



**Buckinghamshire County Council**  
**Select Committee**  
Children's Select Committee

**Date:** Tuesday 27 November 2018

**Time:** 10.30 am

**Venue:** Mezzanine Room 1 - County Hall, Aylesbury

**AGENDA**

**9.30 am Pre-meeting Discussion**

This session is for members of the Committee only. It is to allow the members time to discuss lines of questioning, areas for discussion and what needs to be achieved during the meeting.

**10.30 am Formal Meeting Begins**

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Page No</b>
<b>1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>		
<b>2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> To declare any Personal or Dislosable Pecuniary Interests.		
<b>3 MINUTES</b> To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2018.	<b>10:35</b>	<b>5 - 10</b>
<b>4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS</b>		



Public Questions is an opportunity for people who live, work or study in the county to put a question to a Scrutiny Committee about any issue that has an impact on their local community or the county as a whole.

Members of the public, who have given prior notice, will be invited to put their question in person.

The Cabinet Member and responsible officers will then be invited to respond.

Further information and details on how to register can be found through the following link and by then clicking on 'Public Questions'.

<http://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=788>

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|----------|--|--------------|----------------|
| <b>5</b> | <b>CHAIRMAN'S REPORT</b><br>For the chairman of the Committee to provide an update to the Committee on recent scrutiny related activity.   | <b>10:40</b> |                |
| <b>6</b> | <b>COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES</b><br>For members of the Committee to update the Committee on any issue they are investigating on behalf of the Committee.  |              |                |
| <b>7</b> | <b>HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT CONSULTATION</b><br>To seek Member's views and answer questions relating to the proposed changes to Buckinghamshire's Home to School Transport policy.<br><br><b>Contributors:</b><br><b>Mr Mike Appleyard - Cabinet Member for Education &amp; Skills</b><br><b>Mr Tolis Vouyioukas - Executive Director for Children's Services</b><br><b>Miss Sarah Callaghan – Service Director for Education</b><br><b>Ms Tracey Lawrence – SEN Programme Manager</b> | <b>10:50</b> | <b>11 - 12</b> |
| <b>8</b> | <b>CABINET MEMBER QUESTION TIME</b><br>For the Committee to ask Cabinet Members questions on current key issues for their portfolios.<br><br>I. Mr M Appleyard, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills<br><br>II. Mr W Whyte, Cabinet Member for Children's Services  | <b>11:20</b> | <b>13 - 14</b> |

This agenda item will also include an update on the performance of the Educational Psychology Service.

- |           |   |              |                |
|-----------|---|--------------|----------------|
| <b>9</b>  | <b>OFSTED IMPROVEMENT PLAN PHASE 2</b><br>For Members to be updated on progress of the delivery of the Council's Ofsted Improvement Plan, which is now moving into Phase 2. | <b>11:40</b> | <b>15 - 28</b> |
|           | <b>Contributors:</b><br><b>Mr Warren Whyte – Cabinet Member for Children’s Services</b><br><b>Mr Richard Nash – Service Director for Children’s Social Care</b>             |              |                |
| <b>10</b> | <b>COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME</b><br>TBC  |              |                |
| <b>11</b> | <b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b><br>To note the next meeting of the Children’s Select Committee on 15 <sup>th</sup> January 2019 in Mezzanine 1, County Hall, Aylesbury.         | <b>12:30</b> |                |

### **Purpose of the committee**

The role of the Children’s Select Committee is to hold decision-makers to account for improving outcomes and services for Buckinghamshire.

The Children’s Select Committee shall have the power to scrutinise all issues in relation to the remit of the Children’s Services Business Unit. This will include, but not exclusively, responsibility for scrutinising issues in relation to:

- Nurseries and early years education
- Schools and further education
- The Bucks Learning Trust
- Quality standards and performance in education
- Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Learning and skills
- Adult learning
- Children and family services
- Early intervention
- Child protection, safeguarding and prevention
- Children in care (looked after children)
- Children’s psychology
- Children's partnerships
- Youth provision
- The Youth Offending Service

*\* In accordance with the BCC Constitution, this Committee shall act as the designated Committee responsible for the scrutiny of Education matters.*

### **Webcasting notice**

Please note: this meeting may be filmed for subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site - at the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed.

You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during this webcast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy.

Therefore by entering the meeting room, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If members of the public do not wish to have their image captured they should ask the committee clerk, who will advise where to sit.

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact Democratic Services on 01296 382343.

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If you would like to attend a meeting, but need extra help to do so, for example because of a disability, please contact us as early as possible, so that we can try to put the right support in place.

*For further information please contact: Katie-Louise Collier on 01296 387006, email: [kicollier@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:kicollier@buckscc.gov.uk)*

### **Members**

Mrs P Birchley	Mrs W Mallen
Mr A Collingwood	Mr B Roberts
Mrs I Darby	Mrs L Sullivan
Mr D Dhillon (C)	Ms J Ward (VC)
Mr M Hussain	Ms K Wood
Mr S Lambert	

### **Co-opted Members**

Mr D Babb, Church of England Representative

# Minutes

## *CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE*

**MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SELECT COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 2 OCTOBER 2018, IN MEZZANINE ROOM 1 - COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 2.00 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 3.25 PM.**

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Dev Dhillon (Chairman), Steven Lambert, Brian Roberts and Luisa Sullivan

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Mrs P Birchley, Mr A Collingwood, Mrs I Darby, Mr M Hussain, Mrs W Mallen, Mrs J Ward and Ms K Wood.

