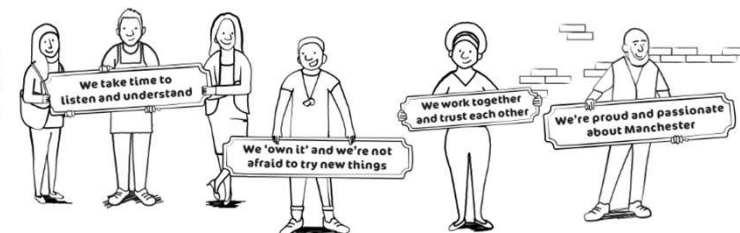


Children's and Young People Scrutiny Committee



Responding to Children in Need of Help, Support and Protection

Sean McKendrick, Deputy Director Children's Services

July 2021

Overview of the ILCAS Framework

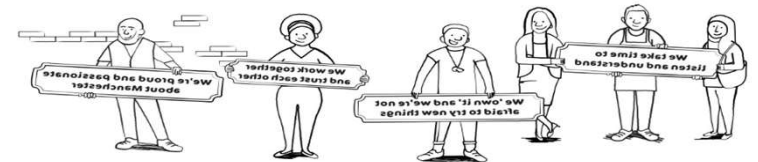
- These inspections focus on the effectiveness of local authority services and arrangements:
 - to help and protect children
 - the experiences and progress of children in care wherever they live, including those children who return home
 - the arrangements for permanence for children who are looked after, including adoption
 - the experiences and progress of care leavers
- OFSTED also evaluate:
 - the effectiveness of leaders and managers
 - the impact they have on the lives of children and young people
 - the quality of professional practice

OFSTED approach to inspection

- intelligent: inspections will be evidence-led, and we will work to ensure that evaluation tools and frameworks are valid and reliable
- responsible: frameworks will be fair and transparent OFSTED We will seek to reduce inspection burdens and make our expectations and findings clear
- focused: OFSTED will target our time and resources where they can lead directly to improvement

ILACS is further underpinned by 3 principles that apply to all social care inspections. Inspection should:

- focus on the things that matter most to children's lives
- be consistent in our expectations of providers
- prioritise work where improvement is needed most



Social work practice

- When talking to social workers about practice, inspectors are likely to ask questions about a range of issues, for example:
- the quality and impact of supervision and management oversight
- the ways in which they are helped to strengthen families and minimise risk
- workloads and workload management
- the availability, quality and impact of training and development opportunities
- the impact on practice of multi-agency training and the dissemination of learning from national or local learning reviews

Our Principles

Relationship Focused Practice

The basis for change lies within the child’s family relationships and network. Relationship focused practice engages with existing networks to build resilience and capacity to resolve difficulties and end harmful behaviours. It is non-judgemental, respectful engagement that honours children’s, families and our own experiences, building on strengths and working together, with our partners, to develop empowered supportive and problem-solving networks.

We work together with children, residents and local services, and across public services like schools, health services, housing and the police, to do everything we can to build a safe, happy, healthy and successful future for Manchester’s children and young people and their families.

Our Approach

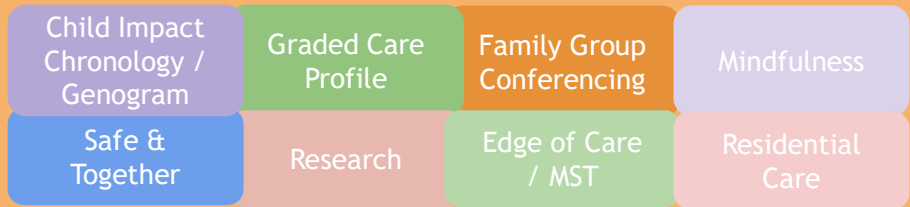
Signs of Safety



Signs of Safety has been adopted by Manchester City Council Children’s Services as the overarching practice framework for all of its work with children and families. This purposeful and collaborative way of working recognises families strengths and expertise to develop their own solutions to promote the safety and wellbeing for children and young people. Applying a stance of critical inquiry, asking our best questions to gain detailed, behavioural information, with examples, not making assumptions, remembering every family functions in it’s own, individual environment.

