

'Getting to Good'

Bristol Children's Services Improvement Plan 2016 - 2017

September 2016
Version 1.3



Introduction

Services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after, and care leavers in Bristol were inspected by Ofsted in October 2014. The overall judgement was that services for these children ‘required improvement’. This included an ‘inadequate’ judgement for the experience and progress of care leavers and a ‘good’ judgement for adoption services.

‘Getting to Good’ Bristol Children’s Services Improvement Plan 2015-2016, approved by Cabinet in February 2015, was developed to respond to the recommendations following the Ofsted inspection. The Plan focused on the actions required to secure improvement and deliver consistently good services for children and young people in Bristol. Ofsted endorsed the Plan, with praise for “ambitious targets, clear lines of accountability, and strong monitoring arrangements”.

The Plan was designed to provide opportunities to engage the whole Council and partners in the delivery of improved outcomes for some of the most vulnerable children and young people in the City. This was further enhanced by the launch of the [Corporate Parenting Strategy and Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers](#), which was approved by Cabinet and endorsed by Full Council in November 2015. Ensuring good outcomes for all looked after children and care leavers is a priority for the Council and the collective responsibility of members and officers as Corporate Parents.

Strong governance arrangements have underpinned the delivery of improvement work. A Children’s Services Improvement Board was established to oversee implementation of the Plan, and to ensure sufficient progress was achieved and deadlines were met. The Board comprises senior leaders and is chaired by the Strategic Director of People to review the Plan on a monthly basis. Regular reporting on progress to Members has taken place through the Assistant Mayor (People) on a monthly basis and the People Directorate Scrutiny every six months. The Bristol Safeguarding Children Board also monitors the progress of the Plan and it was shared with the Children and Families Board.

Bristol Children’s Services Improvement Plan 2016-17

Taking into account the progress made during the first year of the post-Ofsted inspection improvement journey, there remain significant challenges to address as we move into the second year.

The Bristol Children’s Services Improvement Plan 2016-17 has been developed to reflect emerging priorities and to address known gaps against inspection frameworks. In order to deliver improved services and outcomes for children, young people and families, this Plan:

- Continues to respond to outstanding recommendations from 2014 Ofsted Children’s Services Inspection.
- Responds to improvement priorities identified by audit, peer review, and independent review of children’s social care.
- Responds to emerging systemic and demographic challenges and pressures.
- Ensures that known gaps against relevant inspection frameworks are addressed.

The Year 2 Plan has a greater focus on improving the quality children’s social work. It responds to a recently commissioned independent review of children’s social care, which identified continuing challenges around:

- Increased demand on the system and complexity of care needs.
- Retention and recruitment of the workforce.
- Consistency of the quality of social work practice and management oversight.

The Year 1 Plan focused exclusively on recommendations arising within Ofsted's Single Inspection Framework (SIF) for inspecting local authority children's services. The Year 2 Plan covers all elements of the existing SIF as well as the new multi-agency Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) framework, which assesses contact, referral and decision-making arrangements for children’s social care and the quality of practice in responding to referrals. The JTAI framework also includes a “deep dive” element, which will focus on children who are living with domestic abuse.

The Year 2 Plan is set within the context of increased demand for services and an increasingly challenging financial backdrop. The Plan aims to improve the way we manage demand for services, improve the quality of support we provide to our most vulnerable children, and further improve the outcomes for children in care and care leavers. This will be delivered via six thematic areas:

1. Provide consistently **good social work practice** for children and families.
2. **Improve outcomes for care leavers** and enable them to move successfully to adulthood.
3. **Improve outcomes for children in care** and act as an effective corporate parent.
4. Provide effective **leadership, management and governance** to ensure robust decision-making and manageable caseloads.
5. Enable a **stable and resilient workforce** that feel valued and who choose to develop their careers in Bristol.
6. Deliver effective **multi-agency contact and referral arrangements** for identifying and managing the range of risks of harm to children and young people.

