



SELF-EVALUATION OF SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE IN BARNSLEY MBC

APRIL 2018



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Foreword

In Barnsley, we have a shared vision to deliver services that are as a minimum good with a determination to go beyond good to outstanding. This partnership aspiration was established by the Children and Young People's Partnership and Local Safeguarding Children Board in 2014 following the last Ofsted inspection (June 2014) which judged our services overall to require improvement; an assessment that we shared at the time.

To deliver our vision we have created a culture of openness, continuous improvement and learning. We work as a team, within which we all have distinct roles, but collectively champion what good looks like. We have an agreement about what good looks like and an agreed narrative of how together we can achieve even better outcomes for children. We believe that this sets the right conditions for delivering outstanding services in the future.

This self-evaluation has been developed in this context. We asked social workers and practitioners at our Children's Social Care Forums in December 2017 and January 2018 to tell us about the quality of their interventions, the progress and difference they are making to the lives of vulnerable children, how they know this and their aspirations for 'even better' outcomes.

We were provided with a wealth of qualitative information and a rich narrative presented in various mediums - video interviews with social workers and foster carers, children's art work, poetry, storytelling, song and play acting - all with the voice of the child at the centre. This material was then subject to check and challenge against what we know using our performance management and quality assurance framework information. The self-evaluation, which will be updated at quarterly intervals, has informed our business planning process and the annual refresh of our continuous service improvement plan.

The Barnsley Context

Population, Diversity and Deprivation

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council serves a population of 241,847¹ which, since the 2011 census, has grown by 4%, which is equal to the England average for population growth. The population is predicted to grow to over 255,000 by 2025. There are currently 49,857 children and young people under the age of 18, which is approximately one-fifth (20.6%) of the total population of the Borough.

The diversity of our population continues to change. In 2011, 4 in every 100 people were from a black and minority ethnic group, significantly lower than the regional and national demographic picture. The January 2018 School Census shows that 8.8% of primary school pupils and 7.4% of secondary school pupils are from black and minority ethnic origins, an increase from the 2017 census which reported 8.6% of primary and 6.7% of secondary pupils from a BME background, which was below the regional and national averages.

Deprivation affects a significant number of families in Barnsley. The 2015 index of multiple deprivation ranks Barnsley as the 39th most deprived local authority in England. A significant proportion of children and young people (13.8%) are growing up in households where no adults work, and 21.0% of children and young people live in 'low income households'.

¹ Revised mid-year (2016) population estimates; released by ONS on 22 March 2018

Children's Services Key Statistics

In Barnsley, at the end of March 2018 (full year outturn 2017/18) there were:

- **4,409** children with an early help support plan. This number has grown steadily following the introduction of a revised early help offer in April 2016
- **1,529** children with a child-in-need plan. The general trend of the number of children in need (CiN) in Barnsley has shown a gradual increase throughout the last eighteen months. However, numbers of CiN often fluctuate between 1,500 and 1,600 in any given month. The rate of CiN is now in line with the latest (2016/17) national benchmarks but below statistical neighbours
- **185** children with a child protection plan (CPP). The number had reduced gradually during 2017, albeit there are now signs of a reversal of this trend. The rate of children with a CPP in Barnsley is well below latest benchmarks for 2016/17
- **310** children in care (CiC). The number of children in care has grown slowly over the last five years peaking at 314 in February 2018. The rate of children in care at the end of March 2018 was 63.1 per 10,000 – at the national average for 2016/17 and well below statistical neighbours
- **92** care experienced young people. The number of care experienced young people in receipt of services has remained stable over the last two years.

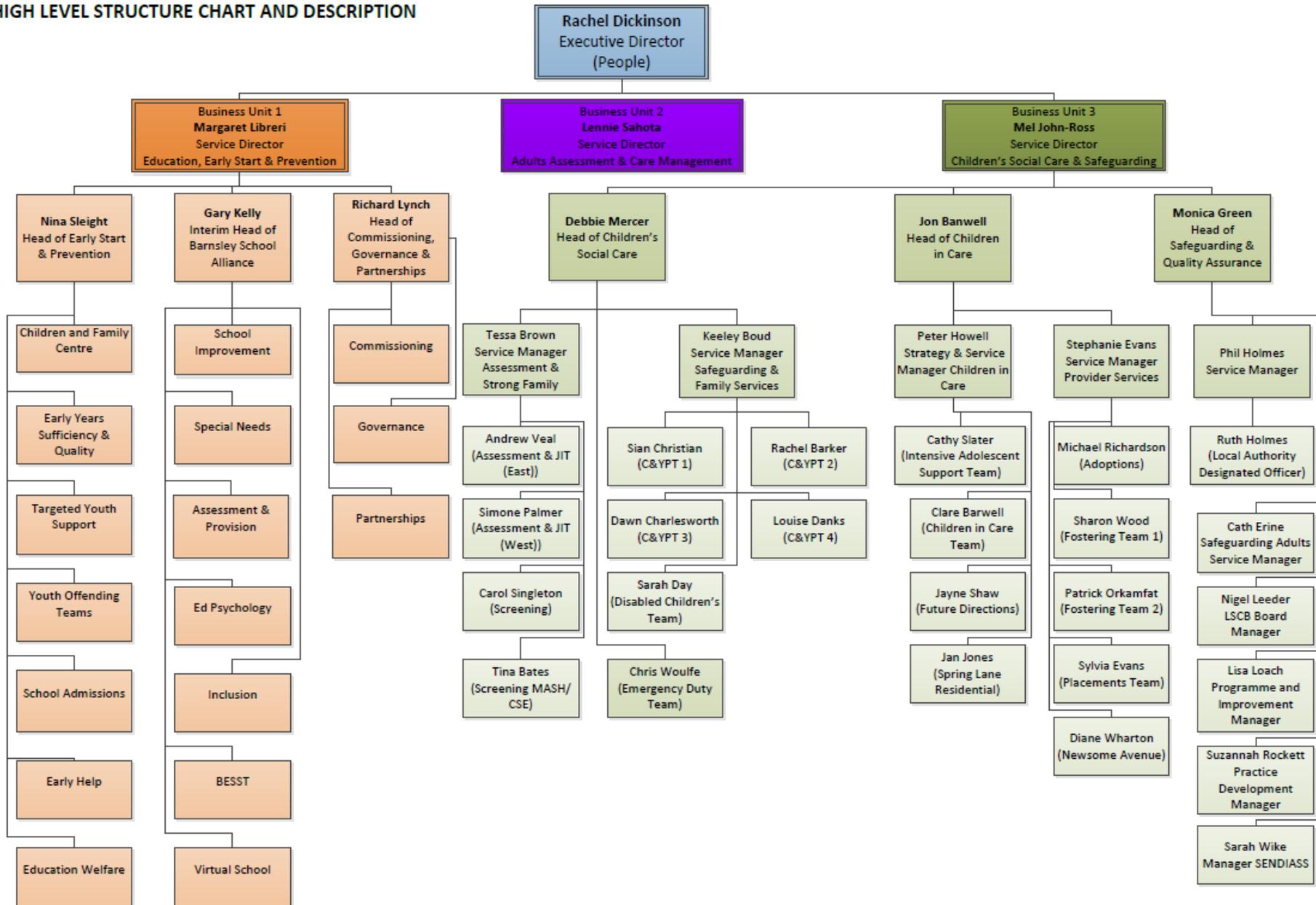
We use our monthly performance management information to review the numbers of children in receipt of services from early help through to leaving care. We are very aware that the numbers of children subject to S47 enquires, child protection plans and in our care are comparatively low; although the latter has increased in the last five years. This is now set against a high level of early help activity and children in need rates that are comparable with our statistical neighbours. We maintain a high level of curiosity about activity rates and regularly test thresholds through dip sampling and case file audits (single and multi-agency); constantly checking whether we have the right numbers of children in need; children subject to child protection plans and children in our care.

