

Committee(s)	Dated:
Safeguarding Sub Committee	26012017
Subject: Service Improvement Plan	Public
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
Report author: Rachel Green, Service Manager, Children's Social Care and Early Help	

Summary

The Service Improvement Plan, as appended, sets out the direction and goals for the forthcoming work of the Children's Social Care Service. The report below details progress to date, and key areas to address in the short and longer term. The plan will be refreshed by the end of March 2017, and incorporates recommendations from the recent Ofsted report.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

The Children's Social Care and Early Help Service is committed to continual improvement in our support and safeguarding of children and their families. The Service Improvement Plan (SIP) sets out detailed specific aims, with corresponding actions, and measures to evidence progress and completion.

The SIP incorporates views of children and families who receive services within all tiers of provision: early help, children in need, child protection, looked-after children and those leaving care. Views are formally sought through independent consultation on a yearly basis. The SIP also incorporates recommendations from our Quality Assurance Service, as well as ideas from staff within the service. Of note, this December update of the SIP includes both the explicit recommendations and those contained within the narrative of the recent Ofsted report on our Children's Services (July 2016).

The SIP is scrutinised at our Service Improvement Board, with progress review and the benefit of multi-disciplinary generation of ideas and feedback.

Notable progress April to December:

- Pathway plan timeliness is now very good.
- Sexual health – the Children In Care Council held a sexual health session, and social workers are routinely undertaking support in this area.

- All pathway plans now include parallel plans if young people have to consider a return to their home country.
- All young people are offered a Return Home Interview in time after going missing.
- Excellent use of Vulnerable Victims Advocate (domestic abuse) by social workers, meaning that victims have independent support.
- A specialist domestic abuse social worker has been appointed, which has enhanced the team's knowledge and practice with children and families.
- All annual medical reviews are in timescale.
- Each sibling within a household is now offered an assessment of their individual needs.
- All children are offered mentors or advocates.

Key challenges:

- Early Help Common Assessment Framework (CAF) completion by partner agencies has not been sustained since summer 2016. Our Early Help Co-ordinator is offering support to partners to help but this has not been successful to date.
- We need to be consistent across the service on ensuring that plans for children are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMART)
- Addressing loneliness of our care leavers is a long-term challenge. We are seeking to help children and young people build sustaining relationships with peers and other adults.
- The immigration process remains long and complex, leaving our young people looked after experiencing fear and anxiety, and in one situation, unable to lawfully access education, training or employment.
- The Ofsted recommendations are new to the SIP, and are therefore in the 'amber' category to be progressed.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Service Improvement Plan

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