To ensure that the Year 2 Plan uses available resources in the best way, improvement work will be focused on priorities:

- That pose a significant risk to children’s outcomes.
- That address system-wide and leadership challenges.
- That provide assurance to leadership that key risks to the authority are mitigated.
- That require additional coordination of resources or capacity to deliver the required change.

Implementing the Year 2 Plan

This Plan aims to deliver consistently good services for children and families to ensure that children in Bristol are safe. More detailed operational plans that contribute to this Plan will drive individual service improvement. The necessary actions, targets and outcomes are incorporated into Service Delivery Plans and Team Plans.

The Plan sets out the actions that will be undertaken, the expected outcomes, improvement measures, lead officers, targets and due dates. The Plan will continue to be overseen by the Children's Services Improvement Board and progress will be reported to Members and partners via existing arrangements.

Each outcome will be RAG rated, as part of our monitoring arrangements, with the status descriptors detailed below:

RAG Table	Status
RED	Tasks and or outcomes have not been met or timescale slipped
AMBER	Tasks and outcomes are on track, milestones met but full action(s) not completed
GREEN	Tasks and outcomes are completed or performance is on target
BLUE	Completed

The Plan will continue to be overseen by the Children's Services Improvement Board and progress will be reported to Members and partners via existing arrangements.

Theme 1: Quality of Social Work Practice

Outcome statement:

The Quality Assurance Framework is embedded, supported by the Signs of Safety methodology and improves the quality and timeliness of social work assessments. All children’s plans show evidence of robust management decision making and oversight.

Action	KPI Ref	Due	Lead
1.1 Embed the Quality Assurance Framework			
1.1.1 Moderate the quality of auditing to ensure it is consistent and so that managers have accurate information about the quality of practice across all teams.	1	Report quarterly	Quality Assurance & BSCB Manager
1.1.2 Clarify what “good” looks like via published examples of good Pathway Plans, Child Protection plans, and Children in Need plans on the Source, and mandatory training on Pathway Plans	1	Dec 2016	Quality Assurance & BSCB Manager
1.1.3 Deliver annual programme of quarterly thematic quality audits (based on audit findings, learning from Serious Case Reviews, and inspection frameworks) and report key findings and associated actions to the Improvement Board (to include Child Sexual Exploitation and domestic abuse).	1	Report quarterly	Quality Assurance & BSCB Manager
1.2 Improve the quality of recorded practice			
1.2.1 Strengthen the quality and timeliness of assessments, taking full account of the family’s history and ensuring a consistently forensic approach. Ensure plans are in place, regularly reviewed, SMART, outcome-focused and address the need of the child.	1, 2, 3	Jan 2017	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services Head of Service Children in Care & Care Leavers
1.2.2 Undertake a survey to ensure that the views of children and parents are gained and that they inform practice. Develop existing systems (e.g. CIN closure, CP reviews, IRO reviews) to capture these views.	1	Jan 2017	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services Head of Service Children in Care & Care Leavers
1.2.3 Develop service standards for Unit Coordinators and communicate to the staff group.	1	Jan 2017	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services Head of Service Children in Care & Care Leavers

