

Public Document Pack



MEETING:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	Tuesday, 26 February 2019
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	Council Chamber, Barnsley Town Hall

AGENDA

Administrative and Governance Issues for the Committee

1 Apologies for Absence - Parent Governor Representatives

To receive apologies for absence in accordance with Regulation 7 (6) of the Parent Governor Representatives (England) Regulations 2001.

2 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interest

To invite Members of the Committee to make any declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interest in connection with the items on this agenda.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting *(Pages 5 - 8)*

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 29th January, 2019 (Item 3 attached).

Overview and Scrutiny Issues for the Committee

4 Domestic Abuse Services in Barnsley *(Pages 9 - 20)*

To consider a report of the Executive Director Core Services and the Executive Director Communities (Item 4a attached) in respect of Domestic Abuse Services in Barnsley including Case Studies (Item 4b attached) and Information on the Public Awareness Campaign (Item 4c attached).

5 Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) in Barnsley *(Pages 21 - 38)*

To consider a report of the Executive Director Core Services and the Executive Director People (Item 4a attached) in respect of the Ofsted ILACS Report (Item 4b attached)

6 Exclusion of the Public and Press

The public and press will be excluded from this meeting during consideration of the items so marked because of the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by the specific paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended, subject to the public interest test.

7 Children's Social Care Performance Report *(Pages 39 - 92)*

Reason restricted:

Paragraph (2) Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

Enquiries to Anna Marshall, Scrutiny Officer

Email scrutiny@barnsley.gov.uk

To: Chair and Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee:-

Councillors Ennis OBE (Chair), Bowler, G. Carr, Charlesworth, Clarke, Clements, Franklin, Frost, Gollick, Daniel Griffin, Hampson, Hand-Davis, Hayward, W. Johnson, Makinson, Mitchell, Murray, Phillips, Pickering, Pourali, Sheard, Sixsmith MBE, Tattersall, Williams, Wilson and Wright together with co-opted Members Ms P. Gould and Statutory Co-opted Member Ms K. Morritt (Parent Governor Representative)

Electronic Copies Circulated for Information

Diana Terris, Chief Executive

Andrew Frostdick, Executive Director Core Services

Rob Winter, Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management

Michael Potter, Service Director, Business Improvement and Communications

Ian Turner, Service Director, Council Governance

Press

Witnesses

Item 4 (2:00pm)

Wendy Lowder, Executive Director - Communities

Cllr Jenny Platts, Cabinet Spokesperson - Communities

Jayne Hellowell, Head of Commissioning & Healthier Communities

Rosemary Clewer, Commissioning Manager - Stronger, Safer & Healthier Communities

Sam Goulding, Project Manager - IDAS

Acting Detective Inspector (ADI) Adrienne Sheekey, South Yorkshire Police

Item 5 (3:00pm)

Rachel Dickinson, Executive Director – People Directorate

Mel John-Ross, Service Director, Children's Social Care & Safeguarding

Margaret Libreri, Service Director, Education, Early Start and Prevention - People Directorate

Councillor Caroline Saunders, Cabinet Support Member for People (Safeguarding)

Councillor Sarah Tattersall, Cabinet Support Member for People (Achieving Potential)

Item 7 (3:45pm)

Mel John-Ross, Service Director, Children's Social Care & Safeguarding, BMBC

Councillor Caroline Saunders, Cabinet Support Member for People (Safeguarding)

MEETING:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	Tuesday, 29 January 2019
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	Council Chamber, Barnsley Town Hall

MINUTES

Present

Councillors Ennis OBE (Chair), Bowler, G. Carr, Clements, Frost, Gollick, Daniel Griffin, Hayward, Makinson, Mitchell, Phillips, Pickering, Pourali, Sheard, Tattersall, Williams, Wilson and Wright together with co-opted member Ms K. Morritt

46 Apologies for Absence - Parent Governor Representatives

Apologies for absence were received from Ms P. Gould in accordance with Regulation 7(6) of the Parent Governor Representatives (England) Regulations 2001.

47 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest.

48 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 8th January 2019 were approved as a true and accurate record subject to a minor amendment to minute 44 to reflect that the service will provide information about how parents whose children are subject to exclusions are supported to challenge exclusions.

49 Provisional Education Outcomes for Children & Young People in Barnsley 2018

The following witnesses were welcomed to the meeting:

Nick Bowen, Principal of Horizon Community College and Joint Chair of Barnsley Schools' Alliance Board

Margaret Libreri, Service Director, Education, Early Start and Prevention, People Directorate, BMBC

Richard Lynch, Head of Barnsley Schools' Alliance, People Directorate, BMBC

Liz Gibson, Virtual School Headteacher for Looked After Children (LAC), People Directorate, BMBC

Councillor Sarah Tattersall, Cabinet Support Member for People (Achieving Potential)

The Service Director introduced this item, explaining that the report outlines the validated education outcomes for children and young people in Barnsley, broken down by pupil group, from assessments taken in 2018. The report provides an overview from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (age 4/5) to Key Stage (KS) 5 (A-Level), including comparisons where possible, together with an initial picture of the statutory outcomes for 2018 of children placed in Barnsley's Corporate Care and

featured in the Statistical First Release (SFR) cohort for the academic year September 2017 to July 2018.

In the ensuing discussion, and in response to detailed questioning and challenge, the following matters were highlighted:

Members were reassured that subjects such as arts, languages and practical skills were not neglected at the expense of more academic subjects in order to meet Key Stage outcomes, although this may have happened in the past. Schools now do much more in terms of getting young people ready for life and the world of work and are actively exploring a much more diverse curriculum, with schools open into the evening. Holocaust Memorial Day was recently commemorated at Horizon in the evening and the event was open to all. There is now more focus on inclusion and a more diverse curriculum, particularly for children with special educational needs and those eligible for pupil premium funding. Primary schools in Barnsley focus on a broad and balanced curriculum and are particularly adept at taking up the rich cultural offer which Barnsley has to offer.

It was explained that changes to the Ofsted framework have helped in this area, with initiatives such as Progress 8 and Attainment 8 leading to a broader, more balanced curriculum, encompassing diversity in languages, arts, dance, drama and photography, to name but a few. It was highlighted that there is currently a push to increase the uptake of languages in Barnsley. Horizon is performing at above the national average in languages at 50% (the national average is 30%). Members agreed that education is a question of getting the balance right but that it seems the new framework is moving in the right direction.

It was felt that the 2.5 School Improvement Officer and Evaluation Officer posts are adequate to actively support schools to improve when coupled with Head teachers from across Barnsley who meet every month to support and challenge each other and to share best practice.

Looked after children can now access an enhanced educational package, with wider opportunities available through effective use of pupil premium funding and a more personalised 'package'. Schools receive £500 per child per term but this is not a personal budget and schools can decide for themselves how this should be spent, although the spending has to be evaluated in terms of effectiveness. Schools are also able to apply for additional funds.

The system for parents to take their children out of school on holiday was explained. Schools have to report such absences and parents are fined £60 per child, which comes back in to the service.

A Member reported that teacher sickness absence at Burton Road school had been much improved when teachers had been for a flu jab. This was also the case at Horizon.

A discussion took place around elective home education (EHE). There are a significant number of cases in Barnsley but there is no requirement placed on schools or the Education Authority to monitor these children, although the Education Welfare Service works with parents.

It was acknowledged that Barnsley's fixed term exclusion figures are high. In comparison to other South Yorkshire Authorities, Barnsley had the highest figure in terms of the average number of days lost per excluded pupil in 2017 and the greatest increase from 2016. The average number of days lost is above the England average and the increase is significantly higher than national and regional figures. The permanent exclusion rate for secondary schools in Barnsley increased again in 2017, with a greater increase than that seen nationally. Data suggests that off-rolling does not occur in Barnsley and any exclusions have to be properly documented.