The Committee noted that Mrs A Wight was substituting for Mrs P Birchley for the duration of the meeting.

### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Mrs A Wight stated that she was a member of the Corporate Parenting Panel. Mr S Lambert declared an interest in items 7 and 8 as he was a member of the early help review panel.

### **3 MINUTES**

The minutes of the last meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> July 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the chairman.

### **4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions received.

### **5 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chairman reported that he had presented the Permanent Exclusions inquiry report to Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> September and all recommendations were accepted, except Recommendation 6. The Chairman reminded members that the Children's Early Help consultation would be announced soon and encouraged everyone to have their say in shaping this service.



## 6 COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES

There were none.

## 7 CABINET MEMBERS QUESTION TIME

The Chairman welcomed Mr Appleyard, Cabinet Member for Education & Skills and Miss Sarah Callaghan, Service Director for Education to the meeting. During discussions and in response to Member questions the following main points were noted:

- Mr Appleyard thanked members who had attended his recent Home to School transport briefing and advised that he would hold further discussions with Members over the coming weeks. A public consultation, in various locations across the County, would be launched following discussions at the Cabinet meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> October. Mr Appleyard was keen to reach as many people as possible, who might be impacted by proposed changes.
- A Member asked whether there had been any issues with the recent 11+ exams, as they had been made aware of technical issues. Miss Callaghan stated that officers were investigating whether all students had received fair access and if not, the situation would be rectified. A full resit would be a very unlikely course of action due the stressful effects of re-taking the exams. Members requested an update on the progress in this area.

### **ACTION: Service Director for Education**

- The Chairman discussed the Educational Psychologist update report and queried item number 6, due to the fact that a similar recommendation had been rejected at Cabinet. Miss Callaghan stated that there may be a misinterpretation and named Educational Psychologists for Schools would be unrealistic based on pressures on the Educational Psychology service. Instead the new preventative way of working Schools would be to allocate a named SEND officer and Educational Psychologist who they could contact for advice, support and signposting.
- In response to a question about privately employed Educational Psychologist reports not being accepted by BCC's Educational Psychology services, Mrs Callaghan said she would investigate, as these reports should be accepted.

### **ACTION: Service Director for Education**

- A member queried why EHCP plans took 20 weeks to issue and why only 32% were issued within the set timeframe. Miss Callaghan advised that a number of different

assessments have to take place to be able to effectively issue the plan, that the department were still dealing with the existing backlog of assessments and that visits to the child, to perform the assessments, were not possible during School holidays. It would be expected that the County would be in line with national average, by the end of the year.

- The benefits and reasoning behind transferring locum contracts into associate contracts within the Educational Psychologist service were explained. Miss Callaghan reassured the Committee that quality of assessments would be monitored prior to payments being made. Members were informed that the Senior EP and Head of SEN posts had been filled permanently and the service intended to move towards a preventative model once the back log is cleared and is expected to be sustainable. . A member asked if the timing of assessments could be reduced. Mr Appleyard stated that the overarching assessment must take place to ensure the resulting assessments are the correct ones for each particular child.

The Chairman thanked Mr Appleyard and Miss Callaghan for attending the meeting.

## **8 CHILDREN'S SERVICES UPDATE**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Tolis Vouyioukas, Executive Director of Children's Services and Mr Gareth Williams, Deputy Cabinet Member for Children's Services to the meeting. During discussions and in response to Member questions the following main points were noted:

- Mr Williams promoted the upcoming early help consultation and encouraged everyone to get involved. He also highlighted recent visits he had undertaken to other Councils to share best practice. An additional children's home would be opened in 2019 and Members were advised that the number of looked after children in Buckinghamshire continued to grow, placing pressure on fostering services and the budget.
- A Member asked how confident the Deputy Cabinet Member and Director of Children's Services were that the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2019/20 would be sufficient, given that the current year's budget was stretched, due to the delay in implementing early help changes and increased numbers of looked after children. In response, the Deputy Cabinet Member emphasised that as the service was demand led it was difficult to predict the largest cost areas, but the management team had budgeted for an increase in numbers for next year, based on an analysis of the cohort of young people currently on Child Protection plans. Mr Vouyioukas assured Members that budgets would not determine the outcomes for any child.
- In response to a question about staffing at the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), the Director of Children's Services explained that there were some vacancies as it was a

particularly demanding environment to work in, but managers were supporting MASH staff as best they could.

