



# Draft Children's Improvement Plan

October 2017

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## Introduction

The Ofsted inspection of Croydon's services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers took place between 20th June and 13th July 2017. The report was published on 4th September 2017. The inspection judged services to be inadequate; with poor quality social work practice and weak managerial oversight leaving too many children at risk of harm.

This Improvement Plan for Children's Services and the Croydon Safeguarding Children Board has been developed in response to the Ofsted report findings, including the 21 specific recommendations, and in recognition of our ambition to improve our services for vulnerable children. It has also been informed by learning from Serious Case Reviews and engagement with staff, which will continue throughout the plan's implementation.

Our ambition is to deliver good services for our children and young people, however we recognise that 'getting to good' will be a three year journey and require activity from the council and partners outside of this plan. This plan outlines the actions that we will take in the first year to address the weaknesses that were identified during the Ofsted inspection and ensure that children in Croydon are supported and protected. It sets out our milestones, 'what good looks like' and the things that we would expect to hear from children, staff and partners if we are doing a good job.

This plan will be reviewed after 6 months and 12 months to ensure we continue to focus on the right priorities at the right pace, and respond to changing needs in order to deliver good services for our children. The plan set outs high and medium level activity, which will be underpinned by a series of detailed project and action plans.

Prior to the inspection, the council had developed an improvement plan which was addressing the right areas, but without sufficient pace or focus on children's' experiences. A Transitional Action Plan was also put in place immediately after the inspection to resolve the most urgent issues. These plans have now been closed down and ongoing actions brought forward into this single improvement plan.

Successful implementation of this plan will depend on a significant cultural change within Children's Services, the wider council and our partners, with a focus on;

- Creating an open system where challenge is welcomed and views are respected
- Inspiring staff to feel passionate about the work that they do and the difference they make
- Understanding the lived experiences of children and young people
- Listening to staff, children and families
- Robust performance management

## Our plan

The plan has been structured into four work streams; **Practice**, **People and Performance**, **Partnerships** and **Platforms** (colour coded for ease of reference) and 11 priorities which have been aligned to Ofsted's recommendations and the findings set out in the report. These are outlined in the table below. The lived experiences, wishes and feelings of children and young people are central and cut across all priorities in the plan.

WORK STREAM	PRIORITY	OFSTED RECOMMENDATIONS	PAGES
<b>Practice</b>	1. Ensure consistent, high quality social work	Recommendations 5 and 12	8-11
	2. Improve the quality of practice for children who need early help and protection	Recommendations 6, 7, 9 and 11	12-15
	3. Improve outcomes for looked after children, including planning for permanence	Recommendations 13, 14 and 16	16-19
	4. Improve outcomes for care leavers	Recommendations 17, 18, 19	20-22
	5. Protect vulnerable adolescents including those at risk of CSE, children who go missing and those at risk of serious youth violence	Recommendations 3 and 4	23-25
<b>People and Performance</b>	6. Strengthen leadership and governance	Recommendation 20	26-29
	7. Develop a stable and skilled workforce	Recommendation 2	30-33
	8. Strengthen management oversight and ensure robust quality assurance and performance management	Recommendations 1, 8, 10 and 21	34-38
	9. Strengthen strategic commissioning	Recommendation 15	39-41
<b>Partnerships</b>	10. Improve Croydon Safeguarding Children Board (CSCB) and strengthen partnership working	Recommendations 13-17	42-47
<b>Platforms</b>	11. Establish organisational support and fit for purpose systems that enable high quality social work	Recommendation 2	48-49

## Our vision

Our vision has been developed in consultation with our staff and reflects our priorities for 2017-2020. In order to be effective, there must be clear actions which will help us to achieve the vision, and the plan sets out what these are.

### **The Vision:**

*‘All Children and young people in Croydon will be safe, healthy and happy, and will aspire to be the best they can be. The future is theirs.’*

What we will do to achieve this:

- Ensure this vision is for all children, not just those involved with Children’s Services
- Work with our partners to make sure that children, young people and families receive the right help at the right time when they experience difficulties
- Support families to care for their children where safe to do so
- Identify and manage risks to children and young people – and maximise family and community strengths to reduce impact of risk
- Target our resources on those children with the highest levels of need
- Work with children, young people and families, listen to their views, and be clear with them about what we want to achieve
- Give our looked after children and young people the best opportunities to reach independence and support them into successful adulthood



## Our conditions for social work to flourish

Croydon's conditions for social work to flourish, set out below, were developed with senior council officers, and children's social care staff following the Ofsted inspection. These will be a public commitment to our staff and children moving forward and ensure that our plan enables us to put in place the necessary conditions for good social work to flourish in Croydon and to keep children at the heart of everything we do.



## Governance

The Croydon Children's Improvement Board will provide effective oversight of the Children's Improvement Plan and programme in order to ensure delivery of all recommendations outlined in the Ofsted inspection report. This will be chaired by Edwina Grant OBE, and will bring together officers, the Lead Member for Children's Services and other elected members from the council, partners, external support, the LGA, the DfE and the commissioner who will meet on a monthly basis to provide oversight and challenge. In addition, the Board will have representation from front-line staff who will provide feedback on whether the improvement programme is having the desired impact on the ground.

The Board will also receive monthly monitoring reports on the implementation of the improvement plan and its impact on front-line delivery, including the experiences of children and young people, which will be used to track progress and hold sponsors to account for the delivery of the improvement priorities.

There will be oversight from elected members at Cabinet, with progress against the plan reported to Scrutiny and Overview Committee. In addition, Children's Scrutiny Committee will consider and challenge impact in specific areas at each meeting. The revised Corporate Parenting Panel will focus on improving outcomes for our looked after children and care leavers, as set out in this plan.