Just two schools in Barnsley are responsible for the majority of exclusions and a lot of work is being done around behaviour and sanctions policies to bring this figure down. Sanctions should be used proportionately and this is now being done, with a greater emphasis on inclusion. Years 7 and 8 are proving to be the most challenging age groups. Schools do a lot of work with very difficult and challenging children. Exclusion is used as a last resort in cases of extreme behaviour.

Members expressed concern about the use of isolation units or 'internal' exclusion. It was reported that this is often done as a sanction to reintegrate the more challenging pupils and can lead to a reduction in the number of exclusions.

Children and young people are separated from their peers, don't go to lunch with friends etc. and this is proving to be effective. It was acknowledged that parents are made aware, in writing, of fixed term exclusions but are not informed of internal exclusions. In some cases the children and young people do not want parents to be aware of this. Schools keep a record of isolation information but this is not shared at a Local Authority level as schools have a degree of autonomy. Any request for this information would have to go through the Governing Body. Similarly, detention has been used as a sanction for a long time but the figures aren't published. More challenging pupils have to be removed from the classroom from time to time as their behaviour impacts on other pupils in the class who are wanting to learn.

Although schools do not publish this information, parents are able to ask for a meeting with the school if their child has had a lot of sanctions and to discuss a way forward. A Member felt that many excluded pupils may have a special educational need, with underlying issues, and it is crucial that sanctions are applied appropriately. Sanctions vary by school.

The practice of 'off-rolling' was discussed and Members were reassured that this does not happen in Barnsley and that the rise in children educated at home was not due to this practice. The rise may be due to a number of factors, including that when children experience problems at a school, parents often decide to withdraw them from school or transfer schools to avoid confrontation with the school. Lots of advice about home education can be found on social media, which is worrying, as it is not suitable for all children and may lead to a poor educational experience.

The Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) system was explained. This works more effectively than in the past, where children were placed on long waiting lists for assessment. Children are now assessed by a multi-disciplinary team of professionals, which leads to a speedier diagnosis. The number of children with special educational needs has increased but there are now fewer identified in early years, with a spike in primary school. Schools are now better informed around behaviours and are better equipped to respond than in the past. Schools are more

proficient at requesting assessments, which may also explain the increase, as more plans are issued than in neighbouring authorities.

That said, there is still a huge amount of work to do for children on the Autistic spectrum, coupled with a need to increase parental confidence that mainstream schools can meet the needs of their children. Currently 72% of plans are issued within the agreed timeframe, which is a vast improvement as the percentage previously was 14%, rising to 50% before reaching current levels. An assessment takes place within 6 weeks, with 20 weeks to complete the plan. Performance is good by comparison to statistical neighbours. The quality of the parental experience is being looked at and steps are taken to ensure that the voice of the child is heard.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) Witnesses be thanked for their attendance and contribution
- (ii) The report be noted, and
- (iii) Enquiries be made as to the feasibility of schools sharing information with this committee regarding their use of isolation units within school

**Report of the Executive Director Core Services
and the Executive Director Communities,
to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC)
on 26 February 2019**

Domestic Abuse Services in Barnsley – Cover Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In response to the March 2016 Government strategy 'Ending Violence Against Women and Girls 2016-2020', a review of domestic abuse services was commissioned. A full business case was developed which recommended the commissioning of a holistic domestic abuse service. This was tendered in late 2016 and on April 2017 a contract for the full provision of domestic abuse services was awarded to a third sector company known as Independent Domestic Abuse Services (IDAS).
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to inform the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on the progress so far on the local commissioned response to domestic abuse and the current climate within Barnsley.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The cross Government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

any incident of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- *psychological*
- *physical*
- *sexual*
- *financial*
- *emotional*

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploring their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is an act or pattern of acts of assaults, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten their victim.

- 2.2 The definition includes issues of concern to black and minority ethnic (BME) communities such as so called 'honour based violence', female genital mutilation (FGM), and forced marriage. Family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, and grandparents, whether directly related, in-laws or stepfamily.
- 2.3 Without the inclusion of coercive control in the definition of domestic violence and abuse, there may be occasions where domestic violence and abuse could be regarded as an isolated incident. We know, however, that the first incident reported to the police or other agencies is rarely the first incident to occur; often people have been subject to violence and abuse on multiple occasions before they seek help.

- 2.4 Domestic abuse contributes to the disadvantage and chaos people find themselves living in and it moulds the behaviour of their children and young people, limiting their expectations and perpetuating the cycle of negative and harmful behaviour.
- 2.5 Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) acknowledges the cost domestic abuse brings to individuals, the communities in which they live and the wider costs to the economy. As such, it is vitally important to have a whole-system, outcome focused system that encourages, supports and empowers individuals and their families to take back control of their lives, helping them to live safe from harm and threat, with their families, and to realise their full potential.
- 2.6 BMBC historically grant funded a wide range of services provided by a wide range of agencies. This was confusing for professionals and service users as it was unclear as to what service did what and where. As a result, a new simplified and modernised system had to be introduced to raise the expectations of the service users and their communities, resulting in better long term, sustainable outcomes.
- 2.7 The initial stage for change required a review and mobilisation of partnerships at a local level, bringing the subject of domestic abuse out of the shadows into a strategic arena acknowledging the cost of domestic abuse to individuals, local communities and the lifelong impact it has on people.
- 2.8 In terms of the system, the challenge was to re-design the process from start to finish to support a whole system family recovery and outcome based approach and to enable efficient use of resource whilst reducing duplication. This would ensure that it focused support where it is most needed and provided a fully integrated model to include all aspects of provision, ranging from low level risk to very high 'Red Flag' risk, established through one access point.

This included an overhaul of provision of:

- women's residential refuge
 - Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) (a meeting between different statutory and voluntary sector agencies where information is shared on the highest risk cases of domestic abuse)
 - counselling and therapeutic interventions
 - Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) coordination
 - education and training programmes
 - aftercare and family recovery
- 2.9 The intention of the new system was to show innovation and creativity at every level, with particular emphasis on adding value to the contract and showing where savings can be made from diverting cases from high risk by timely and unambiguous interventions.
- 2.10 The new system is designed to:
- reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse and the harm it does to the individual and the communities in which they live
 - reduce hospital admissions and A&E attendances relating to domestic abuse
 - improve the mental and physical health and wellbeing of people and their families
 - help individuals overcome the long term effects of domestic abuse and recover
 - empower local communities to take a zero tolerance 'stand' on domestic abuse and help them support people and families who experience it
 - within a zero tolerance climate, empower communities to confront the behaviour that harbours perpetrators of sexual and domestic violence
 - encourage and support victims to take the 'court pathway' to completion
 - increase the numbers of successful prosecutions of those perpetrators of domestic abuse

3.0 Current Position

3.1 Commissioners wanted to find a provider that could deliver the extent of the specification as well as bringing additional value to the contract, both through experience and knowledge. The aim is to:

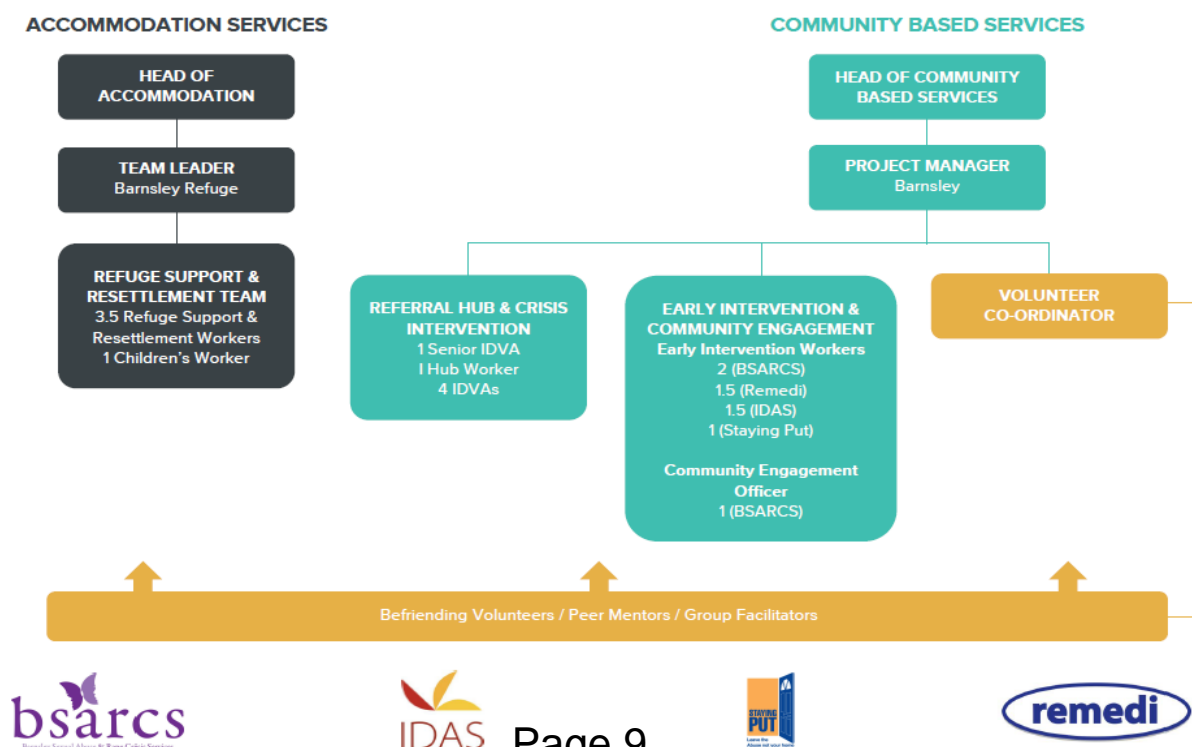
- change attitudes and behaviours
- increase public awareness and professional curiosity
- embed mainstream domestic abuse policies as everyday actions
- combine expertise into a single, expert pathway of response
- direct efforts toward the issues and make it everyone's responsibility

3.2 Unlike any other area in Yorkshire, IDAS were selected to provide the entire domestic abuse service. IDAS provide:

- management of the MARAC process with South Yorkshire Police and the management of all high risk clients and the repeat domestic abuse cases
- an IDVA (advocacy) service to high risk clients during and after immediate threat and harm including personal safety planning
- a health IDVA who works in Barnsley hospital and across primary care, training and supporting health professionals to respond to domestic abuse
- the recruitment, training and support of volunteers and those who've been through the service themselves to enable them to support others
- support to victims both practically and legally through the process of court and offender orders
- physical refuge from violence, threat and harm for women and their children

3.3 The newly designed service includes one integrated domestic abuse service 'front door' which has person centred recovery from abuse at its core. It is also able to work within the individual's partner relationships, helping them to learn new behaviours and overcome damaging behaviour patterns that can harm current or future relationships. The new model also works across the range of domestic abuse needs, including high, medium and low risk clients and creates a family oriented approach, building recovery capital embedded throughout.

3.4 The diagram below shows the model of service delivery for 2017-2020:-



- 3.5 IDAS are accountable to the Safer Barnsley Partnership through the Protecting Vulnerable People delivery sub-group.
- 3.6 IDAS run a number of sub-contracts which include: Barnsley Sexual Abuse & Rape Crisis Services (BSARC) providing support and advocacy to survivors of sexual abuse; Staying Put which provides early intervention with families; and Remedi which provides early interventions and support to young people and families. All agencies provide specific training to professionals who may be working with the same clients.
- 3.7 The service proactively works to enable free and unrestricted access for local people of all cultures, sexuality, faiths and gender identities and will sensitively promote choice across the brief. To reflect this, from January 2018 to January 2019, the number of open cases rose from 565 to 663. For a case to be 'open', this means that IDAS are either still attempting to contact the client or they are accessing some form of support. Of the 663 cases, the majority of clients fell within the 21 to 35 age range although 18 clients were between the 66 to 75 age group. Generally, though, the ages are fairly well distributed between the ages of 16 to 85.
- 3.8 The service, in principle, builds a network of people available to enable a response within a few hours whether that referral is through South Yorkshire Police (SYP), Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (BHNFT) or self-referral. Between October and December 2018, IDAS received three referrals from midwifery and six from A&E. The majority of referrals were from SYP at 399 although the second highest is still self-referrals at 52.
- 3.9 IDAS, together with its subcontract partners have worked tirelessly to create a system that works closely with agencies dealing with multiple and complex needs as well as substance misuse, housing support and local policing requirements. In January 2019, a snapshot in time showed that 39 of the 663 clients expressed concern about their own substance use and 70 clients defined themselves as having a mental or physical disability. They have shown a significant increase in working with individuals to improve safety planning and promoting being in healthier relationships. Item 4b (attached) shows case studies to demonstrate partnership working.
- 3.10 They recruit, train and support volunteers from local communities to ensure support is localised and meaningful, as well as providing professionals from all spheres, training and support to recognise the harmful impact of domestic abuse. They have linked to employment agencies to improve the uptake of courses and employment and can give advice on managing finances or tenancies and benefit applications.
- 3.11 The principles of whole person and family recovery practices acknowledge the value and contributing factors families, carers and significant others have to the recovery of the individual and the family. There is significant evidence to suggest that involving family members, carers and significant others can lead to improved outcomes for all concerned. Appropriately, including family members and carers in the treatment and recovery process often enables them to better support the individual.
- 3.12 The service embraces the 'Think Family' practices of a whole-family approach looking at the extent beyond the individual they are supporting. Intervening early with a Think Family approach can help avoid problems escalating to crisis level and reduce the number of families and individuals who need intensive support in the future. It instils the importance of good physical and psychological health and wellbeing of the individual, children, carers and other family members, where applicable, to recover together. From January 2018 to January 2019 57 clients were referred from family or children's services.
- 3.13 Referrals to IDAS continue to grow but they are also developing opportunities to co-work with other professionals to increase engagement and reduce habit forming behaviour. IDAS are working with housing providers to ensure clients access housing and/or reduce eviction rates.

They have successfully worked with the DWP to improve the uptake of courses and employment and provide advice on managing finances and benefit applications. They have recently started to develop support through GP surgeries and secondary care, to ensure healthcare professionals know what the signs of abuse are and how to offer crucial confidential support. From October to December 2018, there were 18 referrals through health and GP practices.