- Currently Buckinghamshire had 505 looked after children and 634 children with Child Protection Plans. The number of looked after children was below the national and south east average, but the number of Child Protection Plans was higher than expected and this could lead to an increase in the looked after cohort. The Early Help consultation would run for 10 weeks. Independent guidance had been sought on the timing and length of the consultation and consultation documents had been designed to explain three options, with one preferred option clearly stated. Public meetings were also being held to ensure the public could ask further questions.
- A member stated that the percentage of repeat referrals was of concern and asked what actions were being taken to reduce them. Mr Vouyioukas explained that repeat referrals usually happened when a child had particularly complex needs or if a crisis occurred within the family to trigger a second referral. It was noted that there had been an increase in referrals involving domestic violence over the past few months.
- The Chairman noted that some targets in the performance report had been reduced. Mr Vouyioukas explained that whilst key performance indicators (KPI) have their place, both Ofsted and the Commissioner had commented that it was important to strike a good balance between data and KPI targets the quality of social work practice and improving outcomes for young people.
- A member asked for reassurance that the number of looked after children placed within 20 miles of their original home setting would improve. It was noted that the importance of a child receiving the correct high-quality placement was the prime motivator, and also that some children need to be placed away from the County. To date this year, the demand for placements had been met within the County, but this would not be sustainable going forward.
- A member asked whether the frontline and management staff issues had been remedied. Mr Williams said caseloads were still too high in some teams and would take time to reduce, but he had confidence in the new permanent senior management team of excellent individuals who had the experience and expertise to drive improvements. It was acknowledged that realistically it could take up to three years to turn performance around and get to 'good'.
- The Director of Children's Services commented that the service was on the right track – the improvement plans were ambitious, especially with the changing demographic demands,



but the Commissioner had confirmed that the service is moving in the right direction and the new management team would continue to build momentum.

- Members were concerned about frequent changes to foster placements and the effects on children. Mr Vouyioukas said that the service keeps placement moves to a minimum, but some children had special requirements or may display challenging behaviour within a particular setting, which might necessitate a change of placement.

## **9 REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE REPORT - Q1 2018-19**

Items 8 & 9 were considered together, please see above

## **10 VOICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUNG PERSON INQUIRY - PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS 18 MONTHS ON**

The Chairman welcomed Mr James Fowler, Youth Services Manager, to the meeting.

Mr Fowler updated the committee on the development of the Youth Voice website, to ensure that the views of young people would be heard. The Chairman and several other members commended Mr Fowler on the comprehensive report and the work on the website, which was visually appealing and easy to navigate.

- Mr Fowler highlighted a national campaign called Make your Mark, where young people were asked to identify and rank key issues or concerns for them as they grow up.
- There was a short discussion about the 'You said, we did' feature on the website. Mr Fowler said it was important to feedback to young people how their views directly lead to changes. The Deputy Cabinet Member flagged that this could be a useful page for the Select Committee to monitor. The Chairman thanked Mr Fowler for attending the meeting and the Committee confirmed that recommendation 4 of the Voice of the Child Inquiry had been successfully implemented.

## **11 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

Members noted the future work programme.

## **12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will take place on 27th November at 10:30am in Mezzanine Room 1, County Hall, Aylesbury



# Children's Select Committee

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**Title:** Home to School Transport Consultation

**Date:** Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2018

**Author:** Sarah Callaghan

**Contact officer:** Tracey Lawrence

**Local members affected:** Michael Appleyard

*For press enquiries concerning this report, please contact the media office on 01296 382444*

## Summary

*The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Select Committee on key proposals for changes to the current approach to delivering Home to School Transport in Buckinghamshire.*

## Activity to progress recommendation following Budget Scrutiny

On reviewing the increasing cost of Home to School Transport, the Finance, Performance and Resources Select Committee made the recommendation that the Local Authority offer should meet the national guidance levels, providing only the statutory support required under the legislation.

Benchmarking against other Local Authorities indicated that most have already moved to more innovative models of delivering Home to School Transport. In an effort to improve the financial situation without removing services or requiring major changes to the delivery of transport, updates were made to internal processes, routes, procurement and other supporting areas to improve efficiency.

These changes secured some efficiencies, however longer term changes to the current offer were required as demand is creating unsustainable pressures on the budget. At present we spend £15.1m on home to school transport, with £12.7m spent on provision supporting our statutory duties covered in s.508B of the Education Act 1996. In addition, we also provide transport for 4810 children at a cost of £2.4m in accordance with other statutory transport duties and powers.

The recommendations made by the Finance, Performance and Resources Select Committee were clear that any changes ought to be made in consultation with parents, with reasonable notice. The report for Cabinet on 22<sup>nd</sup> October outlined the drivers for change; financial sustainability, promotion of independence, and the need to mitigate the effects of growth on the environment, and requested authority to consult with residents on:

- Proposed changes to the delivery of Home to School transport with a particular focus on areas of spend that could be delivered differently whilst continuing to meet the Council's statutory duties.
  - SEN Post-16 Free Transport
  - Paid-for Transport
  - Evreham Promise
  - Ivinghoe Promise
- And - Proposed models of implementation for the alternative service delivery of travel assistance provision.