## Progress RAG ratings

The improvement plan is accompanied by a performance dashboard which will be used to monitor the impact of the plan on frontline practice and outcomes for children and young people. Progress on delivering the actions outlined in the plan will be monitored using the following RAG ratings. The hardest challenge, and our continual focus, will be on ensuring and demonstrating that actions are having a positive impact on the lived experiences of children and young people.

**Complete**   
**On track**   
**At risk**   
**Overdue** 

## Senior Responsible Officers

Each of the 11 priorities will have a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO), who will be held to account on progress and successful delivery by both the Council and the Board. These are outlined in the table below. Each action within the plan will have a Lead Officer who will be held to account on progress and successful delivery by the relevant SRO. These are outlined at the back of the plan on page 50.

WORKSTREAM	PRIORITY	SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OFFICER (SRO)
<b>Practice</b>	1. Ensure consistent, high quality social work	Philip Segurola, Interim Director, Early Help and Children's Social Care (PS)
	2. Improve the quality of practice for children who need early help and protection	Philip Segurola, Interim Director, Early Help and Children's Social Care (PS)
	3. Improve outcomes for looked after children, including planning for permanence	Philip Segurola, Interim Director, Early Help and Children's Social Care (PS)
	4. Improve outcomes for care leavers	Philip Segurola, Interim Director, Early Help and Children's Social Care (PS)
	5. Protect vulnerable adolescents including those at risk of CSE, children who go missing and those at risk of serious youth violence	Philip Segurola, Interim Director, Early Help and Children's Social Care (PS)
<b>People and Performance</b>	6. Strengthen leadership and governance	Barbara Peacock, Executive Director (People-Director of Children's Services) (BP)
	7. Develop a stable and skilled workforce	Barbara Peacock, Executive Director (People-Director of Children's Services) (BP)
	8. Strengthen management oversight and ensure robust quality assurance and performance management	Barbara Peacock, Executive Director (People-Director of Children's Services) (BP)
	9. Strengthen strategic commissioning	Richard Simpson, Executive Director of Resources and s151 Officer (RS)
<b>Partnerships</b>	10. Improve Croydon Safeguarding Children Board (CSCB)	Barbara Peacock, Executive Director (People-Director of Children's Services) (BP)
<b>Platforms</b>	11. Establish organisational support and fit for purpose systems that enable high quality social work	Richard Simpson, Executive Director of Resources and s.151 Officer (RS)

# Practice

## 1. Ensure consistent, high quality social work

Senior Responsible Officer (SRO): Philip Segurola (PS)

### 1. Ensure consistent, high quality social work - Ofsted recommendations and identified issues

**Recommendation 5** – ‘Ensure that all plans for children contain achievable, realistic goals and that timescales and contingency planning are specific, and include sufficient support for children who return home. Ensure that the individual needs of brothers and sisters are identified and met.’

**Recommendation 12.** ‘Improve the quality of assessments to take account of individual children’s needs, including historical information, and ensure that all information is rigorously analysed and updated when circumstances for children change.’

- Clear social work practice model, standards and tools
- Quality of assessments
- Quality of plans
- Support for children who return home

No.	Issue [Ofsted Ref]	Actions	Lead	Partner involvement	By when	Progress RAG
<b>Social work practice model, standards and tools</b>						
1.1	Model, standards and tools [Para 32, 40 & 110]	Develop and agree an overarching social work practice model in collaboration with staff.	PS	CSCB	Dec 17	
1.2	Model, standards and tools	Revise social work practice standards, aligned to the new practice model, to ensure all social workers and managers are clear about what is expected of them.	PS	CSCB	Apr 18	



	[Para 32, 40 110]					
1.3	Model, standards and tools [Para 32 & 40, 110]	Develop a clear set of social work practice tools, templates and exemplars aligned to the social work practice model and revised standards. To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment tools (e.g. graded care profile)</li> <li>• Planning tools</li> <li>• Best practice exemplars (anonymised)</li> <li>• Direct work tools</li> <li>• Child Permanence Reports</li> <li>• Supervision tools</li> </ul>	PS	CSCB	Apr 18	
1.4	Model, standards and tools [Para 32, 51 & 65]	Review and update policies and procedures, and make changes to CRS to conform to the new practice model and standards and launch with staff.  Establish a single location for materials around the model, standards and associated tools to be accessed.	PS	CSCB	Apr 18	
1.5	Model, standards and tools [Para 32 & 40]	Deliver a comprehensive training programme and communication events to launch and roll out the new social work practice model, standards and tools to all staff (see action 7.8).	JE	CSCB	Apr 18	
1.6	Model, standards and tools [Para 32 & 40]	Work with HR colleagues to integrate the practice model, standards and tools in induction, recruitment and appraisal procedures.	PS	N/A	Apr 18	
<b>Assessments</b>						
1.7	Assessments [Rec 12, Para 22, 31, 66]	Work with L&D to ensure that core skills training programme (see action 7.7) covers assessment skills, including specialist risk assessments.  Monitor impact of training through staff feedback, case audits and performance indicators.	PS	CSCB	Jan 17	
1.8	Assessments [Rec 12, Para 59]	Produce guidance on all elements of pre-birth assessment and intervention to promote early permanency.  Review and update procedures on pre-birth assessment and intervention to promote early permanency.	PS	Health Legal Courts Cafcass	Dec 17  Mar 18	