- 3.14 They have developed a clear and simple referral system, a 'single access point' that can also be accessed online for ease of referral. Professionals can now refer without confusion and duplication. IDAS have also developed strong education links and schools invite them in for awareness raising and healthy relationship workshops.
- 3.15 They are the leading agency to develop an information sharing protocol to ensure safety and timely response and they work closely with SYP on high risk clients around safety planning, court processes and behaviour change.
- 3.16 IDAS are working towards a partnership with local pet welfare agencies to establish a pet fostering scheme, acknowledging that many people won't leave abusive relationships for fear of threat of violence towards pets. Pets are seen as members of the family too and can be used by the perpetrator to manipulate, control and perpetuate abuse. This scheme will offer temporary care whilst a local resolution can take place.
- 3.17 In collaboration with Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield, and with the endorsement of the South Yorkshire Countywide Community Safety Partnership Chairs Forum, BMBC has commissioned a cross-border Perpetrators Programme run by South Yorkshire Community Rehabilitation Company (SYCRC).
- 3.18 Using a probation approved model of group work and behaviour management, the voluntary programme seeks to:
- improve relationships between perpetrators with their partners/ex-partners, which is underpinned by respect and effective communication
 - provide partners/ex-partners with an expanded 'space for action' which empowers through restoring their voice and ability to make choices, whilst improving their wellbeing and safety
 - provide safety and freedom from violence, abuse and threats of harm for women, men (as victims) and their children
 - reinforce safe, positive and shared parenting
 - provide an enhanced awareness of self and others on the programme, including an understanding of the impact that domestic violence has had on their partner and children
 - result in a safer and healthier childhood for children, in which they feel nurtured, heard and cared about
- 3.19 The service is making a difference to people's lives. The following feedback has been received from service users who have been supported by IDAS:-

**'He told me to shut up and go and sit on the naughty step'
'Some angels don't have wings and I believe you were sent to save me and the boys'**

'I don't think I would be where I am today without their help. They have helped me get my life back on track'

‘They [IDAS] organised a trip to the seaside in the summer. At the time I was too scared to leave the house, so this was an excellent day out for me and (my child). I had a really good day and it was good to meet other survivors of domestic violence’

‘They couldn't have done anything more, the number was available day and night, whenever I needed it’

‘I was very reluctant to access support at first, because social services were always in the back of my mind. I felt like I could be honest with my support worker and I trusted her. She understood about how wary I was about everything and everyone’

‘I feel like my whole life has improved and is still improving’

4.0 Future Plans & Challenges

- 4.1 BMBC is working with IDAS and partners to promote high visibility of the service, enabling unrestricted access to services and giving support and empowerment to those who would challenge domestic abuse in communities. IDAS are developing an ongoing media and communication plan, including using a multiple level social media platform.
- 4.2 To enable IDAS's contact details to be readily available, the communications are branded to cause familiarities in message and intent, including the branding for 'Speak Up, Speak to Me and Speak Together' and are regularly used during Christmas and Valentine's Day 'events'. For images see Item 4b (attached).
- 4.3 During 2019, the third year of the contract, we will facilitate a whole scale review of current contracted provision including the scope of the entire provision as well as the experience of victims going through the service. This will enable us to check and challenge the current provision and make any interim changes to the contract with a view to extending it for a further 2 years from April 2020.
- 4.4 Male victims of domestic abuse are underrepresented as clients reporting. As of January 2019 there were 52 male clients in the service. There are multiple and complex reasons for men not coming forward as victims. During 2019 we will be commissioning an organisation called Man Kind who will deliver a training programme to develop professionals' skills in working with men as victims.
- 4.5 In October 2018, BMBC submitted a tender application to the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) for capital funding (£250k) to develop a new women's centre with accommodation. The successful bid has resulted in capital funds being made available for this development. 2019 will see the development of this project in collaboration with partners and providers.

5.0 Implications for Local People

- 5.1 The ambition of the service is to improve outcomes and to encourage, support and empower individuals and their families to take back control of their lives, helping them to live safe from harm and threat and to realise their full potential. Changing attitudes and behaviours, increasing public awareness, and ensuring the service is fit for purpose will all serve to achieve this ambition for the people of Barnsley.

6.0 Invited Witnesses

- 6.1 The following witnesses have been invited to today's meeting to answer questions from the committee on this area of work:

- Wendy Lowder, Executive Director - Communities
- Cllr Jenny Platts, Cabinet Spokesperson - Communities
- Jayne Hellowell, Head of Commissioning & Healthier Communities
- Rosemary Clewer, Commissioning Manager - Stronger, Safer & Healthier Communities
- Sam Goulding, Project Manager - IDAS
- Acting Detective Inspector (ADI) Adrienne Sheekey, South Yorkshire Police

7.0 Possible Areas for Investigation

Members may wish to ask questions around the following areas:-

- What are the current strengths and weaknesses of the service?
- What sort of needs assessment underpins the action on domestic violence?
- How do you evaluate the impact that current services are having on the lives of those affected by domestic abuse and whether they are delivering value for money?
- Why was the decision taken to award IDAS the entire contract, given that all other areas in Yorkshire have not?
- In principle the service has built a network of people to enable a response within a few hours, but what is happening in practice?
- What information sharing practices are in place to ensure that schools are able to offer immediate support for children and young people experiencing domestic abuse?
- What is the strategy for dealing with repeat domestic abuse cases presented to the MARAC?
- What data do you collect relating to abuse within the LGBT community and what work is done with the Council's Equality Forums?
- How do you ensure that front line workers (social workers, GPs, police officers etc.) have the capacity and skills to detect and respond effectively to domestic abuse?
- Where does ultimate responsibility lie for the effective running of the MARAC, are all key roles filled and how do we know it is working well?

- What data collection issues have you experienced over the last two years and how are these to be overcome?
- What can members do to help tackle domestic abuse?

8.0 Background Papers and Useful Links

- Item 4b (attached) – 2 x Case Studies
- Item 4c (attached) – Domestic Abuse Public Awareness Campaign
- HM Government : Ending Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy – March 2016:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/522166/VAWG_Strategy_FINAL_PUBLICATION_MASTER_vRB.PDF
- Independent Domestic Abuse Service (IDAS) Barnsley:
<https://www.idas.org.uk>
- Think Family Model:
<https://www.scie.org.uk/publications/guides/guide30/introduction/thinkchild.asp>
- The Centre for Public Scrutiny: 10 Questions to Ask if You Are Scrutinising Domestic Violence:
<https://www.cfps.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/10-Questions-Domestic-Violence.pdf>
- BMBC website for domestic abuse and sexual violence
<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/children-families-and-education/domestic-abuse-and-sexual-violence/>
- South Yorkshire Police website
<https://www.southyorks.police.uk/find-out/crime-prevention-advice/domestic-abuse/>

9.0 Glossary

A&E	Accident & Emergency
BHNFT	Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
BMBC	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
BME	Black and minority ethnic
BSARC	Barnsley Sexual Abuse & Rape Crisis Services
DVPN	Domestic Violence Protection Notice
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GPs	General Practitioners
IDAS	Independent Domestic Abuse Service
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Advisor
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
MARAC	Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference
SYCRC	South Yorkshire Community Rehabilitation Company
SYP	South Yorkshire Police

10.0 Officer Contact

Anna Marshall, Scrutiny Officer, 15 February 2019

The following case studies are real life accounts of the impact that agencies can have on the life of a victim by working collaboratively through the MARAC process.

Domestic Abuse Case Study No 1

This case was referred to MARAC as high risk for assault and years of coercive control, including financial abuse.

