audit of case files. A roll out of these learning events to the broader social work staff group is planned from February 2018, informed by learning from the audit activity and workshop attendees.</p>	February 18	Head of Corporate Parenting	Planning is in hand for the delivery of assessment learning events.	

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		<p>1.7 Action</p> <p>Supervision practice standards will be reviewed and amended to ensure that progress for the child is explicitly and purposefully evaluated and recorded in all supervisions.</p> <p>All Team Managers will complete training on reflective, outcomes focused supervision.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>An audit of quality in supervision is planned to be undertaken in March 2018, to evaluate progress in supervision practice standards and identify further practice development needs.</p>	March 18	Head of Professional Standards	A survey of supervision experience by practitioners is currently underway.	
		<p>1.8 Action</p> <p>Social workers and managers will be provided with additional support and guidance on the formulation of plans that focus consistently on the outcomes to be achieved and the timescales for the child. Learning events will be delivered to all Corporate Parenting practitioners and managers.</p>	February 18	Head of Corporate Parenting	Planning is in hand for the delivery of planning learning events.	

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		<p>Outcome</p> <p>The impact of the learning events will be evaluated through feedback and an audit of case files. A roll out of these learning events to the broader social work staff group is planned from February 2018, informed by learning from the audit activity and feedback.</p>				
		<p>1.9 Action</p> <p>The Conference and Review Quality Assurance Meetings RAG rating system will be revised and reviewed to evidence greater oversight and impact of improvement actions recommended by Independent Reviewing Officer and Child Protection Chairs.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>Greater clarity will be evidenced on learning and remedial action activity. This will be provided in a quarterly highlight report to SMT, CSMT and an annual report to the Local Safeguarding Children Board.</p>	June 18	Head of Professional Standards	Quarterly presentations to SMT and CSMT will begin in December 2017.	

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2	Ensure that pre-proceedings work is initiated promptly when children's circumstances do not improve and, as part of this, that thorough and holistic assessments are carried out to inform future planning.	<p>2.1 Action</p> <p>Practitioners and managers will be provided with Legal Planning Meeting Training, guidance and support on outcomes focused practice.</p> <p>The guidance and support will be informed by best practice nationally and input from CAFCASS. A series of learning events is planned to be delivered to all Family Support Social Workers. A roll out of these learning events to the broader social work staff group will take place from April 2018.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>An audit of pre-proceedings work will be undertaken to ensure pre-proceedings work is being initiated promptly and key assessments are being carried out in sufficient depth to provide the court with clear evidence supporting the Local Authority's plans for children.</p>	April 18	Head of Family Support	Planning is in hand for the delivery of pre-proceedings learning events.	

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		<p>2.2 Action</p> <p>The Head of Service for Family Support will Chair all Initial Legal Planning Meetings to ensure clear and focussed planning and oversee the accuracy of processes to prevent drift and delay in achieving permanency for children.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>Legal processes will be completed in a timely way for all children.</p>	March 18	Head of Family Support	This arrangement has been in place from August 2017 and an impact review will be undertaken in March 2018.	
		<p>2.3 Action</p> <p>The Head of Service for Family Support and the Senior Legal Representative will meet monthly to review the progress of the cases in pre-proceedings. This review will ensure the agreed assessments, interventions and plans are on track. The learning from the reviews will be collated quarterly and embedded in the learning and improvement plan for the service.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>There will be no delay in the progression of cases in pre-proceedings.</p>	March 18	Head of Family Support	This arrangement has been in place from August 2017 and the next learning review will take place in March 2018	

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		<p>2.4 Action</p> <p>The Senior Legal Representative a monthly report to SMT as part of our Performance Framework.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>Greater visibility of legal proceedings will be provided as part of a regular stream of information to the Director and senior leaders.</p>	February 18	Senior Legal Representative	This will begin in February 2018	
3	Provide rigorous oversight and tracking of children's plans when children become looked after, to ensure that permanence is formally approved and achieved in a timely manner for all children.	<p>3.1 Action</p> <p>Permanency planning meetings will be convened for all looked after children before their second Looked After Child Review.</p> <p>The permanency tracking process for looked after children will be reviewed and amended. This will include fortnightly case review meetings coordinated by the Practice Manager for Conference and Reviews.</p> <p>Permanency Tracking will be embedded within the Mosaic electronic case recording system for children. This will ensure that effective performance management processes are applied.</p>	February 18	Head of Professional Standards	A revised permanency tracking process has been put into place from November 2018. Amendments to the Mosaic electronic case recording system will be in place by January 2018.	

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		<p>All children in residential care will be reviewed at SMT and CSMT every six months.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>All looked after children will be provided with permanence in a timely way. Performance will be closely monitored. The efficacy of the process will be reviewed in February 2018 and quarterly thereafter, with oversight by SMT and CSMT through highlight reports.</p>				
4	<p>Ensure that the performance management and quality assurance framework is strengthened to provide managers with a clear line of sight to practice and quality in all key areas, including the offer and completion of return home interviews and the use of child sexual exploitation screening and risk assessment tools.</p>	<p>4.1 Action</p> <p>An annual review of audit processes will be undertaken to ensure that it meets best practice standards.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>The focus of audit evaluation will be on the effectiveness of interventions and impact on children's progress and experience, as well as compliance with practice standards.</p>	Jan 18	Head of Professional Standards	A revised audit programme will be introduced from February 2018.	

