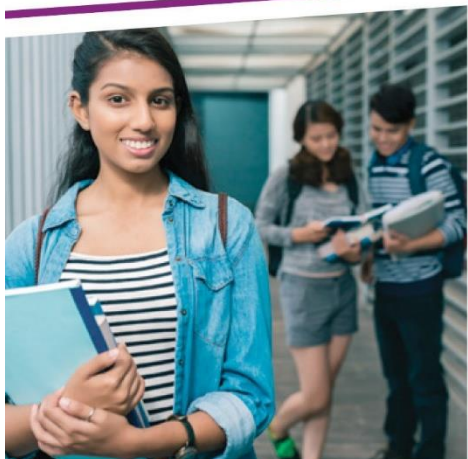


**DRAFT**

# Delivering outstanding outcomes for children: our continuous improvement plan 2020/22

June 2020



OUR DESTINATION



OUR PRINCIPLES



OUR PRACTICE  
FRAMEWORK



Delivering for Croydon

**CROYDON**  
[www.croydon.gov.uk](http://www.croydon.gov.uk)

## Introduction

Our determination to continually improve services for children young people in need of help and protection and champion the interests of children in our care and care leavers is clearly set out in the council's corporate plan 2018-2022<sup>1</sup>. As a partnership we have also set out a shared vision and clear priorities around safety, health and learning for all children and young people in Croydon in our Children, Young People and Families plan 2020-24<sup>2</sup>.

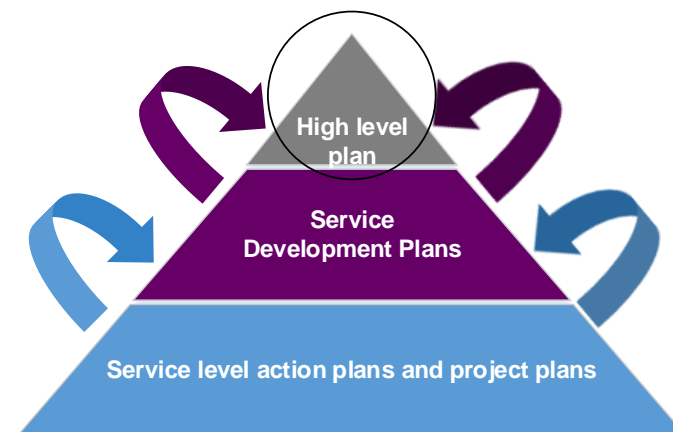
**Vision:** *'Working together to make Croydon a place where all children and young people feel safe, healthy and happy.'*

Ofsted recognised during their re-inspection of Croydon's Early Help and Children's Social Care Services in January and February 2020 that services for children and families have been "transformed" through strong corporate and political support and leaders were creating the "right conditions for effective social work", resulting in an overall effectiveness grading of 'Good'.

However, we cannot be complacent and will build upon the momentum and success of our ambitious and comprehensive improvement programme to deliver outstanding outcomes for children and young people by 2022. This aspiration is simply described in appendix 1 "Who we are and where we are going" and outlines four key areas of work underpinned by 6 key principles, the values that guide all our work.

This high level plan and the priorities within it respond to the recommendations and areas for development in the March 2020 Ofsted report<sup>3</sup> and articulates the service innovation priorities that will help us to achieve outstanding outcomes for children, young people and families.

The 'plan for continuous improvement' is underpinned by service development plans owned by Heads of Service in Children, Families and Education and across the Council, and cross cutting multi-agency plans overseen by senior leaders. These plans detail clear actions, owners and timescales against which progress is monitored by the Executive Director. Underneath these are more granular action and project plans. The high level work streams (pillars) and underlying priorities of our plan for continuous improvement are set out in the graphic below.