- The perpetrator was bailed away from the marital home. Although they initially pled not guilty, they eventually changed their plea to guilty to both charges
- The client was suffering greatly from agoraphobia and anxiety and had not left the home for years
- The IDVA advocated for priority band 1 with Berneslai Homes and within weeks the client and child left the marital home
- The IDVA initially contacted the Bailiffs Office and BMBC Council Tax to advocate regarding the perpetrator's debts accumulated in the client's name. As the client had no income, they requested that the debts be reallocated back to the perpetrator who worked full time
- The IDVA referred to Berneslai Homes Tenancy Support Worker to help the client apply for benefits and address debts that the perpetrator had put in the clients name. Payment plans were eventually set up and benefits drawn
- The IDVA supported the client to apply for Personal Independence Payment and advocated with an assessment officer to get the client an award without having to attend a face-to-face assessment which the client could not attend due to agoraphobia. The IDVA also had to apply for two food parcels
- The IDVA signposted the client to Citizen's Advice regarding Bailiff's action against the client as a result of the perpetrator's debts
- The IDVA promoted client engagement with a GP to access counselling and requested that it should be delivered at the client's home address due to agoraphobia. The client wanted to overcome this severely limiting condition. In addition, the IDVA referred the client to My Best Life NHS Service for support with their condition
- The IDVA supported the client to adopt healthy boundaries with other people they came into contact with, as the client reported that they felt one individual was overstepping the mark with them in their safe space
- The IDVA supported the client to deal with manipulative messages the perpetrator was sending via family members back to the client and child. The client decided to sever contact with the perpetrator's family, with whom they'd had a relationship with for years – as it was holding the client back from moving forward from abuse
- The IDVA guided the client through the Criminal Justice System, advising on the process, as it took some time to conclude with the court hearings repeatedly being adjourned. The IDVA had to manage the client's expectations regarding sentencing - no matter how stringent the perpetrator's sentence, the client would never feel like it was ample for what they has endured
- The client stated that 'it will never end', Assurances were given by explaining that any breaches or non-compliance would result in further consequences for the perpetrator via the Criminal Justice System and that the client never had to see or speak to them again, allowing them to move on with their life. This seemed to provide them with some comfort. Ongoing emotional support was provided throughout, as the client struggled to cope at times
- The IDVA provided a letter for legal aid application in order for divorce proceedings to commence
- The client was elated at the sentence given to the perpetrator (18 months & 14 weeks in prison and a 5 year restraining order)
- The IDVA passed the case over to an IDAS Volunteer to build the client's confidence and self-esteem and hopefully to start to address the agoraphobia. This had to be done on a one-to-one basis with the client as they were unable to attend IDAS group-work

Domestic Abuse Case Study No 2

This case was referred by South Yorkshire Police to Barnsley's specialist domestic violence service, Independent Domestic Abuse Services (IDAS) following a medium-risk assessed police incident. IDAS allocated an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) to the case who completed a Risk Assessment which determined the risk level to be high-risk, resulting in a referral to MARAC.

- The client lived with the alleged perpetrator and two children in a Council tenancy managed by Berneslai Homes. The tenancy was originally in the joint name of the client and the perpetrator; however the perpetrator changed this so the tenancy was in their sole name
- Following the incident, the alleged perpetrator was arrested; they were later released without charge. The IDVA liaised with South Yorkshire Police's Safeguarding Adults Team, advocating that they should consider putting in place a Domestic Violence Protection Notice (DVPN), which could essentially bar the perpetrator from the family household, however this was not possible. In the absence of a DVPN, the IDVA supported the client to get an emergency occupation order and a non-molestation order
- At the MARAC, agencies shared the information they held on the family including discussing any risks that may not have been known by other agencies. Following this, agencies in attendance agreed an action plan which focussed on protecting and supporting the client and children
- After the MARAC, agencies have worked in partnership, including the IDVA, Berneslai Homes, South Yorkshire Police, a social worker and solicitors. This approach has ensured robust and meaningful safety planning has been put in place. Onward referrals have been made to Fire Safety, Education Welfare (for child support) and counselling for the client
- The client was risk assessed (using the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence Risk Identification Checklist) resulting in a score of 16 out of 28 (14 or above being considered visible high risk and therefore referred to MARAC). This risk was reduced to a score of 6, within a five week period – thanks to the collaborative work of agencies following the MARAC. Support for the victim is still ongoing with Berneslai Homes assisting the client to resolve the legal issues surrounding their tenancy and the IDVA continuing to visit the client bi-weekly and making regular reassurance phone calls in between
- By using the MARAC, agencies were able to share information, formulate actions and work collaboratively to significantly reduce the risk for the client. The client has verbally stated to the IDVA how grateful they are for the support given to them and their children

Domestic Abuse Public Awareness Campaign: We will not tolerate domestic abuse in Barnsley!

We believe that to reduce domestic abuse we must change the culture in our communities. We are doing this through a **SPEAK** campaign.

With IDAS our **SPEAK** branding is aimed at reaching into our communities to give a clear message that we will provide a way in which people affected can discuss their situation and get support. We are giving clear message that we will not tolerate domestic abuse and we want people to speak up and be listened to.



Our systematic campaign has delivered professional training on engaging customers regarding risk and domestic abuse. This has been delivered to salons/barbers and gym staff.



Speak To Me has provided training to GPs on how to recognise domestic abuse victims, what to do and where to refer them. We have made it easy for GPs to do this using a simple on-line form. We have drop in sessions that are tailored for GPs to enable them to attend at a time that suits them.

Speak Together brings key people in Barnsley together through conferences and workshops. We have key speakers such as Frank Malone, on his work to support victims of domestic homicide, and Joanne Beverley, speaking about her life following the murder of her sister, as featured in the TV production 'Catch A Killer'.



We are also delighted that Claire Throssell has become an ambassador for IDAS. Her relentless campaigning comes as a result of her abusive husband killing her two sons in a house fire. Claire is helping us raise the campaign through the media <https://vimeo.com/286765707?ref=fb-share&1>

Item 5a

Report of the Executive Director Core Services and the Executive Director People to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on 26 February 2019

Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) in Barnsley 2018

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This purpose of this report is to inform the Overview & Scrutiny Committee of the recent Ofsted inspection of the local authority's Children's Social Care Services. The full report can be found at Item 4b.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 In 2012, Ofsted's inspection of services for safeguarding children and Looked After Children (LAC) was judged to be 'inadequate' for the 'overall effectiveness' of safeguarding services.
- 2.2 In 2014, Ofsted's inspection of services for children in need of help and protection; children looked after and care leavers in the borough, together with the review of the effectiveness of the local Safeguarding Children Board received an overall judgement of 'requires improvement' for 'overall effectiveness' with 25 recommendations for improvement.

3.0 Current Position

- 3.1 Ofsted inspected Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council's (BMBC's) Children's Services on the 8-19 October 2018. The inspection found Barnsley Children's Social Care Services to be 'good' across all the following four judgement areas:
- The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families
 - The experience and progress of children who need help and protection
 - The experience and progress of children in care and care leavers
 - Overall effectiveness
- 3.2 Ofsted reported that services for children in Barnsley are good and there has been steady improvement at successive inspections since 2012. Children are at the heart of strategic thinking, decision-making, and operational practice, which leads to good-quality services from a skilled and motivated workforce. The resolute focus on improving outcomes for children is shared across the partners of the borough's Children and Young People's Trust and is underpinned by political commitment, financial investment and a self-evaluation that shows that leaders know their services well. Other key highlights include:
- Children and families benefit from a good early help offer
 - The integrated front door and multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) in Barnsley work well to protect children
 - Robust arrangements are in place to safeguard children, including those at risk from the impact of domestic abuse
 - Thresholds for early help are clearly understood, and this has resulted in lower level work being diverted away from social work services to universal or targeted early help for assessment and intervention
 - The strong multi-agency partnerships in Barnsley ensure good participation at child protection conferences, with children offered the opportunity to have advocates to support them through the process