Action		KPI Ref	Due	Lead
1.2.4	Train Unit Coordinators to ensure accurate records and chronologies are kept, and to ensure all purposeful work undertaken with the child and their family is evidenced on LCS.	1	Jan 2017	Quality Assurance & BSCB Manager
1.2.5	Configure LCS to enable practitioners to record and evidence work more accurately. Implementing LCS forms (including for case mapping, danger statements and safety goal) that are compatible with Signs of Safety methodology.	1	Oct 2016	Quality Assurance & BSCB Manager
1.2.6	Launch new Bristol social work procedures, using Tri.x.	1	Oct 2016	Quality Assurance & BSCB Manager
1.3 Strengthen and evidence management oversight				
1.3.1	Establish a system and develop LCS to ensure that management decision making and oversight is recorded by Area Managers and senior managers.	1	Nov 2016	Quality Assurance & BSCB Manager
1.3.2	Establish what "good" looks like and provide training and examples of how to record reflection and decision-making in the most efficient way.	1	Oct 2016	Quality Assurance & BSCB Manager
1.4 Address drift and delay				
1.4.1	Assess and prepare a plan for every child in need with an ongoing open allocation to a social work team. Implement planned review schedule and ensure plans are updated.	2	Mar 2017	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services
1.4.2	Train managers to use performance information more effectively and to act on cases that may indicate an issue. Specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children in Need Plans lasting over 2 years • Child Protection Plans lasting over 2 years • children who have more than 1 Child Protection Plan. 	2,3	Mar 2017	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services
1.5 Deliver return interviews for missing children				
1.5.1	Commission services to ensure all children missing from home or care are provided with an appropriate return interview.	4	Jan 2017	Quality Assurance & BSCB Manager

Action	KPI Ref	Due	Lead
1.6 Learning from others			
1.6.1 Visit West Sussex to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the Quality Assurance Framework to ensure consistency with Signs of Safety • improve training for managers to better use performance information. 	1,2,3,4	Dec 2016	Quality Assurance & BSCB Manager

Theme 2: Improved Outcomes for Care Leavers

Outcome statement:

Care Leavers receive help and support tailored to their individual needs, and are provided with opportunities to enable them to move successfully to adulthood. The Local Authority is an active, strong and committed Corporate Parent that is an effective champion of the progress of care leavers.

Action	KPI Ref	Due	Lead
2.1 Sustain the improvement of Pathway Plans			
2.1.1 Review care leavers plans in place with the young person so that all young people are aware of and contribute to their plan	5a	Mar 2017	Head of Service Children in Care & Care Leavers
2.1.2 Review pathway plans on a six-month basis	5b	Mar 2017	Head of Service Children in Care & Care Leavers
2.2 Further improve Education, Employment and Training outcomes			
2.2.1 Broker appropriate, flexible 14-18 options for individual Children in Care with partner providers	6a,b	Mar 2017	Service Manager, Employment, Skills and Learning
2.2.2 Design and implement a pathway for care leavers into council work experience, apprenticeships, traineeships and jobs.	6a,b	Mar 2017	Service Manager, Employment, Skills and Learning
2.3 Increase the numbers of care leavers in suitable accommodation			
2.3.1 Review the provision of accommodation for Care Leavers and assess if it meets their needs.	7	Oct 2016	Head of Service Children in Care & Care Leavers
2.3.2 Following consultation, deliver the Young People's Housing and Independence Pathway	7	Sep 2017	Service Director Early Intervention and Targeted Services
2.4 Improve health outcomes of care leavers			
2.4.1 Monitor the implementation of the Health Action Plan and establish measurable outcomes to assess impact		Dec 2016	Strategic Director for People
2.4.2 Ensure care leavers have access to their health records and consider implementation of the health passport scheme.		Sep 2016	Programme Manager Children and Maternity Commissioning
2.5 Learning from others:			
2.5.1 Develop New Belongings sub-regional action plan to improve Bristol offer for care leavers	5,6,7	Sep 2016	Head of Service Children in Care & Care Leavers

Theme 3: Improved Outcomes for Children in Care

Outcome statement:

Children in care receive the help and support they need to achieve education, health and wellbeing outcomes that are in line with their peers. The local authority is an effective corporate parent and actively challenges and engages schools and other partners to support children and young people in the best way.