Evidence Based & Knowledgeable

Our work is informed and purposeful through the use of tools, complementary models, and research to evidence decision making and the most appropriate support and interventions.



Our Behaviours

Intentional & Passionate

We Work With:

↳Children, families, our partners, communities and each other with a shared understanding.



We Work skillfully:

↳Asking our best questions and taking time to listen to children, families, and partners to understand their stories,



We Work to enable:

↳Using our knowledge, professional curiosity, making the best of opportunities to promote impactful. change.



We Work to Strengthen:

↳Identifying, and building on what is working well. Being open, informed and responsive, validating strength and using healthy challenge,

Our Impact

Goals & Objectives

↳For all children to have the opportunity grow up having fun, opportunities to take part in leisure and culture activities, and having good social, emotional, and mental wellbeing.

↳Provide stability for children to allow them to have healthy, meaningful and supportive relationships, with less children living away from their families.

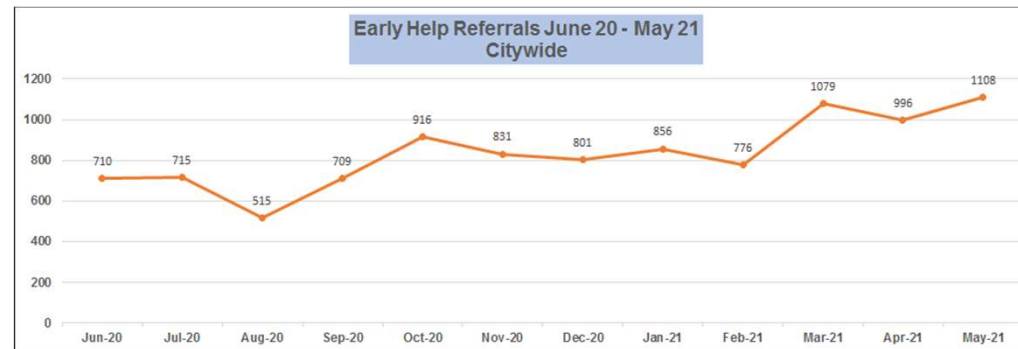
↳To build increased resilience within children and families, ensuring children have a voice and opportunities to contribute in their community.

↳Ensure children and families are safe, can aspire, succeed, live well and grow up healthy and happy.

The front door – areas for inspection

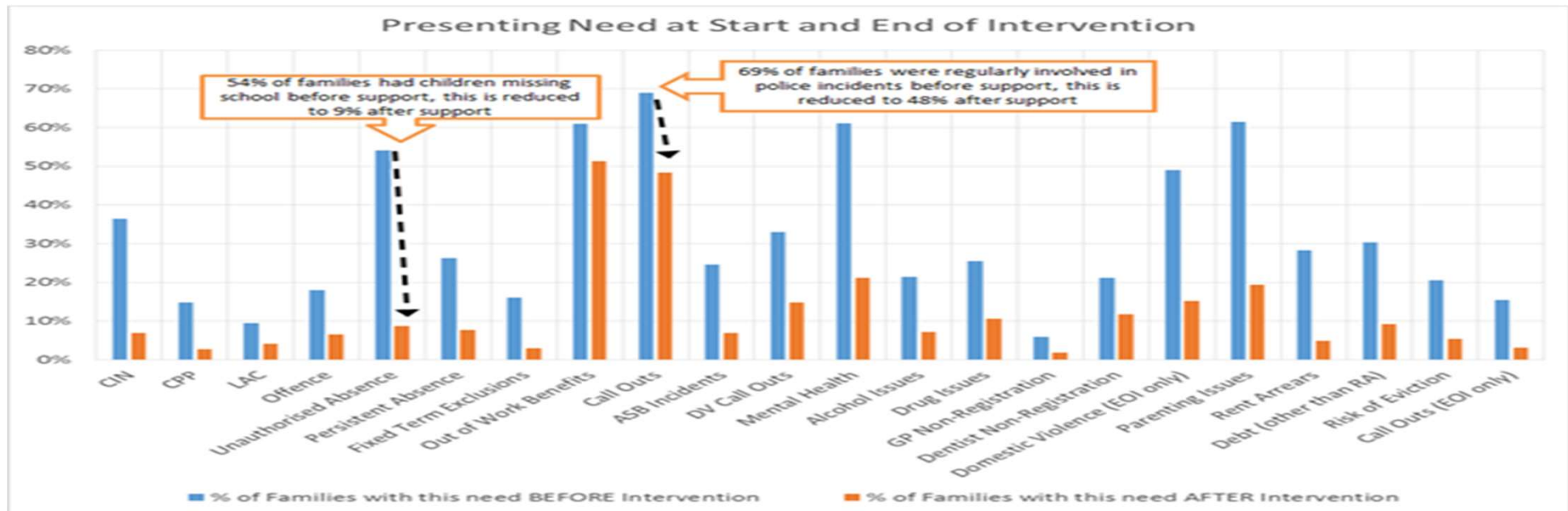
- who are at risk of harm (but who have not yet reached the ‘significant harm’ threshold) and for whom a preventative service would provide the help that they and their family need to reduce the likelihood of that risk of harm escalating and to reduce the need for statutory intervention
- who have been referred to the local authority, including those for whom urgent action has to be taken to protect them; those subject to further assessment (including children subject to private fostering arrangements) and those subject to child protection enquiries
- who become the subject of a multi-agency child protection plan that sets out the help they and their families will receive to keep them safe and promote their welfare
- who have been assessed as no longer needing a child protection plan, but who may need continuing help and support
- who are receiving (or whose families are receiving) social work services because there are significant levels of concern about their safety and welfare, but these have not reached the significant harm threshold or the threshold to become looked after
- who are missing from education or are being offered alternative provision

Early Help – what we know



- Our data tells us that demand for Early Help Hub services has remained high throughout the pandemic and is increasing. In the 3 months prior to lockdown, the hubs received an average of 672 requests for support a month. In the last 3 months, the average has been 1,052.
- Data and practitioner feedback indicates that families have increasingly complex needs, especially related to mental well-being (particularly maternal and adolescent), housing, finance/debt and parenting.
- The hubs have also received requests for support from families who would never previously have sought help around child behaviors, education and parenting concerns during lockdown this has resulted in more short term (preventative) intervention

What are Early Help doing?



- The graph above demonstrates the positive outcomes that our families achieve with Early Help support.
- We take a whole family approach which is strengths based and inclusive of the wishes and feelings of all family members. Getting the right support to families at the right time is crucial and our data tells us that timely decisions are achieved at the first point of contact.. Partners play an active role in supporting families and are an integral part of the early help offer.
- Audit work and family feedback tells us that the hubs deliver good quality support to families.

Early Help Preventative and step down measures

Developed an approach to meeting the needs of new parents and established a Thriving Babies, Confident Parents offer sponsored and overseen by the Centre for Excellence

Our Start Well strategy is evidencing a more cohesive strategic relationship between early years and early help services and improved identification of families who need support

Implemented changes to our structure to ensure improved oversight of our practice including placing additional resources at the front door to meet demand and give greater management oversight.

Delivered a Parenting Helpline to provide support during the summer holiday/periods of school closure

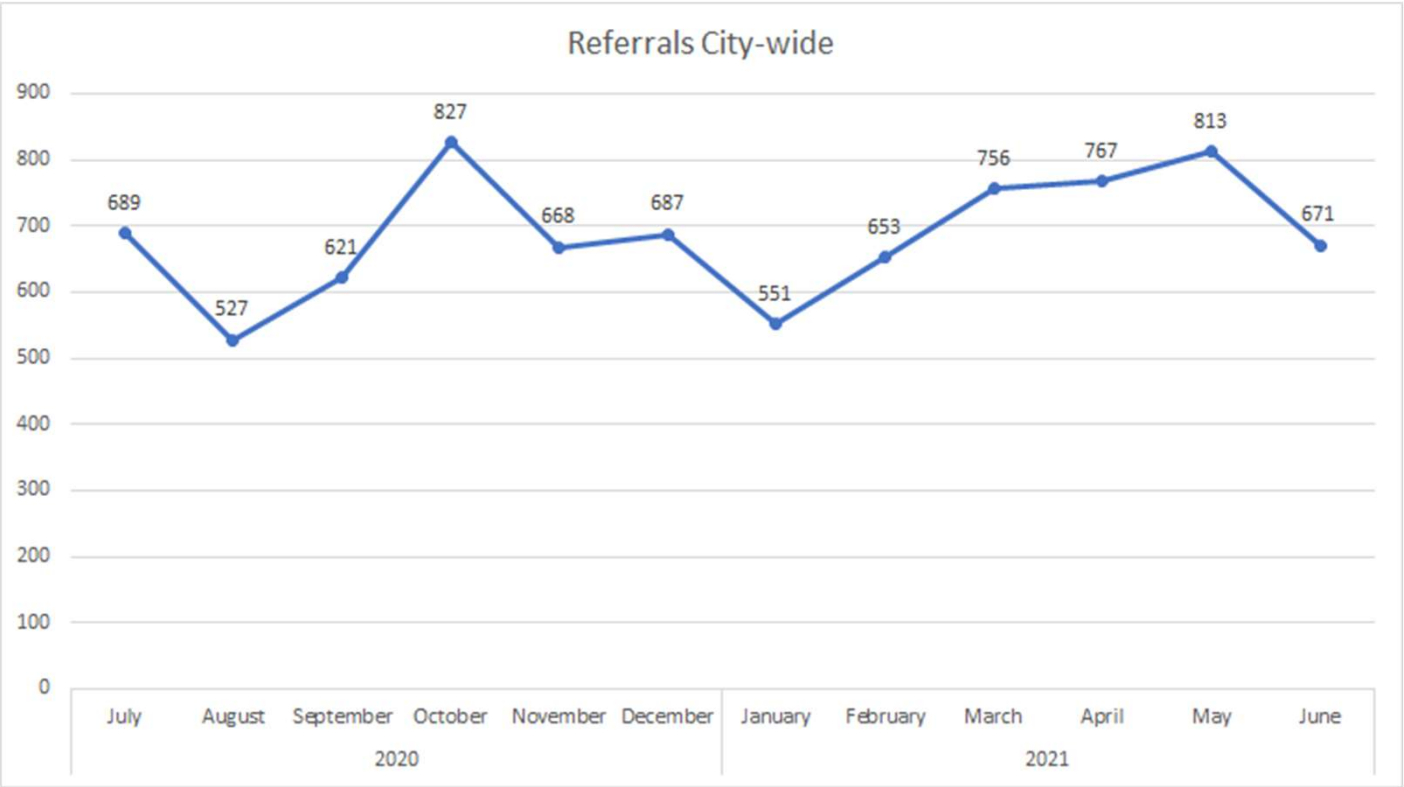
Administered the Winter Covid Relief Scheme

The Early Help Inclusion Team are working on a Contextual Safeguarding Pilot with GM

Been integral to the establishment of the North Thrive Hub to ensure robust pathways of mental health support for our young people

Working with Housing Options and GM to develop a more integrated offer to prevent rooflessness and support homeless families

Referrals City-wide



Front door arrangements - managing referrals to the Local Authority

- Our co designed Advice Guidance and support services are collocated multi agency hubs providing a proportionate and timely service to children who are referred to the local authority .
- The service has , in its early days, been supported by Lancaster University and has more recently been peer reviewed by Leeds City Council
- Due to social distance the model , not the service has been impacted by COVID . In order to relaunch we have renewed a range of policies, procedure and practice including audit arrangements in line with the recommendations of our self-assessment and the afore mentioned peer review
- We have relentlessly focused on our golden threads of effective social work practice :management oversight voice of the child engaging parents and carers impact chronologies quality of assessment and plan and doing with not to, to drive practice in improvements
- We have aligned our Quality assurance framework to support these golden threads
- 1 in 5 referrals are referrals for domestic violence in line with previous recommendations from OFSTED - we have developed a new triaging approach to domestic violence ensuring referrals are completed within 24 hours.
- Simultaneously we are implementing e our Safe and together approach to practice internationally recognized suite of tools and interventions designed to help child welfare professionals become domestic violence-informed.

Where action is required to protect children

- With co-location Children who require a section 47 strategy meeting and /or immediate protection measures are ensured have a speedy response from the co-located geographical Police DST
- Our complex safeguarding hub works alongside locality based social workers to provide child protection support to children deploying the evidence - based model Achieving change together which following a recent study has proven highly effective in reducing harm to young people
- The format of Child Protection Conferences allows for a strength-based approach with families while remaining focused on risk and robust plans, including safety plans. Over the last twelve months we have continued to see strong partnership attendance at conferences that allows for effective sharing of information to inform decision making and identify good quality plans
- When children are stepped down we have arrangements through Cin Panels and meetings to manage their ongoing needs
- Every child who comes into the care of the local authority has a peer led or service led review of the decision to determine appropriateness and whether there were realistic alternatives
- Our governance arrangements to promote the quality of practice ensures a direct line of sight, close the loop, from the children's leadership team to front line practice to the quality

What does our data tell us – CP and assessments.

- rates of referrals reduced from 1092 per 10,000 in 17/18 to 558 per 10,000) this supports our strategic desire to ensure the service is proportionate and children get the right help at the right time from the right professional
- Re referral rates to children's social care is at an all- time low at 20.1% evidencing an increasing ability to do the right thing at the right time
- We are 92.9% compliant on CP visits within timescales evidencing children where there are significant concerns are seen regularly
- Our on time in initial child protection conferences is good at 97.6%
- Our review conferences are timely at 96.4% on time and partnership attendance is good ; thus providing a basis for effective planning
- our rates of children subject to child protection planning have decreased and are in line with statistical neighbours; supported by auditing we believe the reduction points to a more proportionate service and one that is more comfortable in managing risk
- 89 % of assessments are completed on time providing a timely response to the needs of children
- In the first quarter of the year 250 children's files were audited with 90% of these been judged to be good or requires some degree of improvement to be good. 7% were judged to be outstanding and 3% inadequate.
- 84 % of audits are carried out alongside the working thus committing to our commitment to support and develop staff

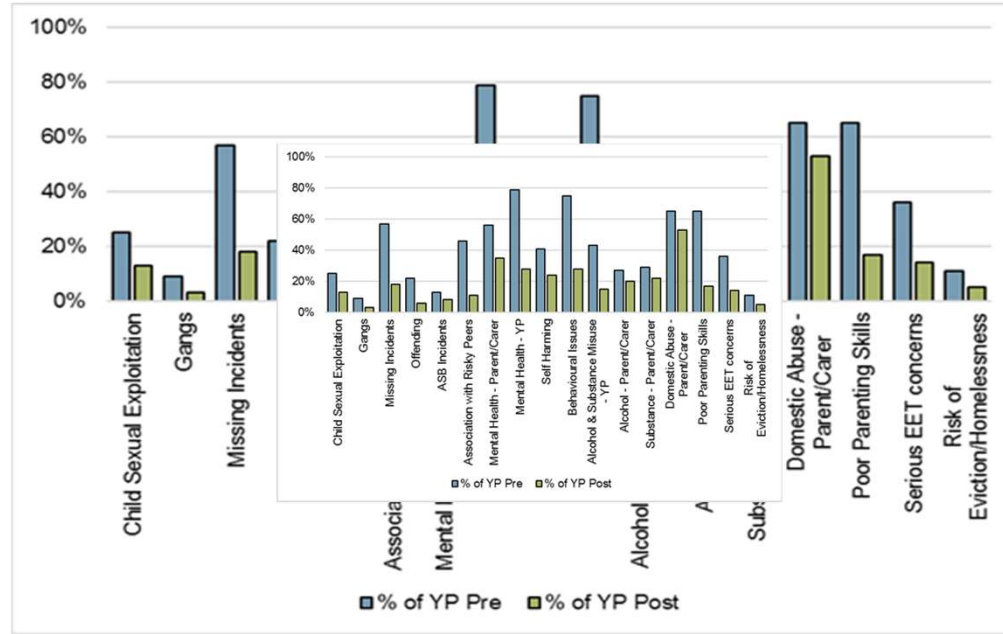
Children Missing Education (CME)

- CME function sits within the School Admissions team with a dedicated small team. It is therefore fully integrated with the school application and adding/removing a child from a school register processes. The team also receive notifications from schools when a pupil has an unauthorised absence for 10 days or more.
- Clear policy established which all schools know and engage with.
- Children whose whereabouts is reported by schools as unknown are traced by the team using a range of sources of information and contacts with other agencies such as border control, health, HMRC, social care and other Local authorities etc. The vast majority of children are located.
- Schools are challenged when pupils are incorrectly taken off roll.
- Numbers of CME are monitored through a monthly Access Board and score card. A Quality Assurance process has been introduced with senior managers sampling cases.
- During the pandemic the number of notifications received by the CME team has significantly increased due to numbers of families travelling abroad and the team is being expanded to deal with this increase. Work to locate children whose whereabouts is unknown has also been impacted by reduced capacity to support this work in key agencies such as border control and HMRC.
- All children not on a school roll during the periods of national lockdown received regular welfare checks and were offered a remote education offer provided by One Education.

Children where there are concerns but have not reached the threshold to become looked after

- We have a strong and experienced edge of care panel who offer advice and resource to social workers where children meet the requirement for more intensive support
- Following work across Greater Manchester we have extended Alonzi , our principal edge of care offer by increasing staff , offering more evidenced based interventions, family group conferences and AIM assessments
- Forecasting an increasing for greater collaboration with mental health providers we will look to evaluate and further develop the role of Alonzi hub and generally and in particular the role of the resident clinical psychologist and relationship with other providers of mental health support services
- The residential / respite aspect of the offer has been judged by OFSTED as Outstanding on three separate occasions.
- Our complex safeguarding hub a multi-agency co located service provides a dynamic evidenced based services that supports our most vulnerable children who are subject to an edge of care support, as part of the GM approach the service had been subject to significant and rigorous evaluation including a peer review learning from these the service will continue to grow and develop
- We continue to invest in support for families including but not limited to BIG Manchester AFRUCA, and Multi Systemic therapy to support children where there are significant concerns

Edge of Care – Alonzi House outcomes



Outcomes CSH outcomes for children closed to the hub

- 60% of those who used the service re-engaged with education, employment and training,
 - 86% engaged with service are living in stable accommodation,
 - 76% where missing incidents had reduced, 8
 - 86% where at least one agreed goal had been achieved
 - and 75% where the young person had formed at least one positive trusted relationship.
-
- * to note some of this cohort will also be looked after

Next Steps

- Ongoing focus on prevention and earlier intervention with a particular focus on extending parenting support and improve interfaces with mental health support services and the family poverty strategy
- Ongoing delivery of vulnerable babies' confident parents intervention (babies born in lockdown)
- Improving the connectivity between audit and personal and organisational learning
- Improve the quality of consistency of good Child in Need planning
- Ensure our assessments are focused , understanding the experiences of children and young people and are reviewed and adapted , where required, to meet the needs of children
- Implement the co-produced with parents offer to provide outreached respite care to support more families where caring for children affected by disability requires such support
- Continuous focus on the delivery of our golden threads promoted by our staff development programme, effective oversight and supervision by managers and evaluated by our auditing
- Maintain and improve on our edge of care offer through the development of partnership with parents and children and young people and our partners
- Maintain the ongoing focus of recruitment and retention