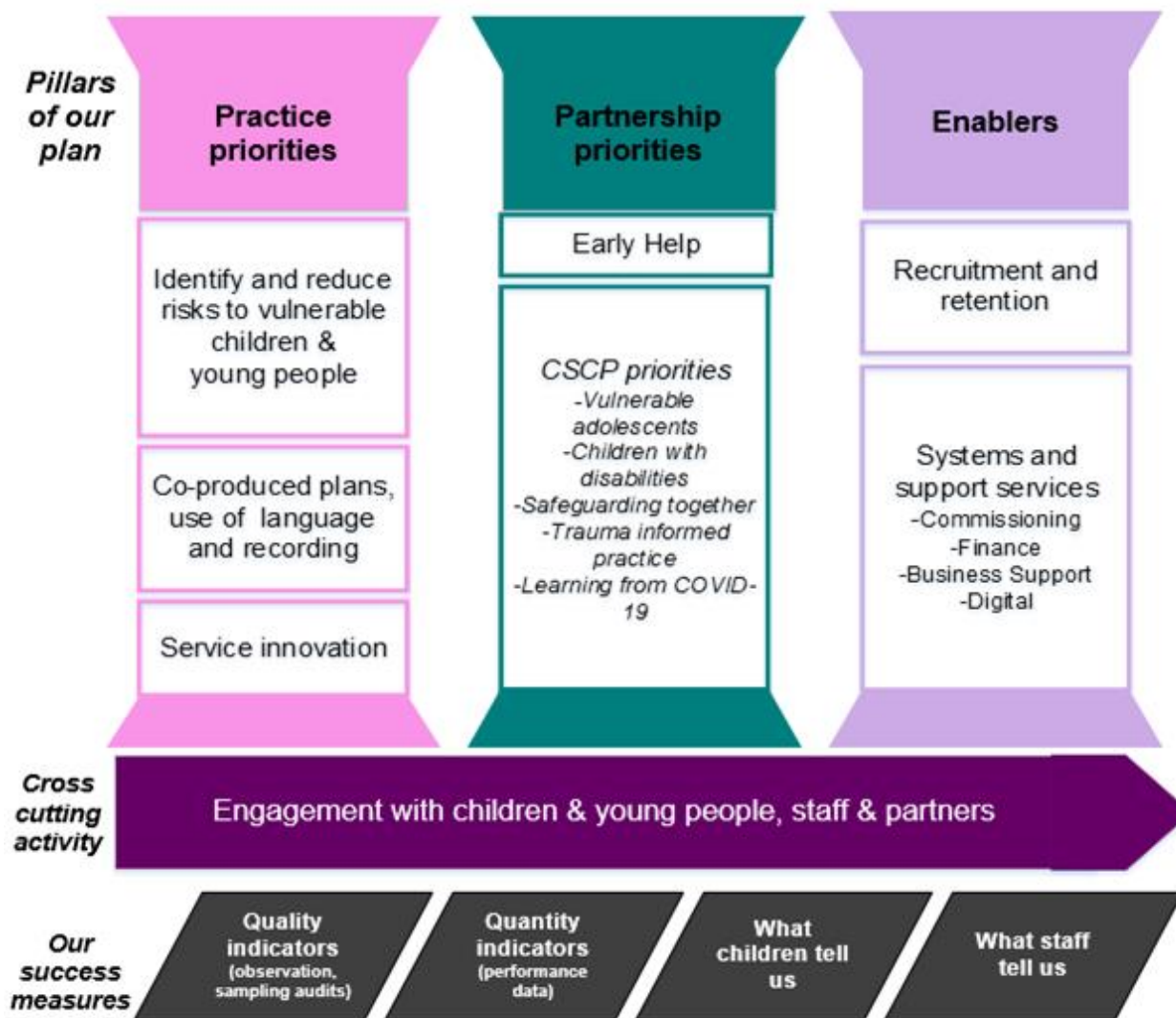


<sup>1</sup> <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/articles/downloads/Corporate%20Plan%202018-22.pdf> (see page 12)

<sup>2</sup> [INSERT FINAL HYPERLINK TO CYPF PLAN](#)