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		<p>4.2 Action</p> <p>The return home interview notification pathway on the Mosaic electronic case recording process will be amended, so that missing notifications are received directly by the Return Home Interview service. All managers and practitioners will be reminded of the practice standard expectations in respect of missing children.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>All missing children will be offered a return home interview promptly. Oversight of performance data on return home interviews will be provided quarterly at SMT and at the CSE Pan Bedfordshire Group.</p>	February 18	Head of Referral, Assessment and Intervention	Managers and practitioners were provided with additional guidance on return home practice standards in November 2017. Completion of modifications to the electronic notification pathways is anticipated to be operational in December 2017.	
		<p>4.3 Action</p> <p>Compliance with the effective use of child sexual exploitation screening and risk assessment tools will be strengthened through increased practitioner and manager awareness and enhanced performance management processes.</p>	March 18	Head of Referral, Assessment and Intervention		

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		<p>Outcome</p> <p>Audit will show that child sexual exploitation screening and risk assessment is used for all children where there are indicators of possible child sexual exploitation.</p>				
5	<p>Ensure that the Corporate Parenting Panel is routinely informed about issues and areas for improvement, so that it is able to act as a critical friend, challenging and holding to account senior managers and driving improvements in outcomes for children in care and care leavers.</p>	<p>5.1 Action</p> <p>The Corporate Parenting Agenda Forward Planner will be agreed with the Chair based upon areas of challenge, risk and development needs.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>Deep dives on areas of concern, for example the health needs of looked after children living outside of Central Bedfordshire, will be completed and shared at Corporate Parenting Panel.</p>	Jan 18	Head of Corporate Parenting	<p>Planning is in hand and will be confirmed at the January 2018 Corporate Parenting Panel.</p>	

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6	Improve the quality of personal education plans (PEPs) by ensuring that actions are based on a clear analysis of need and that targets are precise, detailed and time-bound.	<p>6.1 Action</p> <p>Every section B of the PEP will be quality assured by the Virtual School Team Leader and judged against agreed criteria. If judged unsatisfactory the document will be returned to the school and pupil premium withheld until the document is returned at the required standard. The Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board to be invited to the meeting in the spring term 2018.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>The percentage of PEPs that are outstanding and good will increase. Progress will be reviewed at half term moderation meetings.</p>	June 18	Team Leader Virtual School	This began in September 2017 and significant improvements in the quality of PEPs was evident in the November 2017 half term moderation meeting.	
		<p>6.2 Action</p> <p>The Team Leader and the Virtual School Head Teacher will attend a minimum of three PEP meetings a term to quality assure the process.</p>		Team Leader and Virtual School Head	This process will begin in January 2018 and will continue until July 2018.	

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		<p>Outcome</p> <p>Meetings will be attended by the appropriate people, there will be clear evidence of the use of pupil premium, targets will be SMART and the child's voice will be evident during the process.</p>				
		<p>6.3 Action</p> <p>Training was provided on effective PEP practice at the Designated Network meeting in the autumn term 2017.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>An impact review of the training will be undertaken in January 2018 through securing feedback and an audit of PEPs, with quarterly progress reviews thereafter.</p>	Jan 18	Team Leader Virtual School		
		<p>6.4 Action</p> <p>Targeted support to identified Designated Teachers on writing SMART targets has been delivered.</p>	March 18	Virtual School Team Leader	Session delivered at the October 2017 network meeting. Review of target setting will be ongoing until March 2018.	

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		<p>Outcome</p> <p>All PEPs will be judged good or better.</p>				
7	Ensure that children's physical and emotional health needs are considered earlier when plans are being made for them to be placed at a distance from the authority, so that they can access any services they need in a timely manner.	<p>7.1 Action</p> <p>Service provision for looked after children placed at a distance will be reviewed monthly at the existing partnership meeting with the Looked After Children Nursing Team.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>The physical and emotional health needs of all looked after children will be fully met, through close monitoring, planning and effective remedial action as required. Impact will be reviewed through an audit of case files in March 2018.</p>	March 18	Head of Corporate Parenting	The agenda of the monthly partnership meeting with the Looked After Children Nursing Team will be introduced in December 2017.	
8	Ensure that 16 and 17 year-old homeless children are provided with clear information about their entitlements to accommodation and support under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989.	<p>8.1 Action</p> <p>All social work and Early Help staff to be provided with refresher training on best practice for homeless 16 and 17 year old by the Homeless and Mediation Service.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>All practitioners will provide 16 and 17-year old homeless children with</p>	March 17	Head of Referral, Assessment and Intervention	Planning in hand for this to be delivered.	

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		accurate and effective information. Case file audits will evaluate service quality.				
		<p>8.2 Action</p> <p>Homeless interviews will be placed on children's Mosaic electronic case files.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>Practitioners working with homeless children can trigger and complete required actions.</p>	Dec 17	Head of Referral, Assessment and Intervention	Action in hand for this to be completed.	
		<p>8.3 Action</p> <p>The process for accommodation of homeless 16 and 17 year old children will be strengthened to ensure there is no drift.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>Emergency accommodation for homeless 16 and 17 year olds will be used for a maximum of 28 days, preventing drift and ensuring planned and supported placement endings for all children. A progress reviewed will take place in March 2018, and quarterly thereafter.</p>	March 18	Head of Referral, Assessment and Intervention	Emergency accommodation practice has been revised.	

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9	Ensure the agency decision-maker provides a coherent rationale for all adoption decisions and that this is recorded on children's files.	<p>9.1 Action</p> <p>The agency decision maker will provide an explanation for all adoption decisions, with regular QA provided by the Panel Advisor.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>The Deputy Director, as agency decision maker, is now ensuring that a summary rationale is provided in all sign off of adoption decisions.</p>	March 18	Deputy Director of Safeguarding and Early Help	This outcome has been implemented. A progress review will be completed by the Adoption Panel Chair in March 2018.	