Barnsley MBC - People Directorate Structure

Children's Social Care (CSC) and Safeguarding Services are responsible for the full range of council statutory children's social work functions. They are located within the People Directorate alongside Education, Early Start & Prevention Services and Adult Social Care Services. This structure was introduced in April 2015 as part of a corporate improvement programme (Future Council).

An external Test of Assurance of these arrangements was completed in July 2017.

HIGH LEVEL STRUCTURE CHART AND DESCRIPTION



Leaders: Officers and Elected Members

Job Title	Name	Start Date in Role
Executive Director - People Directorate	Rachel Dickinson	June 2013
Cabinet Spokesperson - People (Safeguarding and Designated Lead Member for Children's Services)	Cllr. Margaret Bruff	May 2015
Cabinet Spokesperson - People (Achieving Potential)	Cllr. Tim Cheetham	May 2006
Service Director Children's Social Care & Safeguarding	Mel John-Ross	September 2014
Service Director Education, Early Start & Prevention	Margaret Libreri	April 2015
Independent Chair of Barnsley Safeguarding Children Board	Bob Dyson	January 2013
Chief Executive	Diana Terris	July 2012
Head of Children & Family Social Care	Debbie Mercer	May 2016
Head of Children in Care Services	Jon Banwell	May 2016
Head of Safeguarding & Quality Assurance	Monica Green	April 2015
Head of Early Start, Prevention & Sufficiency	Nina Sleight	April 2015
Head of Barnsley School Alliance (Interim)	Gary Kelly	September 2016
Virtual Head Teacher, Looked After Children & Vulnerable Groups	Liz Gibson	January 2016
Head of Commissioning, Governance & Partnerships	Richard Lynch	April 2015

Our Offer to Children, Young People and Families

Targeted Early Help

In April 2016 a new service delivery model for Targeted Early Help was introduced with an extended age range of pre-birth to 19 years old (25 years old if the young person has a disability). Children's Centres were re-shaped into Family Centres providing a range of early help services which support and co-ordinate early help assessments (EHA) and interventions across early help and universal services. Our targeted Early Help (EH) Services are closely aligned to the Children's Social Care Front Door with robust step up and step down planning arrangements.

Our Targeted Youth Support Service brings together a range of agencies who work together to help young people who are taking risks, or experiencing difficulties, to get back on the right path. The service provides a multi-agency response and supports children and young people from age 8-19 years (and up to age 25 years for those with additional needs).

Our Youth Justice Service works with the community and local agencies, such as the police and schools, to help keep young people, aged 8 to 17 years, their parents and carers, and those affected by crime, to prevent further offending and to repair harm done.

Youth Voice and Participation

This service provides lots of opportunities for young people to get involved and have a say in deciding the types and shapes of services they receive. We encourage young people to exercise their rights and take part in the decision making processes which affect them. The Youth Council and Children in Care Council (Care4Us) are supported by this service.

The Children's Rights team provide an advocacy service to young people who want help or support on a decision that has been made on their behalf which they are not happy with and will support young people to get their thoughts and views across with the support of a Children's Rights Advocate. This includes children in care and care experienced young people.

Public Health

Barnsley 0-19 Public Health Nursing Service transitioned into Barnsley Council in October 2016. The service leads the delivery of the Healthy Child Programme which is a prevention and early intervention programme offered to all children and families. It aims to support parents, promote child development, reduce inequalities and improve child health outcomes and health and wellbeing. It should also ensure that families at risk are identified at the earliest opportunity.

The Integrated Front Door to Children's Social Care

- Duty and Assessment Services – Children in Need and Child Protection
- MASH (CSC, Police, Early Help, Public Health)
- CSE Hub (CSC, Police, Barnardo's)

This service response is co-located in one building with South Yorkshire Police, and includes Police Officers allocated to the MASH and officers working in the Public Protection Unit who undertake S47 investigations with Social Workers.

The Emergency Duty Team (EDT)

In April 2017 the line management of the Adult and Children's Emergency Duty Team was transferred to Children's Social Care to better align the team to the Front Door to CSC as the majority of activity relates to children, young people and families.

Children & Young People Teams

The four Children & Young People's Teams are all located in one building, each with a dedicated Team Manager and supervisor, but who work together as a team providing:

- CIN and CP case management and planning
- PLO and public law care proceedings

The Disabled Children's Team

Our dedicated Disabled Children's Team provide social work assessment and care management services for disabled children and young people 0-18 years of age who are deemed to be children in need and/or in need of protection.

Children in Care & Care Experienced Young People

- Residential services - one long stay and one respite unit for disabled children
- Fostering and adoption services
- Edge of care/homelessness service
- Children in care team
- Leaving care services (Future Directions)
- Placement sufficiency and commissioning services

Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit

This Unit was expanded in April 2015 with additional council investment to provide a quality assurance service that would support our continuous improvement journey in addition to the Child Protection Conference and LAC Reviewing services and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) arrangements.