- Good quality services from a skilled and motivated workforce
- Children are at the heart of strategic thinking, decision making, and operational practice
- Social work practice in Barnsley is flourishing. Social workers are confident practitioners who are professionally curious and tenacious in their work with families
- The voice of the child is embedded throughout the service
- Leaders and managers, who offer effective and principled leadership, have created a culture in which social workers are valued, feel valued and are proud to work in Barnsley
- Children in Barnsley benefit from a committed and 'pushy' corporate parent with a determination to raise the aspiration of all children, families, and the communities in which they live
- The virtual school head teacher provides strong leadership and direction for her team
- Children in care and care leavers receive a good service and social workers know their children well
- Children with a wide range of needs benefit from achieving permanence through adoption, including older children, brothers and sisters together, and children with complex needs
- Foster carer recruitment training and approval are effective and children are helped to develop secure attachments in stable placements
- Children in care and care leavers receive assistance and support from a range of services to strengthen their journey into independence
- Effective and principled leadership by the executive director, chief executive, and leader of the council models and sets out high aspirations for children in Barnsley
- Our active and vocal Children In Care Council (Care4Us) has worked hard to influence service development
- Staff morale is high, and staff are proud to work in Barnsley. They are positive about the support, guidance and training they receive and the visibility of senior managers

4.0 Future Plans & Challenges

4.1 The inspection made four recommendations for improvement, as follows:-

- Risk assessment and the understanding of the wider risks to which young people are exposed in the community, including the timeliness and quality of return home interviews when children are reported missing from home and care
- Regular review of the use of private fostering arrangements to ensure that they remain appropriate in meeting children's needs
- Numbers of care leavers aged 19-21 participating in education, employment and training
- The rigour of audit and dip sampling activity and how data informs an understanding of the quality of social work practice and timeliness of performance for initial child protection case conferences

4.2 Under the existing inspection framework, local authorities previously judged to be good or better will receive a one week 'short' inspection every three years, rather than a two week standard inspection for local authorities judged as 'requires improvement to be good'. This will now apply to Barnsley. In between inspections, the local authority will usually receive up to two focused visits or a possible Joint Targeted Area Inspection of Child Protection Services (an inspection of how well local agencies work together in an area to protect children) would replace a focused visit. There is also a requirement for an annual engagement meeting between the Executive Director (People) and Ofsted to share our updated Self Evaluation.

4.3 The Ofsted recommendations for improvement will be managed and progressed within the Children & Young People's Trust's Continuous Service Improvement Plan (CSIP), which enables Children's Services to focus on areas for improvement and aspirations for delivering services that are as a minimum good and better. A multi-agency Officer Group, chaired by the Service Director for Children's Social Care and Safeguarding Services, drives the CSIP,

reporting on progress to each meeting of the Barnsley Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) and the Trust's Executive Group (TEG). The annual joint BSCB and TEG event, held on the 30 November 2018, confirmed the ongoing commitment across the Children's Trust, to maintain all performance and improvement activities and governance arrangements.

5.0 Implications for Local People

- 5.1 Local authority children's services continue to be subject to rigorous external inspection and the outcome of Barnsley's inspection provides assurance to children, young people and their families, that services for helping and protecting children in need of help or at risk of harm are effective in meeting their needs, including through early help and intervention.

6.0 Invited Witnesses

- 6.1 The following witnesses have been invited to today's meeting to answer questions from the committee:

- Rachel Dickinson, Executive Director – People Directorate
- Mel John-Ross, Service Director, Children's Social Care & Safeguarding
- Margaret Libreri, Service Director, Education, Early Start and Prevention - People Directorate
- Councillor Caroline Saunders, Cabinet Support Member for People (Safeguarding)
- Councillor Tim Cheetham, Cabinet Member for People (Achieving Potential)

7.0 Possible Areas for Investigation

- 7.1 Members may wish to ask questions around the following areas:

- What are the next steps for children's social care in Barnsley?
- Are there any areas of good performance within the service that you feel were not highlighted by the Ofsted report?
- What progress has already been made around the four recommendations for improvement from Ofsted?
- How do you plan to continue the good work, particularly within financial constraints?
- What support is needed from partners to achieve your goals and is it forthcoming?
- How do you measure the quality of return home interviews and how will you know when it has improved?
- Given the service's journey, which area of improvement are you most proud of?
- What support do young people leaving care receive to access housing, tenancies, employment, benefits, further and higher education and training?
- What are the biggest future challenges that the service faces?
- What can members do to support children's social care in Barnsley?

8.0 Background Papers and Useful Links

- Item 5b (attached) – Ofsted Inspection Report on Barnsley Children’s Social Care Services, October 2018
- Association of Directors of Children’s Services (ADCS) Self-Assessment Report (available upon request)

9.0 Glossary

BSCB	Barnsley Safeguarding Children’s Board
CSIP	Continuous Service Improvement Plan
ILACS	Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services
LAC	Looked After Children
MASH	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills
TEG	(Children’s) Trust Executive Board

10.0 Officer Contact

Anna Marshall, Scrutiny Officer, 15th February 2019

Barnsley

Inspection of children's social care services

Inspection dates: 8 October 2018 to 19 October 2018

Lead inspector: Jan Edwards
Her Majesty's Inspector

Judgement	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Good
The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers	Good
Overall effectiveness	Good

Services for children in Barnsley are good and there has been steady improvement at successive inspections since 2012. Children are at the heart of strategic thinking, decision-making, and operational practice, which leads to good-quality services from a skilled and motivated workforce. The resolute focus on improving outcomes for children is shared across the partnership and is underpinned by political commitment and financial investment and a self-evaluation that shows that leaders know their services well.

Almost all children who need help and protection receive a timely service that meets their needs. The integrated 'front door' is effective in managing risk and protecting children. Thorough assessments with a well-considered analysis of the risks affecting children lead, for the most part, to targeted plans and interventions which are improving outcomes and reducing risk effectively. A greater focus is needed in relation to the use of private fostering. The timeliness and quality of return home interviews and understanding of broader contextual safeguarding are not as effective for some children.

Services for children in care and care leavers are good, and children's outcomes improve because of the support they receive from workers. Children in Barnsley benefit from a committed and 'pushy' corporate parent with a determination to raise the aspiration of all children, families, and the communities in which they live. However, improvement is needed to increase the number of young people in education, employment and training.

What needs to improve

- Risk assessment and the understanding of the wider risks to which young people are exposed in the community, including the timeliness and quality of return home interviews when children are reported missing from home and care.
- Regular review of the use of private fostering arrangements to ensure that they remain appropriate to meet children's needs.
- The numbers of care leavers aged 19–21 in education, employment and training.
- The rigour of audit and dip sampling activity and how data informs an understanding of the quality of practice and timeliness performance for initial child protection case conferences.

The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection: Good

1. Children and families benefit from a good early help offer, which has been redesigned to be delivered through a family centre 0–19 model. This is ensuring a more equitable distribution of targeted support at the heart of communities and where it is most needed.
2. There are a number of established pathways for access to early help services, children's social care, and disabled children. A clear understanding of thresholds by partners has meant that there has been no detrimental impact of having several entry points for access to services. Consultation and advice is provided to professionals for those families who do not meet a threshold for a service. Senior managers have regular oversight through dip sampling of contacts and referrals to assure themselves of the consistent application of thresholds for a service. This ensures that the right children get the right help.
3. The multi-agency Early Help Panel provides a thorough approach to the triage of new early help referrals and the step up or step down from children's social care. A range of targeted parenting interventions are carefully evaluated for impact. Family support workers are trained in the use of the graded care profile so that neglect is understood from the earliest point that children access a service.
4. The integrated front door and multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) in Barnsley work well to protect children. The initial screening of referrals is strong. It involves the gathering of historical and multi-agency information, which is well analysed and subject to rigorous management oversight. No children were found to be in situations of unassessed or unmanaged risk.

Thresholds are understood by partners, including those who are co-located and engaged effectively in the MASH. Robust arrangements are in place to safeguard children, including those at risk from the impact of domestic abuse. Parental consent is consistently sought and recorded, and when situations require consent to be dispensed with, the rationale for decisions are clear and appropriate. Families and professionals are routinely informed of the outcome of the referral.