Action	KPI Ref	Due	Lead
3.1 Further improve educational outcomes for children in care			
3.1.1 Develop a framework for joint decision making about all education provision placements between social care and the HOPE Virtual School, which includes an escalation process when decisions divert from agreed protocols.	8	Dec 2016	Head of Service Children in Care & Care Leavers Headteacher Virtual School
3.1.2 Commission School Improvement Officer visits, in inverse proportion to success, to all schools with children in care on roll.	9	Jul 2017	Headteacher Virtual School
3.1.3 Monitor and track the agreed process to ensure timeliness of PEPs aligned with children in care reviews.	10	Dec 2016	Head of Service Children in Care & Care Leavers
3.1.4 Monitor and analyse attendance and exclusion data for children in care on a weekly basis. Implement a system of early intervention to target, challenge and support children in care when attendance is below the persistent absence threshold of 90%.	11	Jul 2017	Headteacher Virtual School
3.2 Increase number of children in care with up to date health and dental checks			
3.2.1 Work with Children in Care Health Strategy Group to deliver strategy to increase the number of children in care with up to date dental and health checks.	12a,b	Mar 2017	Head of Service Children in Care & Care Leavers
3.3 Prevent older children coming into care and reunify them with families			
3.3.1 As part of Early Help Review, develop proposal for integrated early help / family support services for young people and their families.	13	Mar 2017	Head of Early Help and Targeted Services
3.3.2 Develop DfE Children's Social Care Innovation Programme bid and proposal to support young people at risk of entering care and their families and reduce the need for care.	13	Sep 2016	Service Director Early Intervention and Targeted Services

Action	KPI Ref	Due	Lead
3.4 Reduce the number of children in care with convictions			
3.4.1 Use audit findings and the Laming review of children in care involved with the criminal justice system to develop a strategy to reduce the number of children in care with convictions.	14	Jun 2017	Youth Offending Team Manager Head of Service Children in Care & Care Leavers
3.5 Deliver the right placements for children in care			
3.5.1 Provide new career and payment structure to increase the capacity of the in-house fostering service.	15	Mar 2017	Manager, Placement Service Provision
3.5.2 Deliver the Children's Home Improvement Plan to improve the quality of Bristol residential children's homes.	16	Mar 2017	Manager, Placement Service Provision
3.6 Learning from others:			
3.6.1 Use learning from best practice (e.g. Greenwich, N Yorkshire, Surrey) to inform the Innovation Programme proposal.	13	Sep 2016	Service Director Early Intervention and Targeted Services

Theme 4: Leadership, Management and Governance

Outcome statement:

Caseloads are manageable and the health of the system is understood. The right information is available to inform leadership decision-making and to enable robust performance management.

Action	KPI Ref	Due	Lead
4.1 Address high caseloads and capacity of the system			
4.1.1 Use findings from Remodelling Social Work Review to increase the resilience of area social work units and address pressure on South area units.	17	Aug 2016	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services
4.1.2 Ensure that caseloads are manageable and that work is allocated appropriately across early help and statutory social work.	17	Dec 2016	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services
4.2 Develop performance management / information to inform better decision making			
4.2.1 Ensure that robust and complete performance information and analysis is available to support effective management scrutiny and challenge of poor practice at all levels of the organisation. This should include regular analysis of Annex A and targeting of those most vulnerable children.	All	Oct 2016	Service Manager, Performance & Infrastructure
4.2.2 Analyse and address variability in performance across area social work teams, via regular CMT reviews.	All	Mar 2016	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services
4.2.3 Develop regular reporting to help managers identify relevant cases and act on them to ensure that Children in Need Plans are in place, reviewed, and are closed at an appropriate time.	2a,b	Dec 2016	Service Manager, Performance & Infrastructure
4.2.4 Develop regular reporting of system capacity and workflow for leadership to understand pressures on the system and inform decision-making.	17	Sep 2017	Service Manager, Performance & Infrastructure
4.3 Learning from others:			
4.3.1 Use Ofsted findings from other authorities and learn from best practice, to respond to improvement priorities and prepare for inspection frameworks	1	Dec 2016	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services Quality Assurance & BSCB Manager

Theme 5: Workforce

Outcome statement:

There is a stable and resilient workforce that feel valued and who choose to develop their careers in Bristol.