- Management of the Child Protection Plan Register
- Allegations management (LADO)
- Child protection case conference and independent review service
- Quality assurance and service improvement
- Management and support of the Children and Adult Safeguarding Boards
- Workforce and Practice Development including social work student support

Securing Continuous Improvement – Getting to Good and Beyond

Barnsley was last inspected by Ofsted in June 2014 and judged overall as 'requires improvement'. Prior to this inspection Barnsley had been judged to be 'inadequate'. The 2014 Ofsted inspection did not find any areas for immediate action, and a number of areas of strength and areas for improvement were identified.

Barnsley accurately assessed its effectiveness in 2014 and as a partnership we laid the foundations for continuous improvement by establishing and committing to a continuous improvement framework. The continuous improvement plan was refreshed to reflect the findings of the Ofsted inspection. The Department of Education (DfE) Improvement Notice was lifted in November 2014.

In March 2015 the DfE undertook a review of our progress. Barnsley's priorities were presented during the review:

- Complete the work on our early help offer
- Further development of the Front Door – The MASH
- Maintain our focus on CSE
- Maintaining strong partnerships and strengthening challenge within the Continuous Service Improvement Framework to get it right for Barnsley children
- Continue to develop our workforce

The DfE concluded that there had been 'no let-up in pace' and that we still firmly had 'our foot on the pedal'. The priorities set out in 2015 have all been achieved and we continue to develop the quality of our performance in these areas supported by a programme of continuous improvement and evaluation. Our overall aspiration is to deliver services that are as a minimum good and continuously improving; to maintain momentum; to build on our achievements and deliver our aspirations.

In preparation for delivering further improvements 'post-intervention', a decision was taken in November 2014 to transfer the accountability and governance for our Continuous Service Improvement Framework and Plan (CSIP) from the independently chaired Children's Services Improvement Board to the Barnsley Safeguarding Children's Board and the Children's Trust Executive Group. The Barnsley Children's Service Improvement Board was dis-established in November 2014.

Barnsley's Continuous Service Improvement Framework

Barnsley's Continuous Service Improvement Framework (CSIF) was designed in 2014 to secure continuous improvement and deliver our collective ambition to deliver services that are as a minimum good. It enables the partnership to develop and deliver services to the highest standards, achieving the very best outcomes for children and families. It sets out the dynamic elements of how everyone operating at all levels - officers, elected members, and partners - discharge their responsibilities and work together to make the children's system work effectively. The framework places the child at the centre of everything that we do. The framework is reviewed annually at a joint meeting of the Children Young People and Families Trust Executive Group (TEG) and the Barnsley Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB).

The Continuous Service Improvement Plan (CSIP), which enables Children's Services to focus on areas for improvement, was refreshed to capture the areas of improvement identified by Ofsted in 2014. A multi-agency Officer Group, initially chaired by the Executive Director, continued to drive the CSI plan, reporting on progress to each BSCB and TEG board meeting.

Our More Recent Progress

At the second annual joint BSCB and TEG event in November 2016 there was confidence that there had been good progress in addressing all the Ofsted recommendations for areas of improvement. This event took place on National Takeover Day; young people engaged in the review meeting and presented their own priorities for further improvement. These were taken forward in the next iteration of the CSIP.

The Executive Director with partners pledged that the annual joint BSCB and Trust event would always take place on National Takeover Day to enable young people to participate and engage in updating the priorities for the partnership and the CSIP. In view of the progress that had been made the Executive Director delegated the role of chair of the CSIP multi-agency Officer Group to the Service Director.

In 2016 the refresh of the CSIP included young people's own priorities - seeing their social worker more often; understanding their journey into care well; improved access to emotional support and with more aspirational outcomes agreed for vulnerable children and young people. Our assessment in November 2016 was that significant progress had been made to improve the overall effectiveness of services, that services were 'on the cusp of being good', but practice was not yet consistently good in all areas. This process was repeated at the third annual joint BSCB, TEG and Young People event in November 2017. Our assessment in November 2017 was that services are judged to be consistently good. Of course we continue to aspire to be even better.

Our Approach to Performance Management and Quality Assurance

Barnsley Children's Services has a robust performance management framework. A Children's Social Care Performance Report against all national and local indicators is

produced monthly. This is scrutinised by both the Executive Director and Service Director. A monthly performance meeting is held with the local children's management front line teams. The quantitative performance management information evidences consistently good performance.

Supporting the performance management information is the Children's Quality Assurance Framework. This describes our approach to quality assurance and specifies the annual programme of qualitative enquires into the quality of practice. Children's Social Care has a well embedded monthly programme of case file auditing, where findings are collated and disseminated to front line managers in developmental management forums. Each audit identifies case related recommendations where required. The recommendations are tracked to ensure progress on individual cases. The overall learning from the audit process is drawn up in to an overarching action plan that is reflected in the CSIP.

The Quality Assurance Framework and Auditing Tools are subject to annual review. In February 2018 it was decided to move from a monthly to a six weekly audit cycle in order to create sufficient time for audit activity of greater depth. The auditor and allocated Social Worker will visit the child, young person and their family/carers to seek their views about the services that they have received and the difference the services have made.

Financial Context

The 2017-18 net budget for Children's Social Care & Safeguarding is £23.6m (14% of the Council's net budget) against which the outturn spend is £24.2m. Spend on looked after children's care placements continue to exert pressure on the budget and is the main reason for the reported overspend of £621k in 2017/18.

The approved budget for Children's Social Care for 2018/19 is £25.0m – an increase of £1.4m compared to the previous year. It represents 15% of the Council's overall net budget. The Children's Social Care budget excludes budgeted spend of £6.0m on the 0-19 early help service, targeted youth support and commissioned services and £4.7m budgeted spend on 0-19 Public Health Nursing.

Children's social care budget has been protected over the years against the backdrop of increasing cuts to council funding and the consequent reduction in council spend through efficiency savings. Budgeted spend on children's social care by the Council has increased by over 30% since 2014.

The following highlights the key recurrent budget investments made by the council:

- Children in care placements - including £100k for legal costs (£5.5m)
- Safeguarding & Quality Assurance (£0.1m)
- Intensive Adolescent Support Service (£0.2m)
- Family Group Conference (£0.1m)
- Pay/Pension costs (£1.3m)

The council has recently approved £0.6m investment for the recruitment of fourteen additional social workers across the service to address capacity issues. Recruitment to these additional posts started at the end of 2017. It has also taken a decision to exempt care leavers from paying Council Tax from the 1st April 2018.