5. When screening identifies the need for an assessment or that risk has escalated, there is a seamless transfer of cases to the assessment team, supported by a clear management oversight. Strategy meetings are timely, well attended by relevant partners and clearly record the evidence, with an analysis of what this means for children, and a rationale given for decisions made. Child protection enquiries are thorough, with a clear shared accountability by partners of their responsibility in the safety plan. Children are seen, and their views contribute to action planning. Most children in Barnsley have the benefit of a timely and proportionate response when they need help and support. However, for a small number of children there is unnecessary delay built into the process, because further strategy meetings are being convened prior to them having their needs considered at a child protection conference. This means that this small number of children do not have the benefit of the safeguards of multi-agency planning and monitoring that is afforded when children are subject to a child protection plan at the earliest opportunity. The local authority accepted this during inspection and have plans in place to address the timeliness and delay for children.
6. Assessments are of good quality and they describe the child's world well, although the impact of diversity on the child's identity is not consistently recognised or addressed. The analysis is well formulated, identifying risks and resilience factors that impact on the child's lived experience. Sometimes, key information may be lost for families because assessments are often overly descriptive and repetitious.
7. Children's plans describe well the reasons and triggers that lead to the need for the plan. However, they do not always cover all the risks or detail what needs to be done to improve the child's situation. Very few plans include an explicit and individualised contingency plan. This makes it difficult for parents and others to understand what is expected of them or what will happen if change is not achieved. Better plans evolve as progress is made and prioritise those risks that require immediate attention through targeted interventions and services which help to reduce harm. Plans are regularly reviewed through timely and well-attended core groups and child in need meetings. In most cases, progress is well documented between meetings to enable plans to be amended accordingly.
8. The strong multi-agency partnerships in Barnsley ensures good participation at child protection conferences, with children offered the opportunity to have

advocates to support them through the process. Child protection chairs carefully prepare parents to participate and ensure that they understand the reasons for the concerns leading to conference.

9. Social workers know their children well and their understanding of children's circumstances is informed by social workers who are professionally curious and tenacious in their work with families. Good examples of direct work to establish children's wishes and feelings were seen during the inspection. However, this in-depth understanding and knowledge is not always well reflected in children's case records.
10. The practice relating to help and protection in the disabled children's team is good. Social workers are aspirational for these vulnerable children, and the child's voice shines through in the work. Children's situations improve and the risk of harm reduces as a result of the good assessments that inform strong multi-agency planning, leading to effective support and interventions for children. There is timely and proactive transition planning with adult services.
11. Threshold decision-making, for example when to escalate from child in need to child protection or when to step down to early help, is generally appropriate to children's individual circumstances. Children benefit from effective legal planning when their circumstances do not improve. Pre-proceedings work is timely and well managed, with a contract of expectations that clearly spell out what parents need to do. When parents successfully engage in helping to improve their children's lives, legal planning is ended. When improvements are not made, authoritative action is taken. This means that children are getting the right help at the right time from the right people.
12. Where there is an indication of possible risk from sexual or criminal exploitation, referrals are screened and assessed effectively by a specialist child sexual exploitation social worker. The weekly child sexual exploitation meeting provides a robust multi-agency forum for information-sharing, consideration of relevant risk factors and soft intelligence. This is used to reach a joint and proportionate rating of the level of risk and to formulate action plans. However, subsequent planning and intervention by social workers is not effective for all children. For a small number of children, there is a lack of focus on evaluating and reducing risk posed by their wider network or from the community. This results in assessments and plans that do not address all the risks to ensure that they are protected.
13. The response to children going missing is not robust enough for all children. While there is a clear strategic framework around episodes of going missing and reporting mechanisms into panel, inspectors found variability in the timely offer of an interview following a missing episode. In some cases, there was a lack of persistence in engaging young people with return home interviews. The quality of the information obtained was often poor. This means that the local authority cannot be assured in all cases that the broader risks associated with

children going missing are known and being addressed in order to reduce that risk. Neither can the local authority be assured that young people are always being effectively supported to reduce their risk-taking behaviour.

14. There are effective systems in place to identify and monitor children missing from education and children who are electively home educated (EHE).
15. A small number of children are supported through private fostering arrangements. Inspectors found that, for some children, there is a delay in securing a suitable legal framework that best meets their needs. Safety is assessed, and support and monitoring of children in private fostering arrangements is in place. However, this may not always be the most suitable arrangement to secure stability and long-term planning for their future.

The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers: Good

16. When children come in to care, they receive a good service. Decision-making is based on clear assessments of children's needs that are appropriate and timely. Children are matched carefully with carers who promote their needs and help them to achieve.
17. There are well-established and collaborative working relationships with the local judiciary and the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), which have a clear focus on the child. This ensures that timely and appropriate decisions are made in order to safeguard and secure permanence for children. There is judicious use of parental agreement to accommodation.
18. Social workers know their children well and understand key factors that contribute to children's stability in placement and the child's unique experiences and context. The stability of the social work staff team means that children benefit from established relationships with someone they know well. Sensitive and thoughtful direct work to elicit children's wishes and feelings influences planning and interventions for children. All children in care benefit from life-story work that helps them to understand their situations. Children's wishes and feelings are actively sought and acted on.
19. The importance of contact with birth family members is well understood by social workers. The sensitive approach taken to engage birth families in clear and up-to-date contact plans means that there is a positive impact on children's emotional needs. This also contributes to the stability of placements.
20. Foster carer recruitment, training and approval are effective. Foster carers report that they feel part of the professional network and that their views are valued and used to influence policy and developments. The service has been able to address the issue of sufficiency of local foster carers through a new

recruitment strategy. This has resulted in a substantial increase to the number of foster carers and means that the majority of children can live with Barnsley carers.

21. Carers are well informed of children's needs before placement. Supervising social workers take care to ensure that children are matched appropriately to a fostering family, including for long-term fostering. Important consideration is also given to the needs of foster carers' birth children. As a result, children are helped to develop secure attachments in stable placements.
22. Children's care plans identify and meet their needs. Children experience improved outcomes when they come in to care. They are encouraged to develop their interests and aspirations. Children are supported to participate in their reviews, with independent reviewing officers (IROs) providing effective oversight and challenge. The positive approach taken to engage with birth families means that children benefit from information shared by birth families that would otherwise be withheld because of the difficult emotional climate that surrounds family separation. This is a strength of the children in care team.
23. There are a small number of children whose emotional health needs are not being adequately met by the provision of a child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS). The provision of consultation for carers does help to support placements. However, there remain gaps in the provision of direct support to children from CAMHS. Where CAMHS cannot meet the identified emotional health needs of children in care, social workers can access funding from the local authority for external therapeutic support or refer to commissioned third sector providers. Schools are creatively using the pupil premium funding grant for a range of therapies to support children with additional emotional health needs.
24. The majority of children benefit from timely and well-considered options for permanence. Foster to adopt is used when appropriate to support early permanence. Social workers recognise the importance of promoting all aspects of permanence, including special guardianship, adoption, long-term fostering and a return to family. High-quality special guardianship assessments inform decisions regarding whether children can safely stay within their extended family network. Careful thought is given to the relationships of brothers and sisters in considering future permanence plans.
25. Children with a wide range of needs benefit from achieving permanence through adoption, including older children, brothers and sisters together, and children with complex needs. Persistence in family finding can extend timescales for some children. The local authority recognises that the timescales for matching children need to improve to enable children to move into their new families without undue delay. The adoption support fund is used well to meet children's therapeutic needs in both their adoptive or special guardianship placements.