Planning						
1.9	Plans [Rec 5 Para 33, 66]	Work with L&D to ensure that initial core skills training programme (see action 7.7) covers planning skills, including reviewing plans.  Monitor impact of training through staff feedback, case audits and performance indicators.	PS	N/A	Jan 18	
1.10	Plans [Rec 5] Para 33, 66]	Review permanency pathways and terms of reference of permanency panel to ensure all permanency plans are progressed without delay and; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanency planning meetings (PPMs) are held within timescales</li> <li>• All under 5's have a PPM within 10 days of becoming looked after</li> <li>• A permanency plan for all children is in place by the second PPM</li> </ul> Implement a system for monitoring the time it takes from a permanence option being identified for a child, and that placement being formally recognised as a permanent placement (e.g. Long term fostering at the fostering panel) so that children understand who their permanent family will be at the earliest possible time.	PS	N/A	Jan 18	
Support for children who return home						
1.11	Support for children who return home [Para 33]	Update and re-issue guidance on ending Section 20, to include a formal review of the plan to ensure sufficient support is in place for the child and family. To include a formal review.	PS	N/A	Nov 17	
What good looks like						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessments are timely, proportionate to risk, informed by research and historical context, and address the needs and experiences of each child</li> <li>• Assessments result in a direct offer of help to address any identified needs</li> <li>• Assessments and plans are dynamic and change in the light of emerging issues and risks</li> <li>• Children in need have a plan setting out the help that is offered</li> <li>• Children who need protection are subject to a child protection plan that identifies the work that will be offered to help the family and the necessary changes to be achieved within appropriate timescales for the child or young person</li> <li>• Plans address all the identified needs from assessments. They are clear and easily understood. Families understand what is expected of them, and others, and by when and what will happen if they fail to make the expected progress.</li> <li>• Decisive action is taken when necessary to avoid drift and delay and to ensure that children are appropriately supported and protected</li> <li>• Children's care plans address the individual needs and experiences of each child, including the need for timely permanence</li> </ul>						
Children say:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My social worker understands what it is like to be me/my experiences</li> </ul>						

- My social worker asks me what I want and how I feel about things
- I understand why I have a plan and what we are working towards
- My plan has made a difference to my life

**Staff say:**

- I know exactly what is expected of me
- I understand what Croydon's social work practice model is and have received good training
- I have the tools and training to conduct a thorough assessment
- I have the tools and training to implement an effective plan
- I know why good assessment and planning is important for a child

**Partners say:**

- I understand Croydon's practice model
- I have contributed to assessments of need and felt my thoughts were reflected
- Plans are clear, and I understand my role in implementing them

*[Note to reader: please note that a 'measuring impact' section will be included after each priority which will set out the qualitative and quantitative measures that we will use to assess how we are doing, and the impact our actions are having on children and young people]*

# Practice

## 2. Improve the quality of practice for children who need early help and protection

Senior Responsible Officer (SRO): Philip Segurola (PS)

### 2. Improve the quality of practice for children who need early help and protection - Ofsted recommendations and identified issues

**Recommendation 6.** *‘Ensure that thresholds are rigorously applied at all levels, including care thresholds and the timely and proportionate use of the pre-proceedings phase of the PLO, so that children who cannot live with their parents find permanent alternative homes as quickly as possible.’*

**Recommendation 7.** *‘Ensure that strategy discussions include information gathered from all partners, and result in clear planning and recording of actions and the rationale for decisions.’*

**Recommendation 9.** *‘Ensure that there is routine and comprehensive oversight of all decisions and actions relating to children who are subject to pre-proceedings or court proceedings, to eliminate all avoidable delay in deciding permanent arrangements for children.’*

**Recommendation 11.** *‘Strengthen the provision of early help support for children and families and ensure that partner agencies have a shared understanding of the early help strategy and associated thresholds.’*

- *Understanding and application of thresholds across agencies*
- *Strategy discussions*
- *Use of the pre-proceeding phase of the PLO and improved court work*
- *Planning for permanency, including oversight*
- *Early help services*
- *Children with disabilities*

No.	Issue [Ofsted Ref]	Actions	Lead	Partner involvement	By when	Progress RAG
<b>Early help and the front door</b>						
2.1	Early help services [Para 27]	<p>Review the Early Help screening and assessment process and the MASH interface and make necessary changes to ensure that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Triage decisions are made promptly and children do not wait for social care assessments when needed</li> <li>• Referral processes are streamlined so that there is one front door with multi-agency input and responses</li> <li>• The quality of referrals improves so that all available information is collected early</li> </ul> <p>Agree mechanisms for auditing cases on threshold boundaries, as part of the quality assurance framework, to ensure consistency of practice.</p> <p>Carry out a review of the single front door after three months of operation.</p>	IL	CSCB, Executive, CCG (see health action plan)	<p>Review Jan 18</p> <p>Implement Apr 18</p>	
2.2	Early help services [Rec 11, Para 26]	<p>Engage widely with all partners including schools, health services and community sector as part of the refresh of the Early Help Strategy to develop a cohesive all-age Early Help offer. To include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defining Early Help</li> <li>• Scoping what is available</li> <li>• Designing a clear pathway for all professionals</li> </ul> <p>Publish the Early Help Strategy, distribute and promote the strategy and Pathway Guidance across a wide range of partners.</p>	IL	CSCB Education CCG Police Voluntary sector (see health action plan)	<p>Dec 17</p> <p>Mar 18</p>	
2.3	Thresholds [Rec 6]	Support the CSCB to promote a shared understanding of thresholds across all agencies, including clarity around Early Help and MASH. (See action 10.14)	BP/DS	CSCB Executive Education Health Police (see health action plan)	Jul 18	



Children in need of help and protection						
2.4	Strategy discussions [Rec 7]	Work with police, health and education partners to agree protocols for attendance at strategy meetings and seek agreement through CSCB.  Monitor attendance and report to the CSCB as part of regular data set.	MK	CSCB CCG Police Education (see health action plan)	Protocols reviewed Dec 17  Monitoring reports Apr 18	
2.5	Thresholds [Rec 6]  PLO and court work [Rec 6, Para 47, 48, 49]	Test application of internal thresholds, including use of Section 47 and the Public Law Outline (PLO) through audit and supervision as part of revised quality assurance framework.	PS	Courts Cafcass	From Jan 18	
2.6	PLO and court work [Rec 6, Para 47, 48, 49]	Develop targeted training and mentoring of staff to improve the quality and timeliness of court assessments and reports, and presentation of evidence in court so that children are not subject to unnecessary delays.	MK	Courts Cafcass	From Nov 17	
Children with disabilities <i>[Please note that all practice improvement actions apply to all children, including those with disabilities]</i>						
2.7	Children with disabilities [Para 34]	Ensure that professionals working with children with disabilities (CWD) access the core skills training programme so that they have the skills and knowledge to identify and address safeguarding concerns (see action 7.7)	JE	N/A	Jan 18	
2.8	Children with disabilities [Para 34]	Develop clear criteria for access to service for children with disabilities, consult with parents and partners and publish.	CB	Parents Health Education Voluntary sector	Mar 18	
2.9	Children with disabilities [Para 34]	Ensure that CWD teams feel part of the wider children's services through; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint management meetings</li> <li>Representation on Staff Reference Group and Practice Development group</li> </ul>	BP	N/A	From Nov 17	
2.10	Children with disabilities [Para 34]	Strengthen oversight of the quality of social work for children with disabilities through representation at CSMT and performance meetings.	CB	N/A	Dec 17	

### What good looks like

- The interface between early help and statutory work is clearly differentiated and families and practitioners know what is available to support them
- Children, young people and families are offered help promptly when needs and/or concerns are first identified
- Thresholds are well understood and rigorously applied by professional and partners in work with all children
- Decisions that children should be in care are based on clear, effective, comprehensive and risk-based assessments, involving where appropriate, and other professionals working with the family
- Disabled children and their families receive effective, proportionate and timely interventions which improve their lives

### Children say:

- My worries are being listened to
- I am being helped so that things get better
- My social worker who knows what is happening for me

### Staff say:

- I understand what Early Help is and how it supports my work
- I understand what the PLO is and why it is important for children
- I am more confident in preparing documents for court and presenting evidence
- I am confident in my ability to communicate with children with disabilities

### Partners say:

- I understand what Early Help means and my role in delivering the Early Help Strategy
- I understand thresholds and know when to make a referral
- I am confident that strategy meetings result in decisions informed by all relevant partners

# Practice

## 3. Improve outcomes for looked after children, including planning for permanence

Senior Responsible Officer (SRO): Philip Segurola (PS)

### 3. Improve outcomes for looked after children, including planning for permanence - Ofsted recommendations and identified issues

**Recommendation 13.** *‘Ensure that the fostering service appropriately supports foster carers, and that the work of this service meets all relevant regulations.’*

**Recommendation 14.** *‘Improve permanence planning across the wider service to ensure that the planning and timeliness of adoption improve for all children. Ensure that there is focused family-finding activity for children with adoption plans, to minimise delays.’*

**Recommendation 16.** *‘Ensure that appropriate assessments identify children living in private fostering arrangements.’*

- *Improve the quality and consistency of practice for looked after children*
- *Support for foster carers*
- *Compliance with fostering regulations*
- *Planning for permanence, including adoption plans*
- *Private fostering arrangements*

No.	Issue [Ofsted Ref]	Actions	Lead	Partner involvement	By when	Progress RAG
<b>Looked after children</b>						
3.1	Planning for permanence [Rec 14]	Issue guidance about taking cases to fostering panel and monitor the timeliness of agreements for long term fostering, so that children understand who their permanent family will be at the earliest possible time.	WT	Fostering panel chair	Dec 17	

3.2	Quality and consistency [Para 65]	Manage and oversee notification process for initial health assessments within 3 working days of children becoming looked after.  Continue to seek assurance from the CCG of long term commitment to commission sufficient capacity to meet estimated future demand for initial and review health assessment for looked after children.	WT	CCG (see health action plan)	Jan 18	
3.3	Quality and consistency [Para 60]	With the introduction of e-PEPs, work with the virtual school to refresh and reissue guidance on developing PEPs. Provide training and support to ensure that staff understand the purpose and content of PEP's.	DB		Nov 17	
3.4	Quality and consistency [Para 60, 61]	Audit PEPs on a bi-monthly basis to ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plans are increasingly SMART</li> <li>Plans are increasingly child-led</li> </ul>	DB		From Nov 17	
3.5	Therapeutic support [Para 65]	Identify children waiting for therapeutic support and work with the CCG to put in place resources to meet the needs of these children.	WT	CCG	Apr 18	
3.6	Children in Care Council [Para 107]	Launch the Children in Care Council and develop consultation mechanisms with representative groups of Children and Young People to ensure their views are reflected in our service development and the lived experience of the child is known and understood.	DB	Education	Mar 18	
<b>Fostering</b>						
3.7	Compliance [Rec 13]	Implement the fostering service action plan and ensure that all the national minimum standards are being met.  Schedule quarterly progress reports on fostering service to be presented to CSMT	WT	LAC CAMHS	Apr 18  Jan 18	
3.8	Support for foster carers [Rec 13, Para 59]	Engage in house foster carers to monitor progress on the fostering service improvement action plan. Work with foster carers to better understand the support that they need and improve the service.	WT		Jan 18	
3.9	Support for foster carers [Rec 13, Para 59]	Conduct an annual foster carer survey as part of the quality assurance framework.  Ensure that feedback from foster carers, including complaints, is monitored, responded to appropriately and is used to drive service improvements.	WT		Mar 18  Jun 18	