Sector-led Improvement

We are proactive partners and leaders in external sector-led improvement initiatives. The Executive Director and DCS is the chair of the Yorkshire and Humberside (Y&H) Regional Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) Group.

The Executive Director has been elected as the Vice President for the ADCS from April 2018 and will take up the role of ADCS President in April 2019 for tenure of 12 months. The Service Director CSC is the Chair of the South Yorkshire Safeguarding Assistant Directors Group.

One of our Heads of Service was successfully selected in 2017/18 for the first cohort of the DfE Practice in Leaders Programme led by England's Chief Social Worker Isabelle Trowler. This manager is a LGC 2018 finalist for the 'rising star' 2018 award.

The Executive Director is the lead DCS for Children's Social Work Matters (CSWM) which Barnsley Children's Services host and leads on behalf of all 15 authorities in Y&H. CSWM is a unique interactive online platform that champion's children's social work, provides interactive learning and development tools. Under Barnsley's leadership, we have hosted two regional 'festivals of social work'. CSWM is an LGC 2018 finalist in the category of Public – Public Partnerships.

We are proactive partners in the Y&H sector led improvement programme. We have invited two Peer Challenge Teams to provide external scrutiny of our early help partnership arrangements in October 2015 and for children missing education in April 2017. The outcomes of the peer challenges have been presented to the Council's Cabinet and the recommendations have been progressed under the appropriate governance arrangements reporting to the Children's Trust Executive Group. The Continuous Service Improvement Framework commits to one external challenge of our services each year. We are proposing that our next peer challenge will be focused on our Integrated Front Door to Children's Social Care Service, which we believe is strong, but welcome external challenge within the regional sector-led improvement framework. A Partner in Practice will provide this challenge.

We reciprocate our commitment to sector-led improvement with leaders in the service having led and been members of Peer Challenge Teams across the region. Barnsley leaders have contributed as speakers; mentors and tutors on the Y&H regional aspirational leader's programme as well as acting as coach and mentor on a regional and national basis.

We are fully engaged in the Y&H sector-led regional self-assessment programme, proactively engaging in the performance management information group work. Attendance at the annual check and challenge events was at Executive Director and Service Director (AD) level. Our self-assessment evidences real improvement made in Children's Social Care Services. Areas for improvement identified: employment, education and training (EET) for care leavers in 2015 and the timeliness of our safeguarding assessments in 2016 have both made significant improvement. However, education outcomes, overall and for vulnerable groups, remain a priority for the Council, the directorate and the wider partnership.

We have invited Mark Riddell MBE, National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers, to test our services and offer for care experienced young people; this is planned for 2nd and 3rd May 2018.

Signature of Risk – Yorkshire & Humberside Regional Self-Assessment

Signatures of risk	2014	2015	2016	2017
High turnover and change in senior leadership	A	G	G	G
Negative impact of service reorganisations combined with challenging budget reductions	A	A	A	G
Lack of political focus on safeguarding and care	G	G	G	G
Assumption that performance standards are secure in an environment of service maintenance rather than development	A	G	G	G
Poor planning and performance monitoring with a lack of measurable targets	G	G	G	G
Absence of overarching strategies and weak co-ordination for school improvement	G	A	A/G	A
Inadequate challenge and poor identification of schools requiring intervention and support	G	A	A	A
Inability of school governors to offer sufficient challenge to schools	A	A	A/G	A
Limited self-awareness and no external challenge	G	G	G	G
Ineffective quality assurance system that fails to pick up casework shortcomings	A	G	G	G
Little evidence of reflective supervision and follow up actions is consistently clear across casework	A	A/G	A/G	G
Lack of a learning culture	A/G	G	G	G
Weak commitment from partners	A	G	G	G
Lack of focus on the child's journey or voice of the child	A	A/G	G	G
Cases not are allocated in a timely fashion	A	G	G	G
Ineffective timeliness/quality in all safeguarding processes (ICPCs, reviews, statutory visits, private fostering processes)	A	A	A/G	G
Lack of confidence in the LSCB meeting its statutory duties	G	G	G	G
LSCB has insufficient independence, competence and ability to challenge	A/G	G	G	G
Inability of LSCB to set effective thresholds of intervention and proactively engage partners to ensure that these are operated	A/G	A	A/G	G
Poor workforce development and/or capacity	A	G	G	G
Failing to listen to or accept front line feedback	G	G	G	G
Failure to develop a culture of anticipation and early warning of issues	G	G	G	G
Effectiveness of the front door (auto-fills from front door self-awareness tab)	-	-	-	G
Overall self-assessment rating	A	G	G	G

Strengths						
Listed and colour-coded by main strength/AFI headings (see Strength and AFI headings sheet for further detail)						
Early years	Early help, family and targeted support	Special educational needs and/or disability	Adoption and looked after children	Munro and safeguarding	Young people's education and employment	Other
Strength	2015		2016		2017	
1.	Adoption		Adoption		Adoption	
2.	Adoption		Youth offending		Looked after children care management and outcomes	
3.	Looked after children care management and outcomes		Looked after children care management and outcomes		Early help offer	
4.	Quality and/or sufficiency of early years provision		Quality of provision - Ofsted inspection judgements of schools or other settings		Quality and/or sufficiency of early years provision	
5.	-		Safeguarding/CP		Quality Assurance Framework	
6.	-		-		Workforce strategy	

There is no requirement to have the maximum of six strengths, but please provide a minimum of three in priority order

Areas for improvement						
Listed and colour-coded by main strength/AFI headings (see Strength and AFI headings sheet for further detail)						
Early years	Early help, family and targeted support	Special educational needs and/or disability	Adoption and looked after children	Munro and safeguarding	Young people's education and employment	Other
AFI	2015		2016		2017	
1.	Early help offer		School exclusions		School attendance	
2.	Services for care leavers and/or outcomes for this group		School attendance		Quality of provision - Ofsted inspection judgements of schools or other settings	
3.	School attendance		Improving educational outcomes - post 16		Improving educational outcomes - KS3 and KS4/secondary	
4.	Learning outcomes - Early Years Foundation Stage profile		Improving educational outcomes - KS3 and KS4/secondary		Outcomes for vulnerable groups - for example: FSM gap, new migrants	
5.	Improving educational outcomes - KS3 and KS4/secondary		Safeguarding/CP			
6.	-		-			

There is no requirement to have the maximum of six areas for improvement but please provide a minimum of three in priority order

Regional priorities from 2016	
1.	Improving educational outcomes: KS1 and KS2/primary
2.	Commissioning - including placement supply/ sufficiency/quality issues for CLA placements
3.	Outcomes for vulnerable groups - for example: FSM gap, new migrants

Quality & Impact of Social Work Practice in Barnsley

Early Help

What do we know about the quality and impact of our practice for children in need of early help?