<sup>3</sup> <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50149056>

# CHILDREN'S CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN ON A PAGE 2020-2022





## Practice priorities (lead: Nick Pendry [NP], Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care)

Ref	Priorities and key activity	Delivered through	Lead(s)	By when	Success measures (targets based on benchmarking, impact for children and what good looks like)
1	<p><b>Identify and reduce risks to vulnerable children &amp; young people</b></p> <p><b>1.1 Responses to homeless 16 &amp; 17 year olds</b>            Improve our response to homeless 16 &amp; 17 year olds including assessment of their needs and emergency housing (section 20 and section 17) <i>[Ofsted ILACS recommendation]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Develop and agree a joint protocol/pathway with housing colleagues</li> <li>b) Commission appropriate emergency and longer term accommodation for 16 &amp; 17 year olds</li> <li>c) Create a service user-led housing panel</li> <li>d) Implement new ways of working</li> <li>e) Test the impact of practice through dip sampling/audit activity</li> </ul> <p><b>1.2 Responses to children in care at risk of exploitation or going missing.</b>            Develop and implement a whole service approach to improve the response for children in care at risk of exploitation or going missing. To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Raising awareness across the SWwF and CLA teams to ensure swift identification and compliance with agreed procedures:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• risk assessments are completed as standard where social workers identify exploitation/missing risks</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>✓ SPOC &amp; assessment service plan</p> <p>✓ Adolescent Services plan &amp; service plans for SWwF and SWwCLA</p>	<p>IL</p> <p>HD &amp; RC</p>	<p>30/9/20</p> <p>31/07/20</p>	<p><b>Impact for children and families</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 &amp; 17 year olds at risk of becoming homeless are supported to stay at home safely. Where this can't happen we work with young people to secure a safe home.</li> <li>• Children and young people in care who may be at risk of exploitation benefit from robust risk assessments and action planning to help keep them safe</li> <li>• Children and young people in care who go missing benefit from timely strategy meetings to help keep them safe</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>strategy meetings take place and result in robust safety plans to reduce risk</li> <li>more vulnerable CLA are presented at the complex adolescents panel</li> </ul> <p>b) Work with foster carers to improve missing reporting, raising carers' awareness and curiosity regarding exploitation and missing risks for all children in care (including UASC)</p> <p>c) Development of reporting and tracking mechanisms to help CLA managers maintain oversight of missing CLA and those at risk of exploitation</p> <p>d) Improve life skills work with CLA and care leavers to better equip children and young people to keep themselves safe</p> <p><b>1.3 Responses to care leavers at risk of exploitation and going missing.</b></p> <p>Improve the responses for care leavers who are at risk of exploitation or going missing. To include:</p> <p>a) Work across the CLA management team to design and agree procedures for identifying and responding to care leavers at risk of exploitation and going missing, that build upon work with young people before they leave care and are appropriate to age and risk level (e.g. panel format? Risk assessment as part of pathway planning)</p> <p>b) Develop a robust system to tracking and monitor vulnerable care leavers</p> <p>c) Test the impact of practice through programmed quality assurance activity</p>	<p>✓SWwCLA service plan</p> <p>✓Windows into Practice audit plan</p>	<p>HD</p> <p>SH</p>	<p>30/09/20</p> <p>Bi-monthly cycle</p>	<p><b>Targets by 3/3/22*</b></p> <p><b>95% of missing risk assessment and strategy meetings in timescales</b></p> <p><b>What good looks like</b></p> <p>See page 55 <a href="#">Framework for inspecting local authority children's services</a></p>
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2	<p><b>Coproduced plans, language and recording</b></p> <p><b>Improve the quality of written plans for children in need, children in care and care leavers</b>  <i>[Ofsted ILACS recommendation]</i></p> <p><b>2.1 Raise the quality of Child in Need plans to ensure:</b>  a) Plans are SMART with clear tasks, responsibilities, next steps and timescales  b) More plans are written with children and families, in accessible child and family-friendly language  c) Test the impact of practice through programmed quality assurance activity</p> <p><b>2.2 Raise the quality of plans for children in care and care leavers to ensure:</b>  a) Plans are specific about risks, vulnerabilities and actions that will be taken to reduce risks  b) Plans are specific about health and emotional wellbeing needs and supporting actions  c) More plans are written with young people in language they can understand  d) Test the impact of practice through programmed quality assurance activity</p> <p><b>2.3 Improve the consistency of Life Story Work</b>  Ensure every child in Croydon's care is supported to understand their history and identify through creative life story work</p>	<p>✓ Social Work Academy  Practice Improvement Plan</p> <p>✓ Social Work Academy Practice Improvement Plan</p> <p>✓ Social Work Academy Practice Improvement Plan</p>	<p>NS</p> <p>NS</p> <p>NS</p>	<p>31/03/21</p> <p></p> <p>31/12/20</p>	<p><b>Targets by 3/3/22</b>  Quality assurance activities show majority of planning judged good or better</p> <p><b>Impact for children and families</b>  Children in need and their families benefit from purposeful planning informed by creative direct work which supports more children and young people to remain safely within their families</p> <p>Children and young people co-produce their life stories, supported by skilled practitioners using a range of creative tools</p>
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	<p><b>2.4 Child and family friendly language</b> Ensure all written communication with children and families, including pre-proceedings and PLO letters, is written in accessible child and family-friendly language</p> <p><b>2.5 Recording</b> Work with staff across the service and CDS to improve the ease of recording case work and management oversight</p>	<p>✓ CFS service plan</p>	<p>SH</p> <p>ST</p>		<p>Plans, letters and notes are accessible to children and their families, avoiding jargon and making the contents clear and unambiguous</p> <p><b>What good looks like</b> See para 250 &amp; 251 <a href="#">Framework for inspecting local authority children's services</a></p>
3	<p><b>Service innovation</b></p> <p><b>3.1 Develop and Implement a new approach to contacts and referrals at the front door for children's services</b> a) Develop and implement a revised SPOC where all contacts are responded to through conversations with referrers (Prof. David Thorpe Model) b) Merge the current EDT with the SPOC.</p> <p><b>3.2 Re-design the Assessment Service into a locality-focused 'Supporting Croydon Families' Service</b> a) Collate and analyse data and intelligence on the journey of children and families from the front door through services b) Develop and implement a programme plan to ensure co-dependencies and risks are identified and mitigated where necessary c) Ensure a comprehensive continuous professional development offer is in place to support staff across the service to implement the change</p>	<p>✓ SPOC &amp; Assessment service plan</p> <p>✓ SPOC &amp; Assessment, SWwF service plans</p> <p>✓ Workforce Development service plan</p>	<p>IL</p> <p>IL, RB</p> <p>NS</p>	<p>31/12/20</p> <p>31/03/21</p>	<p><b>Targets by 3/3/21</b> Reduce the number of referrals into CSC by 30%</p> <p><b>Impact for children and families</b> Children and young people benefit from timely and transparent decision making and are supported by practitioners who receive regular reflective supervision.</p> <p><b>What good looks like</b> See para 249, 250 and 251 <a href="#">Framework for inspecting local authority children's services</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support up to 24 women per year</li> <li>• Cost avoidance: prevent at least 5 children coming into care over the project lifetime</li> </ul>

	<p><b>3.3 Plan and implement service innovations including;</b></p> <p>a) The PAUSE project - focused support for women who have had a number of children removed from their care, aiming to break this cycle</p> <p>b) Commission Safe Families, to offer bespoke packages of support delivered through a network of trained local volunteers providing support to families in crisis or in need.</p> <p>c) Safeguarding Together project - Integration of adult specialists alongside children's social workers to take a family safeguarding approach (see partnership action 5)</p> <p>d) Implement the 'windows into practice' quality assurance model bringing together performance and practice insights to continue to grip performance and embed learning</p> <p>e) Improve services to children with disabilities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. a shortbreaks pathway</li> <li>ii. an enhanced family support offer</li> <li>iii. locality based working</li> </ul> <p><b>3.4 Develop a new Clinical Service to support children's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental health (EWMH) needs in Croydon</b></p> <p>a) Develop the Croydon Family Therapy Academy to provide systemic courses at practitioner and supervisor level which are Association for Family Therapy and Systemic Practice (AFT) accredited</p> <p>b) Develop a range of preventative EWMH services at level 2 (early help) that are built around the needs of children, young people and</p>	<p>✓ PAUSE project plan</p> <p>✓ Safe Families Project Plan</p> <p>✓ Safeguarding Together project plan</p> <p>✓ Quality Assurance service plan</p> <p>✓ CWD service plan</p> <p>✓ Clinical Services service plan</p>	<p>NP</p> <p>NP</p> <p>NP</p> <p>SH</p> <p>IL</p> <p>NB</p>	<p></p> <p><b>30/6/20</b></p> <p><b>31/03/21</b></p> <p><b>30/06/20</b></p> <p><b>31/03/21</b></p> <p><b>31/03/21</b></p>	<p>Volunteer support offered to up to 50 families per year</p> <p>Families are offered help when needs and/or concerns are first identified that improves the child's situation and supports sustainable progress.</p> <p>Children and young people who live in households where a parent or carer misuses substances, suffers from mental ill-health or where there is domestic abuse are helped and protected.</p> <p>Management oversight of practice is established, systematic and improves the quality of practice</p> <p>Children with disabilities and their families access tailored support when they need it.</p> <p>The systemic practice model is embedded across the service underpinning high quality front line practice and management oversight.</p> <p>Practitioners are equipped to meet the EWMH needs of children, swiftly drawing on specialist advice and input where needed.</p>
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	<p>their families so they get the right support from the right service at the right time, including children looked after</p> <p>c) Strengthen the EWBMH support available to our young people through the creation of newly funded Lead Family Therapist post in the Leaving Care service</p>				<p><b>What good looks like</b> See para 250, 251, 252 <a href="#">Framework for inspecting local authority children's services</a></p>
4	<p><b>Workforce Development – practice focused</b></p> <p>4.1 Develop and deliver a learning and development offer that supports the continuous improvement plan and is informed by practice improvement priorities identified through quality assurance activities</p> <p>4.2 Create and deliver an exciting, innovative entry and career progression pathway for early help and children's social care, from routes into social work and newly qualified staff through to experienced managers and leaders, growing an embedded learning organisation.</p>	<p>✓ Social Work Academy Practice Improvement Plan</p>	NS	30/06/20	<p>Children and families benefit from well-supported practitioners who have the tools and capacity to provide consistently good services</p> <p>There is effective organisational support for the training and professional development of social workers and managers and the quality of their practice improves the lives of vulnerable children, young people and families</p> <p><b>What good looks like</b> See para 252 in the <a href="#">Framework for inspecting local authority children's services</a></p>