Action	KPI Ref	Due	Lead
5.1 Improve recruitment and retention of social workers			
5.1.1 Recruit to vacancies quickly including temporary staff. Establish reasons for leaving through effective use of exit interviews and respond to any concerns about the rate of staff turnover.	18	Dec 2016	Principal Social Worker
5.1.2 Undertake a strategic review of social work recruitment and how to attract Social Workers from the more diverse cities, including London, to work in Bristol.	18	Dec 2016	Principal Social Worker
5.1.3 Develop a mandatory induction training programme to introduce new starters to Bristol procedures and working practice and to clarify expectations of the role.	18	Oct 2016	Principal Social Worker
5.2 Improve the professional framework and development offer			
5.2.1 Develop a detailed framework of professional expectations (including job paperwork) for key roles (e.g. consultant social worker) to promote consistency and to outline career progression.	18	Oct 2016	Principal Social Worker
5.2.2 Create focus groups for Family Support Workers and Unit Coordinators to understand the needs of the work group and share best practice.	18	Dec 2016	Principal Social Worker
5.2.3 Develop teaching partnerships with Bristol universities to ensure that course module design for social work qualification is up-to-date and reflects the current needs of Bristol children and families.	16	Mar 2017	Principal Social Worker
5.3 Learning from others:			
5.2.4 Continue to work with DfE, national and regional social work practice leaders to respond to the Children and Social Work Bill and further develop training, continuous professional development and career progression for social workers.	18	Mar 2017	Principal Social Worker

Theme 6: Multi-agency Contact and Referral Arrangements

Outcome statement:

There are efficient and effective multi-agency arrangements for identifying and managing the range of risks of harm to children and young people. Thresholds to access services are clear, individual needs of children are considered, and referrals are timely and of a high quality.

Action	KPI Ref	Due	Lead
6.1 Understand and apply consistent thresholds			
6.1.1 Use multi-agency audit findings to work with partners to raise the quality of referrals.	17a,b,c	Mar 2017	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services
6.1.2 Review thresholds alongside partners and investigate the high proportion of repeat referrals and referrals to social work resulting in no further action.	17a,b,c	Mar 2017	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services
6.1.3 Develop a stronger understanding for staff of the threshold between early help and safeguarding and ensure families are worked with by the right service.		Jan 2017	Head of Early Help and Targeted Services Head of Safeguarding and Area Services
6.1.4 Ensure the work undertaken by Early Help is recorded on the right system to ensure all cases are effectively recorded, managed and monitored.	15	Dec 2016	Head of Early Help and Targeted Services
6.1.5 Review Threshold Decision Service to ensure it is supporting pathway decisions in a timely way.		Dec 2017	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services
6.2 Develop Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Arrangements			
6.2.1 Pilot MASH arrangements and evaluate the quality and timeliness of decision-making (e.g. reduction in repeat referrals)	17a	Oct 2016	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services
6.2.2 Work with Police to ensure that domestic abuse notifications are shared and acted on in the most effective and efficient way to reduce the proportion of contacts that result in no further action.	17c	Jun 2017	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services
6.2.3 Develop a sustainable vision and long-term plan for a Bristol MASH with key partners.		Dec 2016	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services

Action	KPI Ref	Due	Lead
6.3 Learning from others			
6.3.1 Use cross-police force and national best practice to inform MASH development plan.		Dec 2016	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services

Key Performance Indicators

Challenging targets have been set for key performance measures to help drive improvement. Targets are based on current performance, benchmarking information from Core Cities and Statistical Neighbours, and an assessment of the timing and efficacy of improvement actions.