Children in Barnsley receive good quality early help and childcare, with 96% of our early years and childcare settings judged to be good or outstanding by Ofsted as of 31/03/2017 better than any other council in the region and 4% above the national average.

Early help services are co-ordinated and delivered through our community based Family Centres. Outcomes and evidence of progress and improvement demonstrate that thresholds for early help are clearly understood and that children are having their needs identified and responded to at the right time and by the right agency. Referrals, re-referral rates and the volume of assessments by Children's Social Care have reduced.

There has been an increase in the number children whose needs are identified with the completion of an EH Assessment and the number of children and young people receiving evidenced based early help intervention.

By working together effectively we seek to reduce the number of children and young people requiring statutory interventions and reactive specialist services.

Key Performance Highlights – position as at Q4 2017/18 (year-end outturn)

<i>Number of 'Active' Early Help cases</i>	14/15 Outturn	15/16 Outturn	16/17 Outturn	17/18 Outturn
Barnsley Performance (Snapshot)	2,183	2,796	3,866	4,409

Local Indicator – Benchmark Comparators Unavailable

<i>Number of Early Help Assessments initiated</i>	14/15 Outturn	15/16 Outturn	16/17 Outturn	17/18 Outturn
Barnsley Performance	994	1,047	1,773	1,650

Local Indicator – Benchmark Comparators Unavailable

Children in Need of Help and Protection

What do we know about the quality and impact of our practice for children in need of help and protection?

Children in need and/or in need of protection have their needs identified and assessed in a timely manner by a qualified Social Worker. Referrals are appropriate and we are assessing the right children, with high conversion rates from referral to assessment. Children and their families do not wait to be assessed and robust performance management ensures that we do not have unallocated cases.

The Integrated Front Door to CSC, including the MASH ensures that information is shared in a timely way, informing decisions and planning to help and safeguard children. Children on child protection plans routinely see their allocated Social Worker at the right time, as specified in their child protection plan. We have a minimum standard of seeing every child with a child protection plan every 4 weeks, but practice standards require this to be sooner.

Child protection plans are reviewed in good time and the number of children becoming the subject of a plan for a second or subsequent time, and those on a plan for over 2 years has reduced. A child who becomes subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time and, any child on a child protection plan for over 18 months is considered under the Public Law Outline (PLO) planning process to ensure that there is no drift in making the right decisions for children, at the right time.

We have a dedicated CSE Social Worker located in our Integrated Front Door, with the Police and Barnardo's. A multi-agency CSE Sub Group, chaired by SY Police, reports to the Barnsley Safeguarding Children's Board (BSCB). CSC and SY Police use shared performance management data proactively and, regular case file audits are undertaken. The profile of CSE incidents in Barnsley is low and active cases and interventions are predominantly focused on helping to prevent the potential of CSE from occurring.

Our Intensive Adolescent Support Team provides a restorative service to young people on the edge of care and their families, preventing the risk of homelessness for young people. All members of the team have been trained in interventions that work with risk facing adolescents, i.e. promoted under Research in Practice and embedded from our partnership under the South Yorkshire DfE Empower and Protect Innovation Programme for Young People at risk of CSE and/or who are vulnerable to CSE.

Our dedicated Disabled Children's Team work with children and young people in need of preventative services, as well as children in need of more targeted, specialist help. The team know their children and families well and investment in additional social workers is enabling us to focus more on integrated and transitional planning.

Children's Social Workers work closely with colleagues in SY Police in attending relevant MARAC meetings, to share information concerning adults experiencing domestic abuse, where there are children who require safeguarding interventions.

Children's assessments are of a good quality and significant improvement has been made in the timeliness for completing assessments. Our case file audits and review quality assurance information tell us that assessments are child focused and consistently evidence the voice of the child; they reference and are underpinned by relevant social work theory, with good information sharing across key services.

The BSCB - Performance and Quality Assurance Sub Group (PAQA) has a strong track record of multi-agency auditing. Most recently it has undertaken audits in the areas of: Section 17 children in need assessments; Section 17 and Section 47 decision making. These audits were undertaken to test higher rates of assessments under S17 and lower rates under S47. The audits evidenced appropriate decision making for vulnerable children and good working relationships between Children's Social Care and the Police.

Key Performance Highlights – position as at Q4 2017/18 (year-end outturn)

<i>Percentage of Re-Referrals to CSC</i>	14/15 Outturn	15/16 Outturn	16/17 Outturn	17/18 Outturn	16/17 Stat. Neighbours	16/17 National
Barnsley Performance	21.4%	26.9%	18.8%	17.2%	17.9%	21.9%

<i>Percentage of Assessments ending NFA</i>	14/15 Outturn	15/16 Outturn	16/17 Outturn	17/18 Outturn	16/17 Stat. Neighbours	16/17 National
Barnsley Performance	42.0%	41.4%	34.1%	33.8%	23.0%	27.8%

<i>Percentage of Assessments within 45 days</i>	14/15 Outturn	15/16 Outturn	16/17 Outturn	17/18 Outturn	16/17 Stat. Neighbours	16/17 National
Barnsley Performance	68.9%	64.0%	79.9%	99.4%	81.2%	82.9%

<i>Percentage of Assessments within 20 days</i>	14/15 Outturn	15/16 Outturn	16/17 Outturn	17/18 Outturn	16/17 Stat. Neighbours	16/17 National
Barnsley Performance	17.9%	25.4%	28.0%	37.2%	27.7%	35.2%

<i>Percentage of CP Cases reviewed within timescales</i>	14/15 Outturn	15/16 Outturn	16/17 Outturn	17/18 Outturn	16/17 Stat. Neighbours	16/17 National
Barnsley Performance	98.0%	96.0%	97.8%	100.0%	83.7%	92.2%

<i>Percentage of CP visits within timescales</i>	14/15 Outturn	15/16 Outturn	16/17 Outturn	17/18 Outturn
Barnsley Performance	95.5%	94.0%	93.7%	99.1%

Local Indicator – Benchmark Comparators Unavailable

Children in Care and Care Leavers

What do we know about the quality and impact of our practice for children in care and care leavers?

We know that Barnsley has stable communities, with well-established extended family networks that frequently support vulnerable children within the family. This factor has an impact on both the numbers of children with protection plans and the numbers of children in our care, which we continually scrutinise. One of our key strengths is the effectiveness of our permanency planning for children in care. This factor also has an impact on the number of children in care. Our performance evidences that children in care have their care plan reviewed in a timely manner.

We have a Legal Gateway Panel where all decisions are taken to initiate the public law outline (PLO) and initiate care proceedings. The panel, which is chaired by a Head of Service, review all cases, including those that have been subject to a CP Plan for 18 months and over. Children in care who are subject to public law care proceedings have good quality assessments of their needs which inform timely permanency decisions. Our permanency planning is strong, with high rates of adoption and child arrangement orders.

Children in care and care experienced young people have strong, stable relationships with their Social Workers and Personal Advisors (PAs) who know them well and see them regularly, over and above regulatory requirements. This is evidenced through our quality assurance activity; reviews; case file auditing and direct observations of practice. Children in care have attention given to their health needs with regular health needs assessments and dental care to promote their health and wellbeing. Waiting times for assessments to CAMHS for children and young people in care has significantly improved and we have introduced a Pathway to CAMHS support and consultation for children in care.

Our children in care running club, led by a children's social worker and former health colleague, has proved to be enormously successful, in engaging with growing numbers of children in care and their carer's, to promote healthy lifestyles and to have fun!

We have embedded Termly Education Plans for children in care, alongside the Annual PEP to ensure that we are predicting, planning and promoting children's education, attendance and attainment, in live time.

Under the governance of the Corporate Parenting Panel we have a separate Virtual School Governance Group, chaired by the Lead Cabinet Member for People Achieving Their Potential, to ensure that there is a continued, dedicated focus and challenge to improve the education outcomes for children in care. The Virtual Head teachers report, as presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9th January 2018 sets out the achievement, attendance and exclusion rates of children in care for the academic year 2016 to 2017.

Children in care experience stable care, relationships and placements. Our ambition, as set out in our Placement Sufficiency Strategy, is that all children in our care are looked after in family type placements, apart from in very exceptional circumstances where a family setting will not meet their needs. Our quality assurance activity; reviews; direct observations of practice; visits to children's homes and family placements, evidence stable and high quality care givers. Whilst Barnsley has not experienced the significant rise in numbers of children in care as reported nationally and regionally, the local demand for care placements, particularly for adolescents, has impacted upon our placement stability.

When a young person who has been missing is found, our Targeted Youth Support service will offer an impartial 'return home interview'. This explores the reasons behind a young person's absence and what they might have encountered while they were missing. The support provided by the return home interview staff helps to identify any issues that led to the young person running away. The service works closely with other agencies to support young people, to build their resilience and to prevent the further likelihood of this happening again.

Monthly management deep dives are undertaken for any child who has been missing from care and a multi-agency audit on the quality of Return to Care Interviews was undertaken by the BSCB Performance & Quality Assurance (PAQA) sub group in July 2017. This showed tenacity in making contact with young people and that there was no safeguarding reason for why young people were missing; most were late in returning to their placements and the most common reason was that they wanted to be with friends. Return to Care interviews are completed with children placed in Barnsley by other local authorities who go missing.

Geographically Barnsley is an area with a high volume of private children in care placement providers. We facilitate a Private Placement Provider Forum, which is also attended by SY Police, the Virtual Head teacher and Specialist Nurse for children in care. We also have a multi-agency Vulnerable Young Peoples Panel which quality assures intervention and planning for any vulnerable young person and young people who go missing.

There are low numbers of children who are cared for in private fostering arrangements. Barnsley Safeguarding Children Board maintain this group of children as a priority, given their potential vulnerability, as set out in the Continuous Service Improvement Plan. There are regular information and awareness raising campaigns across the children's partnership and communities, the last one taking place in October 2017.

Barnsley Council has invested additional resources in the children legal team, to improve the capacity and quality of legal advocacy. We have good partnership arrangements with CAFCASS and the South Yorkshire Family Courts, who are currently struggling to list cases within 26 weeks, due to increased demand in other parts of the sub region.

Barnsley has excellent performance in the percentage of looked after children leaving care through adoption. In 2016/17 this was 30.0%, the third best performance nationally, and we have continued to perform very strongly in 2017/18, with a provisional outturn figure of 29.5%. However, we need to improve our timeliness from decision to adoption.

The Service Director is the designated Agency Decision Maker (ADM) for all children where the plan is that they should be placed for adoption. The ADM reads all child permanence reports (CPRs) and all attached assessments, where the standard of quality is found to be consistently high. CPRs provide coherent assessments with informed analysis supporting the decision, setting out all other options for permanence and all viability assessments of suitable, potential family carers. Crucially, they provide a rich narrative of the child, his/her needs and an invaluable description of the child, for the matching of potential adopters but also, for the child's future reference to his/her history. This supports our assertion that Social Workers know their children well.

Our assessments are evidenced based and we regularly receive positive feedback from CAFCASS and the courts, on the quality of our work. The evidence for this can be found in our 'nominations of good practice' folder.

Since June 2014 we have had no adoption breakdowns for children, due to high quality assessments and rigorous matching processes, delivered by an experienced and highly committed Adoption Team.

We have aspired to continually improve the participation of children and young people, in influencing how services are delivered and what matters to them. In 2014 just one young person participated in this National Takeover Day, shadowing the Executive Director. In 2015 we were awarded a silver commendation and in 2016 a gold commendation by the Children's Commissioner for the broad range of takeover opportunities for young people across the council. In 2017 this also included local private businesses, with the programme led by what jobs and careers young people were interested and aspired to. Young people have attended Cabinet to present their own reports on these events.

Our Pledge to children in care was designed and led by the Care4Us Council, who for the first time in 2017 presented their own annual review of their work in a video, alongside their 'Top 10' improvements that they wanted to see, from their social workers, who responded by attending the Care4Us Council with their pledges to be 'even better'.

We champion higher aspirations for children in care and care experienced young people. Our annual Awards Ceremony for children in care has grown in scale over the last few years. The event is enjoyed by all who attend and its increasing popularity has meant that we have had to find larger venues to accommodate the growing numbers of children, young people and their carers who want to attend the event. Last year's event was introduced by a care experienced young person, who proudly spoke of his achievement in getting in to University. We currently have 5 care experienced young people at University and 20 in further education.