26. Child permanence reports are well written, child centred and bring the child to life. They are an effective tool for matching. Decisions made by the agency decision maker (ADM) are clearly recorded, with a good rationale for ratification of the adoption plan.
27. Life appreciation days provide a guided journey through the child's life. This enables adopters to develop empathy for and understanding of the child's experiences. Letter box contact is well managed, ensuring that children can maintain contact with significant family members to promote their identity and sense of family history.
28. The virtual school headteacher provides strong leadership and direction for her team. There are effective relationships with schools in monitoring the quality of personal education plans (PEPs), tracking attendance and the use of the pupil premium grant, and in providing appropriate challenge. The quality of PEPS has improved since the last inspection, although there is a recognition that the quality of targets is variable. The termly personal education plans (TPEPs) are detailed and set out expected outcomes for a wide range of therapeutic inputs for children in care. These happen in the school environment and include art and play therapy and nurture sessions. The percentage of children in care attending a good or better school has increased. Attendance for children in care is in line with the national average, and persistent absence is below the national average. However, the local authority knows that incidents of fixed-term exclusion for children in care remain too high. The virtual school headteacher is providing additional support for schools. For example, training has been provided for designated teachers to support teachers to be trauma- and attachment-focused and to understand their impact on pupils' learning and behaviour.
29. Historically, employment, education and training (EET) levels for 17- and 18-year-olds have been below the national average and below statistical neighbours. As a result, an EET panel was established to bring together targeted information advice and guidance (TIAG), the virtual school headteacher and the future directions service. This has been successful in achieving an increase in the numbers of 17- and 18-year-olds in EET. Although improving, only around half of all young people aged 19–21 are in EET, and this remains a priority for the local authority to improve.
30. There is an active and vocal children in care council (CiCC), Care4US, which has worked hard to influence service development through its annual 'takeover of the service event' and on such areas as The Pledge, peer mentoring, recruitment for foster carers, presenting to the corporate parenting panel and developing the documents for reviews.
31. Young people leaving care benefit from proactive and diligent personal advisers, who work hard to keep and maintain relationships with them, even

when young people are reluctant to engage. Support needs are captured in plans that are co-produced with young people. They are up to date and simple to understand. Although young people receive information about their health histories, there is more to do to ensure that this information is meaningful and provided in a more accessible format.

32. For some older young people, particularly where they have been involved in criminal activity, assessments and subsequent intervention is not informed by multi-agency information about the range of risks to which they are exposed. The risks that children may pose to others is not always well understood, and a lack of understanding of criminal exploitation also results in social workers failing to fully evaluate the risks posed to young people by others at the point that they return to the community. For a small number of older children, this means that although they are provided with support, effective multi-agency plans are not in place early enough. This leaves them potentially vulnerable to further exploitation.
33. Children in care and care leavers receive assistance and support from a range of services in order to strengthen their journey into full independence. For example, there is good support from allied services such as the targeted information advice and guidance service (TIAG), council tax exemption up to the age of 25, and ring-fenced council apprenticeships. Opportunities for young people to remain with foster carers after their 18th birthdays are promoted, and all young people are in suitable accommodation that meets their needs. This means that young people are benefiting from stability in their living arrangements, which is promoting their confidence in their increasing independent skills.
34. Most care leavers spoken to described Barnsley as a good place to experience care. Senior managers have been highly receptive to the views of young people and have acted swiftly when issues have been raised with them. Several care leavers told inspectors that they had been well supported through leaving care and into independence, through university and into employment.

The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families: Good

35. Effective and principled leadership by the executive director, chief executive and leader of the council models and sets out high aspirations for children in Barnsley. Collectively, they have driven the continuous improvement journey that shows that practice in Barnsley is now good and that the majority of children receive a good service that is making a difference to their lives.

36. Strategic and operational partnerships are mature and effective, and thresholds for services are understood across the partnerships. There is political commitment to protecting the children's services budget, as well as continued investment.
37. The service benefits from a stable and highly committed leadership team, led by the executive director, which has been instrumental in delivering against the continuous service improvement plan. The self-assessment is realistic and demonstrates ambition to continue to do even better. Service effectiveness is well understood, and areas for development and improvement are identified and progressed. There is a clear focus on continuous learning and improvement throughout the organisation and from external peer review and challenge.
38. Senior managers are held to account through a clear governance structure from the chief executive down. The involvement of the lead member, executive director and service director in practice observations and the visibility in social work teams is impressive. A range of trackers and panels have improved management oversight and help prevent drift and delay in most areas of the service, particularly in relation to achieving permanence.
39. The audits reviewed by inspectors did not always fully involve social workers or take account of feedback from children and families and were not moderated. This means that audit activity misses some opportunities to develop practice through feedback. The service recognises that the approach to audit and learning from audit is ready for further development. Other quality assurance activity is better embedded, including lead member visits, themed audits, dip sampling and reporting arrangements. These all contribute to a framework for quality assurance that has clear lines of accountability from the top down.
40. Managers have a good grip on most areas of practice. This has led to improvements in the timeliness of social work assessments, in the strength of the voice of the child and in dynamic planning. However, some sampling activity by managers to assure themselves of the quality of practice on timeliness of progression to the initial child protection case conference (ICPCC) lacks rigour. This has led to a false assurance of the robustness of practice in this area. Inspectors have identified that the reporting on timeliness of strategy meetings to the ICPCC has led to an inaccurate picture of the degree of delay experienced by children. Furthermore, this means that a small number of children have not had the benefit of being protected through a child protection plan at the earliest opportunity.
41. Leaders understand well the communities they serve. The infrastructure of early help has been redesigned through a family centre delivery model, which has meant a more equitable distribution of targeted resource in local communities. This is aimed at strengthening the resilience of children and their families through the provision of a wide range of services and interventions in

the neighbourhoods in which they live. Thresholds for early help are clearly understood, and this has resulted in lower level work being diverted away from social work services to universal or targeted early help for assessment and intervention.

42. There is a clear strategic infrastructure for monitoring vulnerable groups such as those children who are sexually exploited and those who go missing. However, senior managers recognise that while training has been delivered for the workforce, the understanding of contextual safeguarding is not yet as consistently embedded through practice as it might be. Neglect and its cumulative impact on children is well understood and has been supported using the graded care profile. This enables earlier identification of neglect and helps to target interventions in order to improve children's circumstances.
43. Leaders have responded appropriately to the gaps in mental health provision through a respectful challenge to the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). This has contributed to an improvement in timeliness for access to the CAMHS initial assessment, and senior managers from both services are jointly tracking timeliness of interventions offered by CAMHS. However, some children in care who require direct mental health provision and support from CAMHS are not yet receiving a timely enough service for treatment.
44. Barnsley council is an effective and proud corporate parent. Leaders are ambitious for children in care and are particularly well engaged with the active CiCC. Senior leaders and the corporate parenting panel have regular contact with children and ensure that the views of children and young people influence how services are delivered.
45. Improvements in the education of children in care is a priority for leaders, although there remains more to do. Children are benefiting from an effective virtual school. This has improved the overall quality of PEPs and has included a creative use of the pupil premium grant that has supported schools to be trauma and attachment aware, ensuring more effective support for children.
46. Social work practice in Barnsley is flourishing. Social workers are confident practitioners who know their children well. Practice is child-focused and the voice of the child is embedded throughout the service. Manager oversight of individual cases is clearly evidenced. Leaders and managers have created a culture in which social workers are valued, feel valued, and are proud to work for Barnsley.
47. Workforce stability is excellent, which means that children benefit from being able to develop consistent relationships with social workers. While caseloads are high for some social workers, they feel that they can practise effectively because of co-allocation, supervision and management oversight, and a supportive service and team culture. Social workers report that they benefit from reflective supervision, although this is not always well recorded. Staff

morale is high, and staff are proud to work in Barnsley. They are positive about the support, guidance and training they receive and the visibility of senior managers.



The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank