

<b>Committees</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
<b>Safeguarding Sub Committee – For information</b>	<b>19/09/2018</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Service Improvement Plan 2017-2018	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	<b>For Information only</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Rachel Green, Service Manager Children's Social Care and Early Help	

### **Summary**

The Service Improvement Plan (SIP) was fully refreshed for April 2018- March 2019. The plan was developed after listening to children, young people and their parents, following formal consultation by Action for Children, from our annual audits undertaken by Aidhour, from multi agency audit, from specific internal case reviews, from staff feedback.

The SIP contains all six recommendations from Ofsted in 2016 to ensure consistency of oversight, challenge and momentum. The recommendations remain to ensure if there is any dip in practice, this can be identified and addressed.

The Service Improvement Plan shows significant work has taken place, with this being an update on progress at the end of August 2018. This is a live document and is updated by the service manager on a fortnightly basis.

### **The Plan**

The source of an objective is listed in red in brackets in the first column. In this way we can evidence 'you said, we did' to our children and young people and other partners.

The actions are 'BRAG' rated, with blue meaning fully completed, red meaning 'fully stuck', amber meaning 'more work needed or resolvable issue in sight', and green meaning 'in progress, no barriers to continuing'.

There are:

- 20 tasks marked amber
- 45 tasks marked green
- 0 tasks marked red
- 2 tasks marked blue

## **Service Capacity**

- Challenge

The Children's Social Care and Early Help Service is small, with four social workers, an early help worker, an early help co-ordinator, one team manager post and one service manager. The service is the right size to meet the needs of our service users and provide a good standard of care.

The challenge to our capacity arises when there are staffing issues or casework issues. Staffing issues such as sickness, holiday, or a temporarily vacant post have a big impact on the capacity of a very small team. Casework issues can include new unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) arriving, young people going missing, disclosures of significant harm and any care proceedings activity.

- Mitigation

To mitigate against risk, last year the Early Help worker (a qualified social worker) stepped in as needed to support the statutory social work service. Early help was used as a preventative measure only, and cases were not stepped down from Child In Need to Early Help.

This year, the Early Help worker is not a qualified social worker. This has protected the work of the Early Help Service.

To mitigate this risk, the team manager(s) step in to cover social work tasks, and the service manager will step in to cover team manager and social work tasks. Team work is strong and workers capable, and our frontline service to our children and families is very good. In busier periods where staffing/case issues arise, some non immediate tasks are temporarily paused.

The service manager is working on a bid for a qualified social worker to support our care leaver preparation for independence work. This position would offer additional capacity to support our care leavers continuing to receive an outstanding service.

- Pace of continuing improvement and Ofsted recommendations

Our weekly service management meeting will have a short time slot for the Service Improvement Plan to help drive forward our work to ensure our children receive an exceptional service. The fortnightly team meeting has a section for the Service Improvement Plan to keep the team focussed and aware of our objectives and progress.

### *Chronologies*

Our annual audit showed that there had not been consistency in, for example, completing chronologies every three months (A8 in the SIP). This was an Ofsted recommendation. Chronologies are something that can drop in periods of pressure, but are an essential tool to spot drift, reviewing progress and assessing thresholds of harm (objectives 2.2c, 2.3)

To keep momentum, as stated in the August update of the SIP, chronologies are featured in team meetings, addressed in 121s with team managers and social workers. The service manager keeps oversight of chronology completion on a monthly basis and this is updated in the SIP.

### *Health histories*

All young people who have reached the age of 18 have had their health histories shared with them. This is in line with the Ofsted recommendation.

What we do not know is the impact this has, if any on our young people's health or their understanding of their health. It is for this reason that this objective remains amber.

Our working relationship with the Child in Care medical service is now responsive and excellent, and the service much improved. The service manager meets with the CIC health lead quarterly, and seeks evidence that histories have been shared.

### *SMART planning*

Our templates have been adapted to encourage SMART planning. This area of work is subject to regular review and audit including being the subject of detailed case audit in November 2018. To help improve consistency the Child Protection Chair/Independent Reviewing Officer will provide training to both social workers and managers together in September to improve practice.

### **Key actions being undertaken in the next quarter:**

20 tasks are marked as 'amber'. Work in the next quarter is to turn these to green, including the areas highlighted above. Key actions include:

- Work with the new Virtual School Head to drive forward and extend employment and educational opportunities for our children looked after and care leavers.
- Amending and relaunching the MASH to improve information sharing at the beginning of family involvement (September) (SIP 1.5)
- Writing guidance for staff on specific risk assessment tools (SIP 1.6a/1.6b)

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Service Improvement Plan 2018-2019

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