## Partnership priorities (lead: Robert Henderson [RH], Executive Director Children, Families & Education)

Ref	Priorities and key activity	Delivered through	Lead & Owner/s	By when	Success measures
5	<p>4.1 Oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the vulnerable adolescents review</p> <p>5.2 Raise awareness across the partnership around the additional vulnerabilities of children with disabilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Vulnerable Adolescents (VA) Priority Group Action Plan</li> <li>✓ Violence Reduction Programme</li> <li>✓ Safeguarding Children with Disabilities Business Plan</li> </ul>	<p>VA Priority Action Group</p> <p>Safeguarding Children with Disabilities Priority Group</p>	<p>March 2021</p> <p>Nov 2020</p>	<p><b>Targets by 3/3/22</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in local CLA subject to section 20</li> <li>• Reduction in 13-17 year olds becoming looked after</li> <li>• Reduction in average duration in care for 13-17 year olds</li> </ul> <p><b>Impact for children and families</b> More vulnerable adolescents are supported through purposeful safety planning to reduce risks outside the home and remain within their families where possible. Children and young people with additional vulnerabilities due to disability are identified and safeguarded more effectively by knowledgeable and proactive partners.</p> <p><b>What good looks like</b> See para 250 <a href="#">Framework for inspecting local authority children's services</a></p>

6	Oversee implementation of the Safeguarding Together model and co-ordinate work to promote the understanding of a whole family safeguarding approach across the partnership	✓ Safeguarding Together Implementation Plan	CSCP Executive Group	March 2021	<p><b>Impact for children and families</b> Effective direct help with families, focused on achieving sustainable progress for children</p> <p><b>What good looks like</b> See para 250 <a href="#">Framework for inspecting local authority children's services</a></p>
7	Lead work across the partnership to ensure a trauma informed approach underpins actions to better meet the needs of children who are looked after and care leavers	✓ CLA and care leavers health action plan	TBC	March 2021	<p><b>Impact for children and families</b> Systematic and effective consideration of past trauma informs the identification of children and young people's needs and shapes the responses from staff</p> <p><b>What good looks like</b> See para 251 <a href="#">Framework for inspecting local authority children's services</a></p>
8	Co-ordinate and capture the learning from the response to Covid-19 for arrangements to safeguard children and young people, ensuring this is disseminated across re partnership to develop and improve practice	✓ CSCP Business Plan	TBC	December 2020	<p><b>What good looks like</b> See para 252 <a href="#">Framework for inspecting local authority children's services</a></p>

## Enablers (lead: Jacqueline Harris-Baker [JHB], Executive Director, Resources)

Ref	Priorities and key activity	Delivered through	Lead & Owner/s	By when	Success measures
8	<b>Recruit and retain a skilled and stable workforce</b> 8.1 Sustain and build on the programmed recruitment processes, extending the rigorous approach across both agency and permanent recruitment  8.2 Continually refresh the recruitment strategy for Early Help and Children's Social Care drawing on best and innovative practice to make Croydon the employer of choice for south London	✓ Recruitment action plan	KW/SM	Ongoing  Ongoing	<b>Targets</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieve agency rate 25% by March 2021</li> </ul> <b>Impact for children and families</b> Continuity for children and families, allowing practitioners to build relationships of trust to make positive change together with families.  <b>What good looks like</b> See para 252 in the <a href="#">Framework for inspecting local authority children's services</a>
9	<b>Systems and support services which create the conditions for social work to flourish</b> <b>9.1 Commissioning</b> a) Improve placement sufficiency for children in care and accommodation for care leavers <i>(ILACS recommendation)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accommodation Strategy developed including projected future need and demand levels</li> <li>Needs analysis/deep dive into care leavers and CLA needs</li> <li>Improve the Children's Placement Process – to include CWD placements; CDS systems; and finance procedures</li> </ul>	✓ Children's Sufficiency Strategy and Plan	PB/SHo	31/03/21	<b>Targets</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased % CLA placed in borough</li> <li>Improved % CLA placed less than 20 miles from home</li> </ul> <b>Impact for children and families</b> <i>Children looked after are provided with high quality homes that are suited to their needs (e.g. specialist foster carers).</i>  <i>Care leaver impact statement draft:</i> <i>Care leavers have accommodation that best meets their needs and helps them to develop their independence skills safely; receive the right level of emotional support until they are at least 21 and, when necessary, until they are 25</i>

	<p>b) Improve access to and the range of services for care leavers, particularly the range of suitable accommodation and responses to emotional health needs <b>(ILACS recommendation)</b></p> <p>c) Improve Children Looked After Health assessment and review process, including developing a shared dashboard, robust reporting, and improved service quality</p> <p>d) Integrated health and care model – through Joint Strategic Commissioning Plan and Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake a therapies review across health, CWD and SEND service</li> <li>• Analysis of current approach and spend</li> <li>• Suggest better ways of working – vary existing contracts and/or commissioning new service to improve provision and reduce spot purchasing</li> <li>• Develop models of care for integrated service delivery across localities</li> </ul> <p><b>9.2 Workforce Development – one council focus</b></p> <p>a) Identify opportunities to collaborate with the CSCP and adult social care, sharing expertise and developing networks across services.</p> <p>b) Ensure close connectivity to enhance both the corporate and the children's services learning and development offer to staff</p>	<p>✓ Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Partnership Boards</p> <p>✓ Joint Strategic Commissioning Board</p> <p>✓ SEND Strategic Board</p> <p>TBC</p>	<p>MM/PB</p> <p>PB/DD/health designate lead TBC</p> <p>PB/LS</p> <p>GA/NS</p>	<p>31/03/21</p> <p>31/03/21</p> <p>30/09/2</p> <p>31/03/21</p>	<p>Children Looked After receive a timely, coordinated offer</p> <p>Accurate and transparent reporting to the Corporate Parenting Board</p> <p>Integrated Model of Care across localities enabling the delivery of therapy provision across health, education and social care, to meet relevant statutory guidance</p> <p>Children and young people with disabilities have access to quality provision in line with levels of need</p>
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	<p><b>9.3 Finance</b>  a) Provide accurate and timely budget reporting to HoS, Director and DCS  b) Improve support for short and medium term financial and service planning</p> <p><b>9.4 System &amp; Recording</b>  a) Improve the accuracy of operational data through close working between social workers, managers, performance and digital system leads to improve the recording system  b) Target areas to improve users' experience of the case recording system, working closely with practitioners and digital services to make sustained changes  c) maximise opportunities for the efficient and effective use of the case recording system across early help and children's social care, education and adults' services to inform a strategic review of case recording across the Council</p> <p><b>9.5 Digital</b>  a) Ensure that core technology enables the flexible delivery of early help and social care, including devices and connectivity.  b) Improve all online content relating to children and families so that information is easy to find and follow.  c) Improve operational efficiency by digitising processes for both residents and staff.</p>	<p>✓ Children's Finance Service (CFS) Improvement plan</p> <p>✓ CFS Service Plan</p> <p>✓ Children's Digital Development plan</p>	<p>KB</p> <p>ST</p> <p>DB</p>	<p>Success measures to be developed linked to finance recovery plans</p> <p>An environment where good social work can flourish is created and this is evident in the overall quality and impact of social work.</p> <p><b>What good looks like</b>  See para 252 in the <a href="#">Framework for inspecting local authority children's services</a></p> <p><b><i>Draft success measures:</i></b>  <b><i>Feedback from staff, and children and families, through regular surveys and polls, disaggregating feedback from frontline staff and managers</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of outages experienced and number of calls to service desk is reduced. Staff satisfaction with technology is improved.</li> <li>• Website analytics demonstrate users are finding information more quickly, reducing unnecessary contact and demand on the service. Improved feedback from users.</li> </ul>
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	<b>9.6 Payments and processes</b> a) Review the current arrangements for processing payments in children's services, developing options for change b) Establish and lead a cross-service improvement programme to take the agreed option through into implementation	TBC	TBC		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A number of processes are digitally transformed, with demonstrable savings and improved outcomes for residents.</li> </ul>
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# Action leads/owners and other abbreviations

## Action leads/owners

Initials and full name	Role
RH Robert Henderson	Executive Director of Children, Families and Education
NP Nick Pendry	Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care
IL Iain Low	Head of SPOC and Assessments
HD Hannah Doughty	Head of Social Work with Children Looked After and Leaving Care
RC Rodica Corbazan	Deputy Head, Social Work with Children Looked After and Leaving Care
SH Shaun Hanks	Head of Quality Assurance and Safeguarding
CS Clive Seall	Interim Head of Early Help and Youth Engagement
NS Nicki Shaw	Head of Children's Workforce Development
NB Nana Bonsu	Head of Systemic and Clinical Practice
RB Rashida Baig	Head of Social Work with Families
MM Mick McCarthy	Service Manager, Care Leaving Service
DD Derek Dyer	Service Manager, Children Looked After Service
SW Sarah Warman	Director Commissioning and Procurement – London Borough of Croydon Director of Joint Commissioning – NHS Croydon CCG
SM Sue Moorman	Director of Human Resources (HR)
DB Dave Briggs	Head of Digital Operations
ST Simon Townend	Children's Systems Strategic Manager
SHo Stephen Hopkins	Head of Children and Adults Placement and Brokerage
PB Pasquale Brammer	Head of Commissioning and Procurement Children's
GA Grace Addy	Head of Learning and Organisational Development, Human Resources
KB Kate Bingham	Head of Finance, Finance Investment and Risk
NW Neil Williams	Chief Digital Officer
KW Katie Wallace	HR Recruitment and Process Manager

## Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
CYP	Children and young people
CLA	Child(ren) looked after
CSC	Children's social care
HoS	Heads of service
SPOC	Single point of contact
CWD	Children with disabilities (service)
SWwF	Social work with families (service)
SWwCLA	Social work with children looked after (service)
ILACS	Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services
SMART	Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed
CDS	Croydon digital service
CFS	Children and families service
EDT	Emergency duty team
CSCP	Croydon safeguarding children partnership