3.10	Private fostering [Rec 16]	Awareness sessions for social workers on private fostering to improvement understanding across the service.  Quality of private fostering assessments to be tested as part of the quality assurance framework, including an annual themed audit.	MK		Jan 18	
3.11	Planning for permanence [Rec 14]	Issue guidance about the functions and processes to match and agree long term placements, to prevent unnecessary delays to permanence. Launch across all service areas.	WT		Dec 17	
<b>Adoption</b>						
3.12	Planning for permanence [Rec 14]	Ensure that Adoption staff are represented at Legal Planning Meetings, so that adoption is considered as an option for children, where suitable, at the earliest possible time.	WT		Nov 17	
3.13	Planning for permanence [Rec 14]	Awareness sessions for social workers on adoption to improvement understanding across the service.	WT		From Jan 18	
3.14	Planning for permanence [Rec 14]	Ensure the core skills training covers good practice around adoption including writing Child Permanence Reports (CPRs) (see action 7.7) and collate good examples of CPRs to feed into the templates and tools work (see action 1.3)	JE		Jan 18	
3.15	Planning for permanence [Rec 14]	Implement administrative support to enable the adoption service to meet statutory requirements and increase access to the adoption support fund.	WT		Jan 18	
3.16	Planning for permanence [Rec 14]	Strengthen post-adoption support to ensure a joined up approach across the council and partners to meet the needs of children and young people and support adoptive parents	WT	Education Health CAMHS	Mar 18	
3.17	Planning for permanence [Rec 14]	Establish a process to track children identified as potentially suitable for adoption to avoid delay.	WT		Jan 18	
3.18	Planning for permanence [Rec 14]	Review current family finding practices, and identify areas for improvement.	WT		Mar 18	
3.19	Planning for permanence [Rec 14]	Ensure readiness for participation in regionalisation of adoption services.	WT		Jul 18	
<b>What good looks like</b>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permanency achieved in child's timeframe (appropriate to age)</li> </ul>						



- Fewer permanency breakdowns (adoptions, special guardianship orders and long term foster care)
- Looked After Children have positive relationships with professionals and carers
- Looked After Children feel safe and receive help to reduce the risk of harm or actual harm, including from going missing, being sexually exploited offending and misusing drugs or alcohol
- Looked After Children are in good physical and mental health, or are being helped to improve their health
- Looked After Children make good educational progress at school (or other provision) and have access to a range of social, educational and recreational opportunities

#### **Children say:**

- I understand why I am in care, and the things that have happened to me
- My carers are like a family to me
- I know where my forever home is going to be

#### **Staff say:**

- I understand the importance of early permanency planning and the impact that this can have on children
- I have a strong relationships with my Looked After Children and am proud to see them succeed in life
- I am kept informed of what is discussed at the Children in Care Council and can see that it is starting to have an impact on what we do

#### **Partners say:**

- Croydon Council is a good corporate parent
- Croydon Council takes the safety of looked after children seriously
- Achieving a permanent family for looked after children is a priority for Croydon Council

# Practice

## 4. Improve outcomes for care leavers

Senior Responsible Officer (SRO): Philip Segurola (PS)

### 4. Improve outcomes for care leavers - Ofsted recommendations and identified issues

**Recommendation 17.** *Ensure timely pathway planning and ensure that plans are specific, accurate and detailed, and include contingency planning, to support good outcomes for all care leavers.*

**Recommendation 18.** *Ensure that staying-put arrangements are promoted to all care leavers and foster carers, so that care leavers who want to stay with their former foster carers can benefit from greater permanency and support as they move towards independent adulthood.*

**Recommendation 19.** *Ensure that young people move on to independent accommodation only when it is the right time for them to do so. Improve the help/assistance provided during their transition to independent living through more consistently good preparation and support. This should include accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date information about young people's rights and entitlements.*

- *Pathway planning and preparation for adulthood*
- *'Staying Put' arrangements*
- *Care leaver accommodation and transition to independent living*
- *Care leavers rights and entitlements*

No.	Issue [Ofsted Ref]	Actions	Lead	Partner involvement	By when	Progress RAG
4.1	Pathway Planning [Rec 17, Para 82]	Review the structure of the pathway plan and build into CRS to be triggered at the final review prior to young person's 16 <sup>th</sup> birthday, so that young people are supported to move to independence at a time that suits them.	WT	N/A	Jan 18	

4.2	Preparation for adulthood [Rec 19, Para 84]	Engage children in care and care leavers in a programme of work to find out what things they would like to support them to live independently.	WT	N/A	Sep 18	
4.3	Preparation for adulthood [Rec 19, Para 84] Rights and entitlements [Rec 19, Para 88]	Provide training, support, guidance and challenge to personal advisers to enhance their skills, ability and knowledge to properly prepare care leavers for independence and ensure they can access entitlements.	JE	N/A	Jan 18	
4.4	Pathway Planning [Rec 17, Para 82]	Put in place a formal handover between social workers and personal advisors, at the point of transition to the leaving care service, to include a joint meeting with the young person.	WT	N/A	Jan 18	
4.5	Staying Put [Rec 18, Para 85]	Work with the fostering service to develop training, support and guidance to foster carers, social workers and other professionals about staying put arrangements and monitor through supervision how many care leavers want to take up this option.	WT	Foster carers	Mar 18	
4.6	Preparation for adulthood [Rec 19, Para 84]	Issue guidance and revise procedures to ensure that all care leavers who are pregnant, or have children under 4, have had an assessment of their needs to ensure that they and their children are adequately supported.	WT	Health	Jan 18	
4.7	Preparation for adulthood [Rec 19, Para 84]	Implement the provision of the Children social work act for care leavers, including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A published 'local offer' to care leavers</li> <li>Support from a Personal Adviser to all care leavers to age 25</li> </ul> (see action 6.9)	WT	N/A	Apr 18	