Ref	Measure	Responsible officer	Frequency	Target	Target due
-----	---------	---------------------	-----------	--------	------------

Theme 1: Quality of Social Work Practice

1a	% audited Single Assessments are 'good' or 'outstanding'	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services	quarterly	80%	Jun-17
1b	% audited CIN Plans are 'good' or 'outstanding'	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services	quarterly	80%	Jun-17
1c	% audited Child Protection Plans are 'good' or 'outstanding'	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services	quarterly	80%	Jun-17
1d	% audited Care Plans are 'good' or 'outstanding'	Head of Service Children in Care & Care Leavers	quarterly	80%	Jun-17
1e	% audited Pathway Plans are 'good' or 'outstanding'	Head of Service Children in Care & Care Leavers	quarterly	80%	Jun-17
2a	% of Children in Need that have a CIN plan	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services	quarterly	90%	Mar-17
2b	% Child in Need Plans open for more than 2 years (snapshot figure)	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services	quarterly	28%	Mar-17
3a	% Child Protection Plans lasting more than 2 years (snapshot figure)	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services	quarterly	2.5%	Mar-17
3b	% Repeat Child Protection Plans	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services	quarterly	15%	Mar-17
4	% return interviews offered for children missing home or care	Quality Assurance & BSCB Manager	quarterly	100%	Mar-17

Theme 2: Improved Outcomes for Care Leavers

5a	% of Pathway Plans are understood and agreed by YP	Head of Service Children in Care & Care Leavers	quarterly	90%	Mar-17
5b	% of Pathway Plans are reviewed on a six monthly basis	Head of Service Children in Care & Care Leavers	quarterly	90%	Mar-17
6a	% 17-21 year old care leavers in EET	Head of Service Children in Care & Care Leavers	quarterly	58%	Mar-17
6b	% 16 – 18 year old children in care / care leavers into EET	Head of School Partnerships	quarterly	70%	Jan-17
7	% care leavers in suitable accommodation	Head of Service Children in Care & Care Leavers	annual	86%	Mar-17

Theme 3: Improved Outcomes for Children in Care (CiC)

8	% of CiC placed in "good" or "outstanding" education provision	Headteacher Virtual School	6-monthly	85%	Sep-17
9a	% CiC achieving C(5) or above in Eng Lang or Lit at GCSE	Headteacher Virtual School	annual	27%	2017
9b	% CiC achieving C(5) or above in maths at GCSE	Headteacher Virtual School	annual	16%	2017

Ref	Measure	Responsible officer	Frequency	Target	Target due
10	PEPs completed within statutory timescales	Head of Service Children in Care & Care Leavers	quarterly	90%	Mar-17
11	Persistent absence of CiC	Headteacher Virtual School	quarterly	12%	2017
12a	% CiC with an up to date health check	Head of Service Children in Care & Care Leavers	quarterly	90%	Mar-17
12b	% CiC with an up to date dental check	Head of Service Children in Care & Care Leavers	quarterly	86%	Mar-17
13	% of new entrants to care aged over 10 years old	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services	annual	40%	Sep-17
14	% CiC with a conviction	Head of Service Children in Care & Care Leavers	annual	7%	Sep-17
15	Number of children placed with in-house foster carers	Manager, Placement Service Provision	quarterly	439	Mar -17
16	Number of Bristol Children's Homes rated good or better by Ofsted	Manager, Placement Service Provision	quarterly	4 / 7	Mar -17

Theme 4: Leadership, Management and Governance

17a	Area social work unit average caseload	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services	quarterly	60	Sep-17
17b	Through-care team average caseload	Head of Service Children in Care & Care Leavers	quarterly	110	Sep-17
17c	Early Help Social worker average caseload	Head of Early Help and Targeted Services	quarterly	20	Sep-17

Theme 5: Workforce

18a	Social Worker turnover rate	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services	quarterly	16%	Sep-17
18b	Social Worker vacancy rate	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services	quarterly	10%	Sep-17

Theme 6: Multi-agency Contact and Referral Arrangements

19a	% Repeat Referrals to children's social work	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services	quarterly	24%	Mar-17
19b	% Referrals to children's social work resulting in NFA	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services	quarterly	15%	Mar-17
19c	% police domestic abuse notifications resulting in NFA	Head of Safeguarding and Area Services	annual	50%	Sep-17