The proposed changes are part of a wider transport transformation programme across council services to improve quality and best support residents' travel needs. This programme aims to ensure a consistent approach in the adjustment to provision that mitigates any negative impact on particular cohorts. The transformation programme and changes to delivery are underpinned by the following guiding principles.

We will:

- Support those most in need
- Promote principles of independence
- Provide the most cost effective travel assistance
- Promote and encourage the use of sustainable travel

The public consultation went live on 31<sup>st</sup> October, and will run until 4<sup>th</sup> January 2019. Responses will be analysed, and recommendations will be made to Cabinet in March 2019.

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## **Background Papers**

### **Modernising home to school transport**

All of the information for the Home to School Consultation has been published at:

[www.buckscc.gov.uk/schooltransportsurvey](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/schooltransportsurvey)

### **Cabinet Report – 22<sup>nd</sup> October**

<https://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/documents/s123658/Report%20for%20Home%20to%20School%20Transport%20Consultation.pdf>

# Delivering Educational Psychology Services November 2018

This report aims to update Members on issues relating to recruitment and performance of the Educational Psychology Service (EPS).

## 1. Update on the current position:

The table below provides an overview of the total number of Appendix D's completed since the beginning of the calendar year up until the end of October and the number and % completed within 6 weeks.

	2018		
	Number completed	Number in 6 weeks	% in 6 weeks
Statutory Assessments	588	348	59%
Statutory Re-Assessments	81	12	15%
<b>Total Appendix D's</b>	<b>669</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>54%</b>

In addition, the figures shown below provides a breakdown of performance for recent months:

	2018		
	Number completed	Number in 6 weeks	% in 6 weeks
August	48	29	60%
September	27	7	26%
October	94	26	28%
<b>Total Appendix D's</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>37%</b>

Given the pressures the service is facing and the reduced staffing levels for a sustained period of time, there has been limited opportunities to engage in preventative work, working alongside schools, all of which have contributed to the current performance levels.

## 2. Looking to the future:

There are currently 36 children awaiting assessment and these children are being prioritised according to vulnerability. Locum EPs are being utilised to ensure that assessments are completed as quickly as possible.

### 2.1 Associate Model

The service is in the process of moving to an Associate Model to support the completion of Appendix D's. This will mean the use of high cost locums will cease and a payment by results approach will be adopted. The service is working with existing locums to move them across to Associate contracts with a view to this model being fully implemented from 1 January 2019.

### 2.2 Early intervention

Valuable work strands, including Nurture group, Holding Hands (Parenting Group) and Emotional Literacy Support Assistants programmes continue to operate, delivered by the Psychology Assistants and overseen by an EP. The purpose of these work strands to identify need at an earlier stage and provide appropriate support.





**Buckinghamshire County Council**  
**Select Committee**  
 Children's Select Committee

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## Report to the Children's Select Committee

<b>Title:</b>	Ofsted Improvement Plan Phase 2
<b>Committee date:</b>	Tuesday 27 November 2018
<b>Author:</b>	Tolis Vouyioukas
<b>Contact officer:</b>	Richard Nash <a href="mailto:rnash@buckscc.gov.uk">rnash@buckscc.gov.uk</a>
<b>Cabinet Member sign-off:</b>	Warren Whyte

### Purpose of Agenda Item

*The purpose of this report is to (a) highlight the key activities that were completed as part of the initial high level action plan, and (b) share the Ofsted Improvement Plan – phase 2, following its recent introduction.*

### Background

1. In response to the Ofsted re-inspection in November 2017, and their subsequent report published in January 2018, a high level action plan was developed and a significant amount of immediate remedial action was taken to establish a firm base for improvement within the service.
2. The service has been extremely fortunate to have recruited an experienced, competent Senior Management Team (SMT) with a proven track record. This team has now been together for six months and although it continues to identify some examples of poor practice, it is also working hard to influence the way our staff engage with children and young people to improve their outcomes.
3. In delivering the initial high level plan, SMT has found that in some teams there has been insufficient operational management capability to sustain and embed the improvement activity. This is an important finding as the service is in a stronger position to make the required improvements as it has a much more accurate and well-informed understanding of the barriers to sustaining positive change and the areas that require further attention.



## Key achievement against initial High Level Action Plan

### Development Centre Programme

4. The Development Centre Programme was developed in response to the Ofsted re-inspection report (January 2018) findings which identified significant concerns about the quality of management oversight and decision-making. Strengthening these two elements remains a key driver at the centre of all the on-going improvement activity.
5. Effective and competent first line management tiers of Team and Assistant Team Managers are critical to achieving and maintaining a good standard of social work practice and delivering improved outcomes for children. Collectively, this cohort of managers is central to the assessment, planning, support, intervention and review functions for children, young people and their families known to the service.
6. The Senior Management Team is addressing the outcomes of the development centre.
7. Personal Development Planning sessions are being offered to agree the bespoke training, learning and development offer with this tier of managers.