#### What good looks like

- Care leavers actively contribute to their pathway plans at an early stage so that they know what is going to happen in the future
- Care leavers have positive relationships with professionals and carers who are committed to protecting them and promoting their welfare
- Care leavers feel safe and receive help to reduce the risk of harm or actual harm, including from going missing, being sexually exploited, offending, and misusing drugs or alcohol
- Care leavers are in good physical and mental health, or are being helped to improve their health
- Care leavers' good educational progress at college (or other training provision) and have access to a range of social, educational and recreational opportunities

- Care leavers have access to good quality accommodation and employment opportunities which support them to gain independence and fulfil their aspirations

#### Young people say:

- I played a big part in producing my pathway plan, I knew what was going to happen to me as I prepared to leave care and I influenced the decisions about where I was going to live and study/work
- I know what support I am going to get, and my social worker expects me to do well in school and in my adult life
- I have enjoyed being part of the Children in Care Council and I feel like it is making a difference for me and others

#### Staff say:

- I understand the importance of good pathway planning for care leavers so that they get the right help and support when leaving care
- I have high aspirations for the young people with whom I work and am able to work with them to help them achieve success in life
- I have good relationships with the young people that I support and am proud to see them succeed in life

#### Partners say

- Croydon's care leavers are seen as valued citizens of Croydon
- Care leavers are well supported by Croydon Council
- Care leavers are empowered and supported to achieve in education

# Practice

## 5. Protect vulnerable adolescents, including those at risk of CSE, children who go missing and those at risk of serious youth violence

Senior Responsible Officer (SRO): Philip Segurola (PS)

### 5. Protect vulnerable adolescents, including those at risk of CSE, children who go missing and those at risk of serious youth violence - Ofsted recommendations and identified issues

**Recommendation 3** 'Ensure that there is appropriate and timely action with regard to understanding and reducing risk to all children, especially those at risk of sexual exploitation and those who go missing from home or care. Ensure that social workers have the necessary skills and knowledge to help children at risk of sexual exploitation.'

**Recommendation 4.** 'Ensure that children missing from home or care have every opportunity to speak to an independent person about the reasons they go missing so that appropriate action can be taken to effectively support them, and reduce risk.'

- Response to CSE and missing from home or care
- Return to Home Interviews (RHIs)
- Practice standards for social workers, including training

No.	Issue [Ofsted Ref]	Actions	Lead	Partner involvement	By when	Progress RAG
<b>Children and young people that go missing</b>						
5.1	Missing [Rec 4]	Review the systems and processes for undertaking return home interviews when children go missing from home, and identify and implement improvements.	PS	CSCB, Police, NSPCC, Safer London	Dec 17	
5.2	Missing [Rec 4]	Incorporate responses to missing children into the social work practice standards and create visual tools to help social workers to understand and follow procedures. Launch with staff and partners.	PS	CSCB, Police NSPCC, Safer London	Apr 17	



5.3	Missing [Rec 4]	Offer a return home interview to all children missing from home or care and ensure that findings are clearly recorded on case files.	PS	Police, NSPCC, Safer London	Dec 17	
5.4	Missing [Rec 4]	Take appropriate actions to support children and young people and prevent them going missing	PS	Police	Ongoing / test impact in March 18	
5.5	Missing [Rec 4]	Track completion of Return Home Interviews, ensuring all children and young people are offered the appropriate support.	HD	CSCB Police, NSPCC, Safer London	Dec 17	
5.6	Missing [Rec 4]	Ensure all missing children's data is recorded, collated and analysed to understand and oversee the most vulnerable cohort of young people and use this information to inform service development and what actions should be taken by the council and partners to try and prevent incidents re-occurring.	HD	CSCB Police,	Dec 17	
<b>Children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation</b>						
5.7	CSE [Para 40]	Incorporate responses to CSE into the social work practice standards.	PS	CSCB	Apr 18	
5.8	CSE [Para 40]	Ensure the initial core skills and social work practice model training supports practitioners to understand the potential vulnerabilities of adolescents and young people, including those vulnerable to sexual exploitation, and identify and address the risks, and de-escalate situations.	PS	CSCB	Apr 18	
5.9	CSE [Para 40]	Introduce and promote the use of tools and models for assessing risk and creating safety plans for adolescents, including those at risk from sexual exploitation. Test application through the Quality Assurance Framework	PS	CSCB	Mar 18	
<b>Children at risk of serious youth violence</b>						
5.10	Missing [Rec 4]  CSE [Para 40]	Work with youth offending service (YOS) colleagues and the police to understand links between CSE, missing and serious youth violence in order to better protect vulnerable young people.  Identify young people known to be at risk of serious youth violence and work with YOS and the police to take action reduce risks.  Support YOS to deliver the serious youth violence action plan.	BP	Police LSP Community Safety Partnership	Tbc	