We have delivered significant improvement during 2017/18 for the numbers of care leavers engaged in employment, education and training. However this remains a priority for us, as well as driving improvement for the attendance, progress and attainment of children in care.

At the current time we are in touch with all our care experienced young people. There is sufficient and suitable accommodation for care leavers but we are developing an even better offer. Our performance is accumulative and the young people who we have judged not to be in suitable accommodation are those placed by the youth justice system in custody and bail hostels.

We have good relationships with our local housing provider, Berneslai Homes who prioritise all care leavers for housing upon the age of 18 years. We have designated training flats for care leavers and local semi-independent accommodation for vulnerable young people has been recommissioned, now provided by CentrePoint. We promote and support staying put arrangements and the Council agreed that all our care leavers would be exempt from council tax payment from 1 April 2018.

Key Performance Highlights – position as at Q4 2017/18 (year-end outturn)

<i>LAC Reviews within timescales</i>	14/15 Outturn	15/16 Outturn	16/17 Outturn	17/18 Outturn
Barnsley Performance	85.1%	96.9%	96.7%	99.0%

Local Indicator – Benchmark Comparators Unavailable

<i>LAC Visits Timeliness</i>	14/15 Outturn	15/16 Outturn	16/17 Outturn	17/18 Outturn
Barnsley Performance	75.0%	90.0%	91.9%	98.7%

Local Indicator – Benchmark Comparators Unavailable

<i>LAC Visits Timeliness (as per 'Regulations')</i>	14/15 Outturn	15/16 Outturn	16/17 Outturn	17/18 Outturn
Barnsley Performance	76.7%	91.8%	93.2%	99.2%

Local Indicator – Benchmark Comparators Unavailable

<i>Personal Education Plans (PEPs)</i>	15/16 Outturn	16/17 Outturn	17/18 Outturn
Barnsley Performance	100%	98.7%	98.6%

Local Indicator – Benchmark Comparators Unavailable

<i>Termly Personal Education Plans (TPEPs)</i>		16/17 Outturn	17/18 Outturn
Barnsley Performance		96.8%	97.3%

Local Indicator – Benchmark Comparators Unavailable

<i>LAC Health Assessment Timeliness</i>	14/15 Outturn	15/16 Outturn	16/17 Outturn	17/18 Outturn	16/17 Stat. Neighbours	16/17 National
Barnsley Performance	100%	100%	99.9%	98.5%	94.8%	93.7%

<i>LAC Dental Assessment Timeliness</i>	14/15 Outturn	15/16 Outturn	16/17 Outturn	17/18 Outturn	16/17 Stat. Neighbours	16/17 National
Barnsley Performance	100%	100%	99.2%	99.5%	90.8%	88.2%

<i>LAC Placement Stability: 3+ Placement Moves</i>	14/15 Outturn	15/16 Outturn	16/17 Outturn	17/18 Outturn	15/16 Stat. Neighbours	15/16 National
Barnsley Performance	4.2%	5.1%	5.6%	3.4%	9.7%	10.0%

<i>LAC Placement Stability: Stable Placement 2.5yrs+</i>	14/15 Outturn	15/16 Outturn	16/17 Outturn	17/18 Outturn	16/17 Stat. Neighbours	16/17 National
Barnsley Performance	70.5%	75.0%	77.2%	67.9%	66.8%	68.0%

<i>Adoptions - Days from 'Placement Order' to 'Adopter Match'</i>	14/15 Outturn	15/16 Outturn	16/17 Outturn	17/18 Outturn	16/17 Stat. Neighbours
Barnsley Performance	298.9	279.3	242.2	184.6	234.5

<i>Care Leavers - Percentage in Education, Training and/or Employment</i>	16/17 Outturn	17/18 Outturn	16/17 Stat. Neighbours	16/17 National
Barnsley Performance	40.0%	61.8%	49.4%	50.0%

(This information is for 19-21yr olds, in line with the national PI)

<i>Care Leavers - Percentage in Suitable Accommodation</i>	16/17 Outturn	17/18 Outturn	16/17 Stat. Neighbours	16/17 National
Barnsley Performance	93.0%	95.6%	91.0%	84.0%

(This information is for 19-21yr olds, in line with the national PI)

<i>LAC subject to Final Warning, Conviction or Reprimand</i>	14/15 Outturn	15/16 Outturn	16/17 Outturn	17/18 Outturn	16/17 Stat. Neighbours	16/17 National
Barnsley Performance	6.4%	5.2%	7.0%	5.0%*	5.1%	4.0%

*2017/18 outturn figure of 5.0% is provisional at the time of writing

<i>LAC Education Attainment</i>	 
Barnsley Performance	Virtual Head Teacher 2016-2017 Key data Report March 2018 final summary for annual r

<i>Ofsted 'Rating' of Children's Residential Units</i>	Newsome Avenue	Spring Lane
Barnsley Performance	'Good'	'Good'

The Operating Environment for Social Work Practice

Our Workforce

We have a stable and proud workforce, with 80% of our workforce being experienced practitioners, balanced against 20% of newly qualified social workers.

Good workforce retention rates mean that we have few vacancies. We have no difficulty filling social worker vacancies when they do arise. Pursuing a strategy of rolling and over recruitment to front line posts has meant that we have had no agency social work staff for 18 months.

Teams are located together, management and peer support is strong. We know because staff consistently report this in the QA visiting programme. We are a proactive member of the South Yorkshire Teaching Partnership (SYTP) and invest in practice teaching and student placements, where upon qualifying most select us as an employer of choice.

We have implemented a more equitable Flexible Working Scheme, to promote a better offer of work life balance for our workforce, alongside promoting health and wellbeing clinics in the workplace and the flu vaccination.

Caseloads

All children in need; children subject to child protection plans and children in care are allocated to a suitably qualified social worker. We do not have unallocated cases. Caseloads are monitored on a weekly basis and they are higher than we would like. The Council has allocated an additional £675,000 to create 14 additional social work posts. This is supporting a reduction in caseloads, enabling social workers to spend more time on each child and further improve the quality of practice.