### Children in Need (CIN) Audit and Review

8. In February 2018, Children's Services began an audit and review of a high proportion of open Children in Need cases. The audit and review have provided an opportunity to evaluate social work practice, through scrutinising electronic case records and consulting with allocated staff, to reach a professional judgement about the overall standard of practice and the child's safety and well-being.
9. Whilst there remains a concerning cohort of cases that have been judged to be 'Inadequate', the majority have been judged to be 'Requires Improvement' with a small cohort of cases judged to be 'Good'.
10. The Senior Management Team is addressing the outcomes of these audits both in supervision with their direct reports and through the quality assurance framework. To assure the quality of future practice standards in implementing audit findings, it is proposed that an unannounced spot checks will take place regularly.

### Beyond Auditing

11. The Ofsted re-inspection report (January 2018) includes recommendation number nine which states that Children's Services should:
12. "Apply an appropriate audit tool to ensure that qualitative analysis, alongside quantitative compliance auditing, measures effectively the improvements, impact and outcomes for children."



13. The 'Beyond Auditing' pilot programme was subsequently launched at the end of April 2018 as part of the post-inspection activity to improve qualitative analysis and measure improvements, impact and outcomes for children. The 'Beyond Auditing' Quality Assurance Framework and programme of activity aims to promote and embed practice evaluation and assure the quality of practice as part of business as usual. The 'Beyond Auditing' Team work in collaboration with the allocated social worker and team/assistant team managers in 'real time' to review a number of different elements, analyse the quality of practice and measure improvements over time. The process includes consultation, audit review and observation activities to connect the outcome and findings with active feedback, learning and change by increasing the level of insight about identified strengths and areas for improvement. The Principal Social Worker and 'Beyond Auditing' Team provide the necessary feedback, learning and development support to individual social workers and team/assistant team managers to address the identified recommendations and support the required learning and development that has been identified.
14. As with the CIN audits, there is a small number of cases judged to be 'Good', the audit evidence shows that the general standard of practice is still not consistently good.
15. It is important to note that there is a number of 'legacy' cases which are being addressed and these cases require robust management oversight to ensure that the audit feedback is acted upon.
16. Having analysed the combined findings to identify the most common themes and issues, a practice guidance tool has been created to assist social workers in their roles.

#### Public Law Outline Review (Court work)

17. As part of the post-inspection improvement programme, a thematic review has been completed in respect of Public Law Outline (PLO) practice. This focuses on several practice concerns highlighted in the Ofsted re-inspection report (January 2018):
  - a. Widespread and serious weaknesses in some safeguarding services.
  - b. Critical weaknesses spanning the children protection and court work teams.
  - c. Risks not being recognised and weak managerial oversight being found at all levels.
18. The review provides a comprehensive analysis of pre-proceedings and court practice. The review includes input from social work managers and practitioners as well as legal service and takes into account available performance data and legal spend.
19. Based on the findings of the thematic review, the report sets out a number of recommended actions, which the service is in the process of implementing. Progress against this action plan will be monitored by the Children's Improvement Board.

## Placement at Home with Parents Arrangements

20. The Ofsted re-inspection report (January 2018) raised concerns in relation to children subject to Care Orders who are placed at home with parents. These arrangements are part of the legal framework set out in Regulations 15 to 20 of the 'Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulation 2010' which govern practice and decision making regarding the return of children, who are the subject of Interim Care Orders or Care Orders, to the care of their families.
21. Since the last update presented to Cabinet, all children currently subject to these arrangements have now been reviewed by the service. The main impact of the intervention to date has been to consider all arrangements, identify weak areas of practice regarding individual children and young people in order to strengthen the management overview and decision making to make these arrangements safe. This has resulted in some children and young people requiring remedial action to address deficits in their care planning. In a small number of instances, evidence of poor practice and non-compliance with agreed plans has resulted in escalation and direct intervention, including a return to court where necessary.
22. To assure the quality of future practice standards regarding children placed at home, there will be six monthly unannounced spot check. This activity will include a review of the child's records and case discussions with the allocated Social Workers, Team Managers and Independent Reviewing Officers, as necessary and appropriate.

### **Ofsted Improvement Plan – Phase 2**

23. A phase 2 improvement plan has been produced and is attached to this report. It expands on the actions included within the initial high level action plan and the findings, as well as what the service has discovered in recent months. The plan concentrates heavily on the impact that first line managers need to have in order to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families. This plan is a live document and will be under regular review to ensure that actions are further expanded where it is necessary.

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## **Background Papers**

Appendix 1: Ofsted Improvement Plan - Phase 2.

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**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
CHILDREN'S SERVICES  
IMPROVEMENT PLAN (PHASE 2)  
NOVEMBER 2018**

## **PART ONE: INTRODUCTION**

The Ofsted re-inspection of Children's Services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers took place on 6th November to 30th November 2017. The [re-inspection report](#) was published on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2018 and judged the overall service to be inadequate, with the Care Leaving Service requiring improvement to be good and the Adoption Services judged to be good.

Progress since the previous Ofsted inspection in 2014 was found to be inconsistent, too slow and failed to achieve the wholesale service improvements required for vulnerable children. The re-inspection found widespread and serious weaknesses in some services to safeguard children as well as some critical weaknesses in services to children looked after.

