

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee - 27 February 2018

Subject: Post Ofsted Improvement Plan Update: Children's Services Workforce Strategy

Report of: Head of Quality Assurance for Safeguarding

Summary

The purpose of this report is to update the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on the Post Ofsted Improvement Plan and progress made in relation to the Children's Services Workforce Strategy.

Recommendations

Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the contents of this report in order that they can be assured about workforce development plans, progress and impact for children.

Wards Affected:

The functions and services covered in the report are provided to all wards in the city.

Alignment to the Our Manchester Strategy Outcomes (if applicable)

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	An effective children's service will reduce inequalities within the City and result in children and young being more able to contribute to the economy.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	An effective children service will lead to the nurturing of talent and the advancement of skills
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	A effective children's service will promote equality utilising personal and local resources
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	

A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	An effective children's service can make a significant contribution to our infrastructure and assist in the growth of the city
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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

- Workforce Learning and Development Strategy 2017 - 2020
- Children and Young People Plan - Our Manchester, Our Children 2016 – 2019

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The children services workforce is our most important resource. The ambition of the Workforce Learning and Development Strategy 2017 - 2020 is to improve the lives of children and young people and families and keep them safe, happy, healthy and successful. This can only be delivered by a confident, competent and highly skilled children and young people's workforce that understands each other's responsibilities and works together to deliver relevant, responsive and high quality services for children, young people and their families.
- 1.2 The Workforce Learning and Development Strategy 2017 - 2020 was developed in partnership with key stakeholders and was underpinned by an understanding of the particular needs and experience of children, young people and their families in Manchester. In addition learning from quality assurance activity and feedback from children and young people was taken into account.
- 1.3 The strategy is underpinned by high aspiration for Manchester's children, young people and families' as set out the Children and Young People Plan 2016 - 2019 Our Manchester, Our Children' which is underpinned by key behaviour and principles; none no more than delivering services that are fiercely child-centred and having by strong and high aspirations for children, young people and families in Manchester.

We will deliver this by ensuring:

- our workforce is clear about the City's vision for children and its strategic priorities
 - children, young people and families are encouraged to provide with meaningful opportunities to participate and engage in services and contribute to practice and service development and improvement
 - our workforce are promoting resilience, working in a strengths based way and working with, no doing to children, young people and families
 - our workforce is cognisant of their responsibilities to promote educational opportunities' for children, you people and adults.
 - our workforce are clear about the importance of promoting community engagement.
- 1.4 The Our Manchester strategy 2025 sets out a shared ambition for the city for The next 10 years. The Our Manchester approach puts people at the centre, recognising that people are more important than processes, procedures or organisational boundaries and connecting with people in a different way that starts from a focus on people's strengths and asks not "what's the matter with you" but instead "what matters to you". The approach is grounded in four underpinning principles:
 - Better lives - it's about people
 - Listening - we listen, learn and respond
 - Recognising strengths of individuals and communities - we start from

strengths

- Working together- we build relationships and create conversations

Our People is part of Our Manchester and articulates what our future workforce will need to be like in order that the 65 'we wills' are delivered to make Our Manchester a reality. The strategy will help to embed the Our Manchester principles across the council and partner organisations' with the aim that all staff own it and see it as a call to action. The strategy recognises that the changes will be best be delivered as part of existing programmes of change so it becomes how we deliver our planned changes. For example, the introduction and our ongoing commitment to delivering the Signs of Safety is enabling staff to start to work in an Our Manchester way.

Our ambition is for our workforce to be inspired, connected and empowered to make a difference to the lives of Mancunians every day: to recognise that this is an extraordinary City and organisation to work for and shout about it proudly.

There are four central ways of working that will ensure Our Manchester becomes the way we work:

- We work together and trust each other
- We are proud and passionate about Manchester
- We take time to listen and understand
- We "own it" and we're not afraid to try new things

- 1.5 The aim of this strategy is therefore to build and sustain a resilient and stable workforce that is supported and challenged to practice with innovation and creativity and to be confident their knowledge, skills and abilities. This will be evidenced based and empower children and families to make the changes that enable children and young people have safe, healthy, happy and successful lives.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Ofsted re-inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers in Manchester that took place in October and November 2017 made 12 recommendations. Below is a summary of plans and progress in relations to recommendations that are being delivered via Workforce Learning and Development Strategy.

- 2.2 Recommendation 1.
Monitor and improve the frequency and quality of management oversight and supervision in all teams. Ensure that supervision is regular, reflective and challenging, and that managers record the rationale for their decisions.

Prior to the Ofsted Inspection the Children's Service Management team with the input of managers developed a bespoke Level 5 Leadership and Management programme that was endorsed by the Institute of Leadership and Management 'Our Manchester, Our Leaders. Our Children'. This programme

via sixteen taught learning sessions and guided learning is designed to develop effective managers and leaders. Effective management oversight and reflective supervision is a core component.

In September 2017 we registered 13 first line managers on the programme which is ongoing and the next programme is due to start in March 2018.

Effective management oversight and supervision continues to be the focus of monthly audit activity and performance activity. Audit activity focuses on the quality of practice and outcomes for children alongwith compliance with timeliness across all service areas. Findings and required actions are shared at monthly Quality Assurance Framework meetings and cascaded throughout the service. In addition Monthly Performance Clinics receive reports on evidence of supervision on the child's' case file.

As part of the Quality Assurance Framework refresh we are developing a supervision quality assurance audit tool that will be in place and used to undertaken thematic audits twice yearly.

We continue to embed Signs of Safety which is our practice model in all areas of practice including reflective supervision. We have Signs of Safety practice leads across working across the service who are being supported by a licensed Signs of Safety Trainer and Consultant to embed and further advance this work.

2.3 Recommendation 2.

Ensure that the work allocated to newly qualified social workers is commensurate with their level of experience and that their caseloads are kept within national guidelines.

Weekly caseload reports are produced that provide us with essential information about the number of cases allocated to Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW) and the case type. In the last report that was published on the 1 February the average caseloads for Newly Qualified Social Workers in there Assessed and Supported Year of Employment (AYSE) had increased from 19.1 to 19.6, while the average Social Worker caseload had reduced from 20.9 to 20.1.

As well as providing locality and team level data the weekly caseload report also provides data in relation to individual social workers and identifies those workers in their ASYE with the highest caseload and in response remedial actions are discussed and agreed with the responsible service manager at the weekly Performance Development Group Chaired by the Deputy Director of Children's service. There is an expectation that managers are robustly managing caseloads and the throughput of work.

In January 2018 we refreshed our Caseload Guidance to include a revised average for AYSE's caseloads to ensure they have a 10% reduction in allocated cases when compared to their experienced social worker

counterparts. Most importantly cases allocated to ASYE's need to be commensurate with the skill and experience of the individual staff member.

2.4 Recommendation 4.

Improve the quality of assessments so that the lived experiences of children are fully understood and inform plans. Ensure that plans set out clear and measurable outcomes for children based on a comprehensive assessment, and that their effectiveness is regularly reviewed.

Our approach in this area is focused on the following priorities:

- Revising of Practice Guidance for social workers that outlines 'What a good assessment looks like linking this to our Signs of Safety Practice Model will be complete by the end of February 2018. This guidance will be delivered via staff briefings with managers and social workers and via the induction programme. Improved assessments that consider the child's holistic needs will lead to improved plans and arrangements for them.
- Concluding the Impact Chronology Pilot that has been undertaken in the North of the City by the end of March 2018 and to use learning from this to develop practice guidance and wider service implementation plans. An Impact Chronology is a chronology of significant life events for a child and the impact this has had on them. Effective use of chronologies can help us to identify risks, patterns and issues in the child's life and should be used as an analytical tool to inform assessments, plans and arrangements for the child.
- Developing managers to ensure their oversight of assessments on an ongoing basis and the quality assurance of assessments and outcomes is effective.
- Effective assessment and analysis of risk and need is a 'golden thread' that runs through all quality assurance and audit activity. From April onwards our refreshed Quality Assurance Framework sets out a new requirement to carry out twice yearly deep dive audits that focus specifically on the quality of assessments and how they inform good quality plans that deliver improved outcomes for children.

2.5 Recommendation 6.

Improve the quality of assessments of privately fostered children and ensure that they are rigorously reviewed.

At the time of writing this report we have 33 Privately Fostered Children in Manchester. Private fostering is when a child under the age of 16 or under 18 if disabled is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a close relative. This is a private arrangement made between a parent and a carer, for 28 days or more. Close relatives are defined as step-parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles or aunts (whether of full blood, half blood or marriage/affinity).

In January 2018 we refreshed our Child in Need practice guidance to strengthen practice requirements in relation to children who are Privately

Fostered. This was important because existing practice guidance was not offer specific enough in relation to this group of children. Social Work Consultants via practice briefings will continue to ensure staff across the service are conversant with this guidance.

The refreshed Quality Assurance Framework sets out expectations that the Safeguarding and Improvement Unit undertake an independent audit of all Private Fostering cases on a six monthly basis from April 2018. Reports will go to the Children's Service Management team and learning from audit will be used to inform practice development and improvement plans.

Children who are Privately Fostered are also subject to monthly auditing as part of the independently selected Child in Need audit sample.

2.6 Recommendation 8.

Ensure that plans for permanence progress without unnecessary delay.

Permanence means making a long-term plan for how a child will be cared for that lasts throughout their childhood. Permanence options should deliver good outcomes, giving children a sense of security, continuity, identity and belonging to ensure future positive life chances. Permanence options for children can include returning home to their families, living with kinship carers, including special guardians; living with adoptive families; living with long-term foster carers or living in residential care.

A social worker responsible for permanence planning is expected to avoid drift and delay in order to ensure that the right permanence plan is put in place in a timeframe that meets the child's best interests. The service has improved its system for tracking permanence; from February tracking meetings will be established to ensure permanence is being achieved for children in a timescale consistent with their needs.

In addition we are working in partnership with Coram-i as part of the Department for Education project on Permanency Planning and Permanent Fostering. The objectives of this project are to strengthen practice in the following areas: Child's Journey - Permanency Planning, Family Finding and Foster Carer Recruitment and Retention.

Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO's) have an important role to play in ensuring that practice, plans and arrangements for children are in their best interests and will meet their individual needs. It is expected that IRO's are tracking permanence from the point children become looked after and it is an expectation that a permanence plan will be in place for the child's second looked after child review at 4 months. This performance is monitored via the service Performance and Improvement Framework and is a 'golden thread' in all audit activity. From April onwards our refreshed Quality Assurance Framework sets out a new requirement to carry out twice yearly deep dive audits that focus specifically on permanence planning and how effective that has been in delivering good outcomes, giving children a sense of security, continuity, identity and belonging to ensure future positive life chances.

Permanence briefings have been offered to staff and we are currently looking at commissioning Research in Practice to deliver a tailored programme to our workforce 'Care Planning for Permanence'. Key objectives of this programme would be as follows:

- Keeping children and their lived experience at the centre of the work
- Ensuring that care planning begins before birth and addresses the impact of maltreatment on current and future needs
- Hearing and understanding the family's story and what it means, within an attachment and systems framework
- Encouraging a culture of urgency and professional curiosity with brave conversations from the outset to avoid drift and delay.
- Promoting a reflective practitioner-researcher mindset to enhance analysis and critical thinking in assessment and intervention.

2.7 Recommendation 10.

Improve the quality of pathway plans so that they reflect the individual needs of

the young person, including their educational needs, and so that the required actions are measurable.

There will come a time in the life of a young person who has been looked after by Manchester to move on to independence. In preparation for this the young person must be provided with the level of support akin to that which a parent would normally provide to their child. An effective Pathway Plan sets out how the young person's individual needs will be met.

Our approach to improving the quality and impact of Pathways Plans focuses on the following priorities:

- Working with our leaving care provider to ensure good quality training is offered to Personal Advisors, Social Workers, Independent Reviewing Officers and other staff involved in developing Pathway Plans for looked after children and care leavers. Planning for this training is in progress and this will be rolled out across the service in the next six months.
- Providing good quality information to young people to ensure they can contribute to their Pathway plan and that they understand what the purpose of the Pathway Plan is and importantly what they can expect from adults supporting them.
- The quality of practice in relation to Pathway Plans for young people is a 'golden thread' in all audit activity of looked after child or care leaver cases. From April onwards our refreshed Quality Assurance Framework sets out a new requirement to carry out twice yearly deep dive audits that focus specifically on the quality of Pathway Planning and how effective plans are in supporting young people to achieve positive outcomes in all areas of their lives.

3.0 New Initiatives

3.1 National Assessment and Accreditation System (NAAS)

Manchester has been selected to be part of the Phase One of the NAAS for social workers alongside three other Greater Manchester authorities, Wigan, Oldham and Bury. The NAAS will introduce a new practice-focused methodology to establish the knowledge and skills that child and family social workers need for statutory child and family social work.

The Department for Education funding for Phase One of the NAAS has been provided to enable us to put in place support structures. We will use this money to strengthen our workforce learning and development offer.

Phase One of the NAAS which will commence in July 2018 and will focus on Child and Family Practitioners (those in frontline statutory social work roles with more than 2 years post qualifying experience) and Practice Supervisors (Social Workers responsible for supervising the work of others) will be invited to be assessed against the Knowledge and Skills Statements (KSS). In return those demonstrating proficiency will be accredited as Child and Family Practitioners or Practice Supervisors.

In readiness for Phase One of the NAAS we have developed a Social Work Career Pathway that provides a framework for social workers to progress their careers in Manchester. We believe this will have a positive influence on our recruitment and retention plans enabling us to achieve a skilled and stable workforce.

3.2 Social Worker Apprenticeships

We are working towards from September 2018 delivering a Social Worker Integrated Degree Apprenticeship Scheme, which could offer a route into the profession for experienced and skills social care staff. This is an exciting development and offers us an efficient way of using our apprenticeship levy payments to offer career development opportunities to internal staff who have the right values and experience to be a social worker but not necessarily the academic background.

3.3 Quality Assurance and Practice Improvement Framework

We have refreshed our Quality Assurance and Practice Improvement Framework to strengthen how findings from audit and other quality assurance activity informs workforce learning and development plans.