Current average caseloads, as at 31 March 2018, are:

- Safeguarding Teams 21.3
- Disabled Children's Team 27.3
- Children in Care Teams 19.5
- Adoptions & Fostering 15.0

Our Practice Model

We promote a model of relationship based practice where the child is at the centre and children's experiences are well understood, as evidenced by our QA activities. Our practice model is underpinned by the 'Three Rs' promoting research, relationships and restorative practice. We have embedded a strength based approach to our child protection case conferencing.

We subscribe to Research in Practice (RIP) and evidenced based practice. We have implemented family group conversations and a strength based approach to all our assessment, intervention and planning activities.

A bi-monthly Social Work Forum is held where best practice is cascaded and celebrated and where all service learning and development takes place. These events have helped to build the confidence and pride in our workforce, to know collectively what good and even better looks like.

We launched a Neglect Strategy at the end of 2017 in partnership with the BSCB and the NSPCC, introducing the graded care profile and assessment tools, for all children identified as experiencing neglect.

Social Workers Perspective

We are in touch with how social workers feel about working in Barnsley through the Principal Social Workers Annual Health checks and our Council Employee Surveys. The findings from these sources tell us that Social Workers in Barnsley are happy in their job, that managers are visible and approachable, and that they are supported in carrying out their responsibilities. Social worker satisfaction with the frequency of supervision has also improved. Both reports in 2017 demonstrated an even better response from our workforce, in comparison to the positive 2016 reports. Social workers attended the [Council's Scrutiny Committee](#) in September 2017. Acting as a 'critical friend' to the service, elected members directly asked social workers about their work; caseloads; outcomes; access to supervision; CPD and senior leaders.

Through the corporate communication points, social workers actively engaged in giving feedback and shaping council wide services. The Talkabout sessions which relate to business planning for CSC, are extremely well attended. Self-evaluation; priorities and business plans have been driven 'bottom up' by the service.

Continuous Professional Development

Our workforce is our greatest asset. Barnsley social workers and managers are highly committed to continual improvement and to a collective effort to deliver 'even better' services. We benefit from an experienced and stable leadership team where managers promote a culture of openness and learning, with high visibility, high support, learning and respectful challenge.

We promote our council value of learning and together improving as a 'team'; managers at all levels have a tight grip on practice, decision making and smart planning for children. Our managers have all accessed the council's leadership programme in addition to post qualifying opportunities under the SYTP.

We have no manager vacancies, promoting consistent support and supervision for social workers. A review of contact arrangements for children in care will introduce a Family Time Co-ordinator, who will supervise family time supervisors, reducing the number of direct reports in the Children & Young Peoples (safeguarding) Teams.

We have a well-developed workforce development offer for social workers, from student placements, practice teaching, and progression routes from ASYE to Advanced Practitioner. We have an embedded supervision, appraisal and workforce development programme, promoting evidenced and strength based practice, built around relationships, knowing children well and the child's voice being at the heart of what we do. Social workers tell us through the Social Work Health Check and Quality Assurance visits to front line teams that they receive and benefit from reflective supervision. However, we need to better record reflective supervision.

Cases are allocated appropriately and we have an embedded culture of joint allocation to support the development of newly qualified social workers, whereby they are supported by working alongside more experienced practitioners, whom they can directly observe and learn from.

CSWM is one element of our workforce development offer. We convene 'team' meetings' for practitioners to engage together in the live webinar events, one of which has been facilitated by our Head of Services in partnership with the NSPCC promoting the graded care profile for children who are neglected.

Assuring the Quality of Practice

We know that practice is consistently good. We have robust performance management information which evidences strong and excellent performance in most areas. Our quality assurance activities, case file auditing, meetings with children, young people, their families and carers, routine observations of practice, all support our performance management information. We are confident that Social Workers know their children and families well; that they build consistent, restorative relationships with them in which both Social Workers and service users can each articulate the difference and progress that our intervention is making. Case file auditing, which is undertaken with social workers, consistently demonstrates relationship based practice with understanding of what life is like for the child and the voice of the child is central in all assessments, which we can see is making a difference, i.e. strong placement stability for children in care, excellent permanency planning.

Consistent themes of quality practice from our Audit Highlight Report (February 2018) were:

- Children's records are clear and concise
- Management oversight and decision making is visible
- Social work interventions produce strong outcomes and children are being helped and protected
- Assessments are timely, comprehensive and analytical of risk and need
- Children are central to practice and the child's voice is consistently evidenced in assessments
- Cases demonstrate effective information sharing between professionals

We have launched a Neglect Strategy, with accompanying practitioner tools to assist social workers and key partners in better identifying and responding to neglect.

We promote a strong 'line of sight' with the Executive Director, Service Director and Lead Cabinet Member for Safeguarding meeting with teams and accompanying Social Workers on visits every 6 weeks. These visits provide an invaluable insight through discussion and direct observation into the quality of relationships, engagement, empathy, respectful communication, and of course the clear progress and outcomes that are being achieved for children. These visits were introduced by the Executive Director with the aim of building a culture of openness and learning, working together as a team, a council value to collectively improve services for vulnerable children in Barnsley. Our evaluation in 2017 of this programme of direct observation of front line practice, as presented to our Overview and Scrutiny Committee (October 2017) was that we have confident, well supported social workers, where team and peer support is highly regarded.

The outcomes of the Social Work Health Check and Quality Assurance Visits for 2017 are reflected in the CSC Business Plan for 2017/18.

Future Plans

Our aspirations for children’s outcomes are set out in our Continuous Service Improvement Plan. Our evaluation is that services are now consistently good, but we strive to deliver ‘even better’ outcomes for children in Barnsley. Our experience of our continuous service improvement journey is that achieving this has been and is relentless. We believe that we have now achieved a position where the strategic vision and leadership, is mirrored if not overtaken, with the aspiration of our social work workforce. Our strength is working as a collective team, from strategic leaders to front line practitioners, to make a difference for every child, every day – every intervention and every contact counts, to make a difference.

Our key priorities for ‘even better’ services include:

- Deliver the Placements Sufficiency Strategy
- Improve our adoption timeliness from decision to adoption
- Improve school attendance; progress and attainment outcomes for children in care
- Improve the numbers of care leavers engaged in employment, education and training
- Improve transitional planning for disabled young people into adulthood
- Further improve the quality of the social work service to children; life story work; focusing on emotional wellbeing
- Further development of the children’s electronic recording system

Appendices

Children’s Social Care Monthly Performance Report	 CSC Monthly Performance Report_
Continuous Service Improvement Plan	 CS Imp Plan v28.pdf