We accept these findings and are committed to improving services for our children and young people. There is much to do and we anticipate that this is likely to be at least a three year improvement journey. Phase 2 of our improvement plan builds on Phase 1 which was put in place immediately following the Ofsted re-inspection. The Phase 1 improvement plan has been progressed and closed down with outstanding actions rolled over into the Phase 2 improvement plan.

The Phase 2 improvement plan continues to embed performance compliance and further develops practice and quality standards. The improvement plan outlines the actions that we will take to address the identified weaknesses and areas for development identified in the Ofsted inspection report. It incorporates the inspection report recommendations and the feedback from the first [Ofsted monitoring visit](#). It is also informed by the [Commissioner's report](#) and attends to the details contained in the Secretary of State's [statutory direction](#), including the Improvement Adviser role provided by Hampshire County Council.

The action that is taken and the progress that is made to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families will be monitored and reviewed by the Children's Improvement Board which is chaired by the Children's Improvement Adviser.

**The anticipated timescales for completion of actions will be reviewed regularly given the outcome of the Development Centre for first line managers. The successful implementation of this plan relies on effective and competent first line managers as this tier is critical to achieving and maintaining good standards of social work practice. It is too early to demonstrate the impact of initial progress against actions on improving outcomes. In addition, the plan will be under regular review to ensure that actions are further expanded where it is necessary.**

**PART TWO: IMPROVEMENT PLAN (PHASE 2) – PRACTICE, PERFORMANCE, PEOPLE AND PARTNERSHIPS**

Number Including Ofsted Recommendation	What we want to achieve	Action	Lead	Timeframe
<b>1. PRACTICE</b>				
<b>First Response Service</b>				
1.1 Ofsted Recommendation Number 3 and Ofsted Recommendation Number 7** (only in relation to asylum seeking children)	To refresh and embed clear protocols for assessing children and young people referred to children’s social care ensuring compliance with the revised <a href="#">Working Together (2018)</a> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To consult with safeguarding partners and revise the Assessment Protocol for assessing children, and young people.</li> </ul>	Amanda Andrews	Jan 2019
1.2 Outlined in DfE Direction ToR	To provide an efficient and effective principal point of contact to receive and consider all contacts and referrals regarding concerns about children, young people and their families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen the impact and resilience of the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) particular by improving:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Screening and decision making tools</li> <li>Domestic abuse triage (including the advisability and feasibility of a domestic abuse Family Group Conference offer)</li> <li>Missing children and young people (ELPIS)</li> <li>SWAN Unit</li> <li>Out of hours Emergency Social Work Team (ESWT).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Amanda Andrews	Mar 2019
<b>Safeguarding Service including Children in Need of Help and Protection, including Children with Disabilities</b>				
1.3 Ofsted Recommendation number 1	To further develop the recently aligned Safeguarding Teams to provide targeted support and intervention for children in need of help and protection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure that CIN Audit and Review recommendations and remedial actions have been responded to and addressed and the learning embedded into everyday practice.</li> <li>To review service arrangements for conducting CIN Reviews and ensure that allocated social workers are adequately supported by line managers and business support officers.</li> </ul>	Errol Albert	Jun 2018 – Feb 2019

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To review processes and pathways on the stepping down of children who no longer meet the threshold for CIN/CP and who would benefit from support from partner agency involvement including community and voluntary services.</li> </ul>		
1.4 Ofsted recommendation number 2	To deliver targeted outreach services to support children and young people to live with their families and prevent them becoming looked after	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the Children and Teenager Community Help Team (CATCH) and explore the feasibility for developing an enhanced 'Edge of Care' Service.</li> <li>As part of the above, identify a menu of available resources and establish an agreed service approach to support children, young people and their families.</li> <li>Review opportunities for CATCH to develop their offer on reunification and return from care.</li> </ul>	Errol Albert	Mar 2019
1.5	To ensure that children and young people at risk of significant harm are afforded appropriate legal protection through the Public Law Outline when required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To implement the action plan arising from the Public Law Outline thematic review recommendations.</li> </ul>	Errol Albert	Oct 2018 – Jan 2019
<b>Care Management Service (Children in Care Service and Care Leavers)</b>				
1.6 Ofsted Recommendation number 8	To ensure children in care and care leavers are well informed and receive their full rights and entitlements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To review and refresh on line information and hard copy materials to provide children in care and care leavers with full details of their rights and entitlements, including advocacy and complaints.</li> <li>To provide all care leavers with full information about a health passport about their health history.</li> </ul>	Richard Nash / CCG	Jul 2018 – Mar 2019
1.7 Ofsted Recommendation Number 4	To ensure care plans appropriately reflect children's diverse needs and individual identities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To complete a file review of care plans to ascertain the details of practice as part of the Beyond Auditing Programme.</li> <li>Use the findings of the review to develop practice guidance, training and development opportunities.</li> </ul>	Yvette Thomas / Julie Davies	Mar 2019
1.8 Ofsted Recommendation Number 6	To ensure children placed at home with parents are looked after and protected appropriately.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To undertake a further review of children placed at home with parents to assure standards of care and compliance with procedures and guidance.</li> </ul>	Paulette Thompson- Omenka	Mar 2019

<b>Child Protection, Independent Reviewing and LADO Service</b>				
1.9 Ofsted Recommendation Number 1  Outlined in DfE Direction ToR	To ensure that Child Protection Advisers and Independent Reviewing Officers strengthen and assure the quality of child protection and care planning practice through robust oversight, challenge, support and escalation where required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To review the child protection and independent reviewing service in order to maximise the role and function of available resources to improve outcomes for children and young people.</li> <li>Further embed and refine the child protection and care planning alert and escalation protocols.</li> </ul>	Julie Davies	Dec 2018
<b>Care Services (Fostering, Adoption, Residential and Placements)</b>				
1.10 Ofsted recommendation number 2	To ensure all children in care and care leavers placements meet their assessed needs and are allocated in an efficient and effective manner that delivers value for money.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To maintain and further develop robust management of the weekly Children’s Care Planning and Resources Panel to oversee resource allocation, decision making and financial administration for all new placements and any changes to existing placements.</li> <li>Increase the availability of local placements for looked after children.</li> </ul>	Nathan Whitley	Jul 2018 – Mar 2019
<b>2.0 PERFORMANCE</b>				
<b>Practice standards</b>				
2.1 Outlined in DfE Direction ToR	To provide clear practice guidance and tools to ensure that staff are aware of what good practice looks like and model this in their work with children, young people and families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop practice guidance and standards that identify the hallmarks of good practice, including;                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case recording standards</li> <li>Direct work and the voice of the child</li> <li>Strengthening Families assessment and planning tools</li> <li>Supervision standards</li> </ul> </li> <li>To ensure that the above practice guidance and standards are launched and are the focus of team and service meetings across the service.</li> </ul>	Julie Davies	Jan 2019 - Mar 2019
<b>‘Beyond Auditing’ Quality Assurance Framework</b>				
2.2	To ensure that the Beyond Auditing Team resources are fit for purpose to work alongside staff and model the critical friend role.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To review staffing in the Beyond Auditing Team and establish the requisite knowledge, skills, experience and values to fulfil the quality assurance role.</li> </ul>	Julie Davies	Complete

<p>2.3 Ofsted recommendation number 5 and recommendation number 9</p> <p>Outlined in DfE Direction ToR</p>	<p>To deliver the 'Beyond Auditing' Quality Assurance Framework and assure the standard of practice and the impact this has on improving outcomes for children, young people and families.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To agree the 'Beyond Auditing' programme from September 2018 to April 2019, including a review of previous findings and recommendations, and a number of additional thematic 'deep dives' focusing on:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Child protection planning</li> <li>○ Care planning</li> <li>○ PLO pre-proceedings and Court proceedings</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Julie Davies</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>2.4 Ofsted recommendation 10</p>	<p>To provide regular audit and review feedback to staff and promote continuous learning, development and support opportunities to improve practice across the whole service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To deliver a comprehensive programme of support led by the Principal Social Worker in conjunction with the Beyond Auditing Team, including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Practice Forums</li> <li>○ Team and Assistant Team Manager workshops</li> <li>○ Reflective supervision</li> <li>○ Action learning sets</li> <li>○ Coaching and mentoring</li> <li>○ Practice Champions.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>David Glover-Wright</p>	<p>Mar 2019</p>
<p><b>Training, Learning and Development</b></p>				
<p>2.5</p>	<p>To re-launch the Strengthening Families Framework model of approach to ensure consistent strengths based practice with children, young people and their families.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To re-issue the SFF Practice Guidance to all staff.</li> <li>• To roll out individual team/ service training as and when appropriate.</li> </ul>	<p>Senior Management Team</p>	<p>Apr 2018 – Mar 2019</p>
<p>2.6</p>	<p>To target and promote the findings and outcomes from the Development Centre Programme to strengthen and address areas for development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To complete the final Development Centre, review overarching findings and complete individual feedback to all Team and Assistant Team Manager.</li> <li>• To review and consolidate the learning from the outcome of all the Development Centre sessions and consult with Development Centre Assessors and agree the offer and next steps.</li> <li>• To convene a joint session with Assessors and Team/Assistant Team Managers to provide feedback and agree next steps.</li> </ul>	<p>Richard Nash</p>	<p>Nov 2018</p>

<b>Performance Framework</b>				
2.8 Ofsted Recommendation Number 9  Outlined in DfE Direction ToR	To ensure that regular and accessible performance data, including compliance, trend and benchmarking information, is reported consistently in a manner that aligns with the quality assurance priorities and supports the overall management and leadership of the service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To review and remodel the existing performance framework to streamline the scope, format and cycle of reporting across the service.</li> </ul>	Richard Nash	Nov 2018
<b>3.0 PEOPLE</b>				
<b>Workforce Development &amp; Planning</b>				
3.1	To lead and coordinate the implementation of a Strategic Workforce Development Board that promotes Buckinghamshire as an employer of choice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To convene regular Strategic Workforce Development Board meetings to oversee the progress of the workforce priorities and Sub Group activity for :                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment &amp; Change Management</li> <li>Retention &amp; Wellbeing</li> <li>Training, learning &amp; development.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Rebecca Ellis	Complete
<b>Recruitment and Change Management</b>				
3.2	To launch an external recruitment campaign to attract skilled and permanent social work staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop an social worker recruitment campaign, including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refresh &amp; review the online microsite</li> <li>Update communications and branding</li> <li>Revise job descriptions</li> <li>Devise targeted adverts and recruitment campaigns</li> <li>Attend and increase visibility at external job fayres e.g. COMPASS in London &amp; Birmingham</li> <li>Develop in-house recruitment events.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Rebecca Ellis	Complete
3.3	To reduce over reliance on agency social work staff and build stability in the workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To authorise and robustly review the continuing use of agency social work staff at a senior level.</li> <li>To undertake 1:1 consultations with existing agency staff to promote conversion onto permanent contracts.</li> </ul>	Richard Nash / Rebecca Ellis	Nov 2018



**4.0 PARTNERSHIPS**

**Internal - Business Support**

4.1	To ensure that social work teams and services are well supported and enabled to deliver efficient and effective services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To review the role, function and capacity of Business Support Services and address the findings and recommended actions.</li> </ul>	Mark Green / Clare Brown	Apr 2019
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## PART THREE: APPENDICES

### Appendix A - Ofsted Re-Inspection Report (29<sup>th</sup> January 2018) Recommendations

The improvement plan incorporates the findings from the Ofsted inspection and includes the ten recommendations outlined below:

1. Take immediate action to improve the quality of management oversight and decision-making at all levels to make sure that children's plans are properly progressed. Ensure that management interventions, including escalations and alerts by child protection chairs and independent reviewing officers, are clearly recorded on children's files and that these actions are followed through.
2. Ensure that appropriate support is in place to meet the needs of children when child protection plans end and also when children return home from care.
3. Improve the quality of assessment and planning to ensure that risk is identified and responded to promptly, especially when risks escalate. Ensure that assessments and plans identify the unique needs and experience of each individual child, particularly when they are part of a large family of brothers and sisters.
4. Ensure that care plans for children reflect their diverse needs and individual identities, and are realistic about achieving change.
5. Ensure that all written records are clear and up to date, and accurately identify the circumstances of children and their families.
6. Take immediate action to ensure that monitoring and visiting arrangements to all children looked after in placements with parents are sufficiently robust to ensure their safety and progress until these arrangements are formally resolved.
7. Review the procedures for accommodating and supporting unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, including those who arrive outside office opening hours, to ensure that their immediate needs and vulnerabilities are appropriately assessed.
8. Ensure that all care leavers have full information about their health histories and what they can expect during their time in care and on leaving care, including information about advocacy and complaints.
9. Apply an appropriate audit tool to ensure that qualitative analysis, alongside quantitative compliance auditing, measures effectively the improvements, impact and outcomes for children.
10. Ensure that all staff receive appropriate training, including mandatory training, in order to improve their key skills and to keep them up to date in their knowledge and practice.

## APPENDIX B – SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION STATUTORY DIRECTION 12<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2018

### Improvement Advisers Terms of Reference – July 2018

1. Buckinghamshire County Council (“the Council”) has failed systemically and persistently in its delivery of children’s social care services. The 2018 Ofsted report found the service to be ‘inadequate’ overall and for all key judgements.
2. Hampshire County Council is expected to support the Council’s improvement programme on those areas of practice that Ofsted has judged to be inadequate. It shall in particular:
  - a. Chair Buckinghamshire’s Children’s Services Improvement Board (‘the Improvement Board’);
  - b. Ensure that the Council:
    - Continues the implementation of a robust improvement plan which spans children’s social care services, and includes clear and specific actions that reflect the journey of the child and which address all recommendations made in the Ofsted report so as to improve the quality of services for children;
    - Implements a revised early help offer that links more closely with social care activity and an improved multi-agency safeguarding hub;
    - Invests specifically in leadership and management development for the senior leadership team and team managers;
    - Continues to embed a new organisational culture that supports social work practice;
    - Creates an effective performance and audit framework;
    - Reviews the role and impact of child protection conference chairs and Independent Reviewing Officers; and
    - Develops a fully-realised transformation plan that sets out a vision for how the service will deliver high-quality social work and related services.
  - c. Provide leadership, support and practice advice in line with priorities agreed with the Council and set out in the Commissioner’s report and areas of weakness identified by the Ofsted report;
  - d. Provide where appropriate direction, monitoring, and coaching to the children’s services senior team to secure the necessary improvements and to build on their capabilities; and
  - e. Provide regular reports to the Department for Education that assess improvements in Buckinghamshire by reference to the Ofsted report. These reports may cover but are not exclusive to practice; performance; culture; leadership, management and governance; management oversight; early help; and local multi-agency arrangements.
3. Agree to review support arrangements with DfE 12 months after the date of the Direction.