5.11	SCR learning	Ensure learning from thematic vulnerable adolescents SCR is disseminated and embedded to reduce risks to children.	DS	CSCB	Tbc	
<b>What good looks like</b>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social workers recognise the factors that can make adolescents more vulnerable and tailor their interventions appropriately, including children at risk of radicalisation or exploitation or gangs, children who go missing and children at risk of sexual exploitation</li> <li>• The CSE tool is being used effectively to help staff to assess the risks for young people</li> <li>• Young people are enabled to reduce their levels of risk with support from staff</li> <li>• Social workers and other professionals build lasting, open relationships with vulnerable young people that allow young people to make better life choices and improve their outcomes</li> </ul>						
<b>Children say:</b>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People heard me and helped me</li> <li>• Social workers understand my history and what motivates me</li> <li>• I was supported to stop putting myself in risky situations and I can now see the harm this did to me.</li> </ul>						
<b>Staff say:</b>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The training I have had and the introduction of the CSE tool has helped me to make better assessments of risk when it is thought that young people might be placing themselves in risky situations.</li> <li>• I understand why young people engage in risky behaviour and I have the skills and support to allow me to reduce it.</li> <li>• We now work much more closely with partners when we think children and young people are at risk of CSE.</li> </ul>						
<b>Partners say:</b>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I understand my role in identifying risk and supporting vulnerable adolescents</li> <li>• I understand and follow the agreed multi agency procedures to support vulnerable adolescents which are used consistently across the Partnership</li> <li>• I am confident that training and available tools improve practice in this area</li> </ul>						

# People and performance

## 6. Strengthen leadership and governance

Senior Responsible Officer (SRO): Barbara Peacock (BP)

### 6. Strengthen leadership and governance - Ofsted recommendations and identified issues

**Recommendation 20.** *'Ensure that elected members, as corporate parents, prioritise and focus on improving all areas of poor practice for children looked after and care leavers.'*

- Clear line of sight from senior leaders to frontline practice
- Clear vision and strategy, with appropriate prioritisation of action
- Involving children and young people and understanding their lived experiences, wishes and feelings
- A more streamlined structure which minimises transition points and offers children and young people better continuity of relationships
- Stronger corporate and partnership governance arrangements, including the relationship with the judiciary
- Stronger corporate parenting arrangements
- Improved scrutiny and oversight, including improving evidence of accountability and challenge

No.	Issue [Ofsted Ref]	Actions	Lead	Partner involvement	By when	Progress RAG
6.1	Clear line of sight [Para 91]	Reduce the span of control of the Executive Director People & Director of Children's Social Care to ensure the DCS can fully discharge their statutory responsibilities and has a clear line of sight around the quality and effectiveness of frontline practice,	JN	N/A	Interim arrangements 2 Oct 17	
6.2	Clear line of sight [Para 91]	Establish protocol which sets out how the DCS and lead member will have a clear line of sight to frontline practice.	BP	N/A	Nov 17	
6.3	Clear line of sight [Para 91]	Embed regular staff forums and informal engagement channels (as part of a broader culture change exercise) to ensure the organisation learns from staff, feedback informs practice improvements and that staff feel valued and listened to	BP	N/A	From Oct 17	

		<p>Actions resulting from this are clear, detailed and implemented within timescales. Any immediate concerns of staff are addressed, documented and followed up to ascertain if things have improved.</p> <p>Ensure staff receive regular communications on a 'You said, we did' basis.</p>				
6.4	Streamlined structure [Exec summary, Para 65]	Implement robust transfer processes which put children at the heart of decision making, support continuity of relationships with the adults responsible for their care and ensure that any impacts for children are understood and minimised.	PS	N/A	Dec 17	
6.5	Partnership governance [Para 95]	<p>Strengthen governance arrangements between key strategic bodies so that partners, senior leaders and elected members can demonstrate how they hold each other to account for the quality of practice and services to children and understood their respective roles in keeping children safe.</p> <p>Written protocols between formal partnerships and partner agencies will be drawn up and agreed.</p>	JE	LSP CSCB Health Police Health & Wellbeing board Community Safety Partnership Safeguarding Adults Board	Dec 17	
6.6	Scrutiny [Para 94]	<p>Undertake a review of Elected Members' training needs and their knowledge of Children's Services. To include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Member induction programmes including for May 2018 election</li> <li>• LGA training for scrutiny members</li> <li>• Training programme which responds to emerging needs</li> <li>• A monthly series of open sessions for elected members to meet social workers and understand a child's journey through the system</li> </ul>	JHB	LGA Democratic services	<p>Jun 18</p> <p>Nov 17. Jan 18. Nov 17</p>	
6.7	Scrutiny [Para 94]	<p>Strengthen how we record, circulate and follow up on action agreed at CYP scrutiny and corporate parenting panel. To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action sheets produced and circulated within 2 working days</li> <li>• Formal minutes produced and circulated in draft within 10 working days</li> </ul>	JHB	Democratic services	Nov 17	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A discussion around the question: 'What difference has this meeting made to Croydon's Children' as a standing agenda item</li> </ul>				
6.8	Corporate parenting [Rec. 20]	Review the current Corporate Parenting Panel, including the terms of reference, membership, and work programme and how it is held to account to ensure stronger challenge and focus on key practice areas.	BP	LGA	Dec 17	
6.9	Corporate parenting [Rec. 20]	Implement the provision of the Children social work act for care leavers, including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embed the seven corporate parenting principles</li> <li>A published 'local offer' to care leavers</li> <li>Support from a Personal Adviser to all care leavers to age 25</li> </ul>	WT	Health Education	Apr 18	
6.10	Relationship with the judiciary [Para 49 & 101]	Hold quarterly meetings with Children's Leadership team and the judiciary and agree an action plan with specific measurable targets.	PS	Cafcass Judiciary	From Oct 17	
6.11	Involving children and young people [Para 107]	Implement the Youth Engagement Strategy to be presented to Cabinet in October, setting out the Council's vision for children and young people in the Borough and how they will be involved and heard through all service delivery.  Develop feedback mechanism so that children and young people can see how they have been heard and what changes will be made as a result, including making Croydon a more child friendly community.	DB	Education, Community, Voluntary sector Business, LSP, UNICEF,	From Oct 17	
6.12	Involving children and young people [Para 107]	Explore creative ways in which to encourage and increase children's participation at reviews and conferences, which will include use of advocacy and use of technology.	TS	N/A	Apr 18	

#### What good looks like

- There are clear lines of accountability and governance with a clear distinction between political, strategic and operational roles
- Leaders, including Elected Members and managers, have a comprehensive and current knowledge of what is happening at the 'front line' and how well children and young people are helped, cared for and protected
- Elected Members are strong and committed corporate parents, challenging partners and poor practice, when necessary, to ensure that children and young people have every opportunity to succeed

#### Children say:

- I receive the help I need without having to ask too many people
- I know there is a children in care council and can join in
- I feel like my voice is heard in meetings about me



**Staff say:**

- Senior managers (e.g. Heads of Service, Director and Executive Director) are more visible and accessible
- Senior managers have a better understanding of what it is like to be a social worker in Croydon
- I feel like senior managers listen to my opinions and I can influence change

**Partners say:**

- I understand the roles and responsibilities of the key strategic partnerships
- I know how I can make a contribution
- I can see that practice issues are being addressed

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# People and performance

## 7. Develop a stable and skilled workforce

Senior Responsible Officer (SRO): Barbara Peacock (BP)

### 7. Develop a stable and skilled workforce - Ofsted recommendations and identified issues

**Recommendation 2** – ‘Establish a stable workforce through purposeful recruitment and retention activity that includes targeted training for frontline staff and managers so that they have the skills and knowledge to better protect and care for children. Take steps to ensure that the workloads of social workers are manageable, and that they have sufficient time to complete essential work.’

- Stable workforce and more permanent staff
- Skilled workforce with effective induction, training and support
- Manageable caseloads
- Child centred and proud to work for Croydon

No.	Issue [Ofsted Ref]	Actions	Lead	Partner involvement	By when	Progress RAG
<b>Recruitment and retention</b>						
7.1	Manageable caseloads [Rec 2, Para 23]	Provide a regular, up to date, suite of workforce and caseload data and analysis to inform workforce and caseload planning, and a tracker to measure impact and progress.  This analysis will identify individuals and teams with high caseloads.	SM	N/A	Nov 17	
7.2	Manageable caseloads [Rec 2, Para 23]	Take immediate action, where necessary, to reduce excessive caseloads, and undertake an exercise to understand current caseloads across to service.  Model optimum staffing requirements and team sizes.	BP	N/A	Nov 17  Jan 18	
7.3	Stable & permanent workforce	Create a Workforce Strategy with timely and measurable targets that reflects the ambition for children's services and align this with a clear employee value proposition for working for Croydon, including;	SM	N/A	Dec 17	

	[Rec 2, Para 112]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attraction</li> <li>• Value/recognition</li> <li>• Retention</li> <li>• Reward/benefits</li> <li>• Career development</li> <li>• The professional capabilities framework with a view to meeting the new registration requirement</li> </ul>				
7.4	Stable & permanent workforce [Rec 2, Para 112]	<p>Partner with Jobs Go Public, to launch a recruitment campaign to attract experienced social workers to careers at Croydon and keep this live for 12 months, capturing performance activity and reviewing impact quarterly.</p> <p>Consider the role that children and young people could play in recruitment going forward.</p>	SM	Jobs go public	Nov 17	
7.5	Stable & permanent workforce [Rec 2, Para 112]	<p>Implement a new exit interview process to gather timely and robust feedback from both contracted and locum staff on the reasons they leave so that improvements can be made for future recruitment and retention.</p> <p>Provide regular reports to the DCS and improvement board on leavers and reasons for leaving and capture learning to inform the recruitment and retention activity.</p>	SM	N/A	From Nov 17	
7.6	Stable & permanent workforce [Rec 2, Para 112]	Review and develop a revised pay and benefits offer for children's social work to ensure we are competitive and offer attractive and supportive career opportunities and meet the new registration requirements.	SM	N/A	Apr 18	
<b>Learning and development</b>						
7.7	Skilled workforce [Rec 2]	<p>Design and deliver an initial core skills training programme that addresses all basic social work skills. To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk assessment</li> <li>• Pre-birth assessment</li> <li>• Chronologies</li> <li>• Genograms</li> <li>• Assessing the impact on children of parental behaviours such as domestic abuse, mental health, drug and alcohol use and neglect</li> <li>• CSE risk assessment</li> </ul>	JE	Training providers	Jan 18	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with vulnerable adolescents</li> <li>• Effective planning and review</li> <li>• Permanency planning</li> <li>• PLO and court work</li> <li>• Direct work with children, including Life Story work</li> <li>• Lessons from SCRs</li> <li>• Safeguarding training for SWs working with children with disabilities</li> <li>• Regulation 24 and connected carer placements</li> <li>• PEPs</li> <li>• Pathway planning</li> <li>• Support for independent living (care leavers)</li> <li>• Child Permanence Reports (CPR)</li> </ul>				
7.8	Skilled workforce [Rec 2]	<p>Design and deliver a training programme on the new social work practice model, in consultation with the Principal Social Worker.</p> <p>Incorporate into core skills post implementation.</p>	JE	Training providers	<p>Apr 18</p> <p>From Apr 18</p>	
7.9	Skilled workforce [Rec 2]	<p>Deliver a development programme for all managers which covers;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflective Supervision</li> <li>• Performance management (including the use of data)</li> <li>• Managing poor performance</li> </ul>	JE	Training providers	Ongoing from Sep 17	
7.10	Skilled workforce [Rec 2, Para 110]	<p>Develop a comprehensive future-focused Learning &amp; Development (L&amp;D) strategy/plan for Children's services as part of a corporate L&amp;D plan. To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The requirements of compulsory accreditation for Children's social workers</li> <li>• Develop strong programme to support ASYEs</li> <li>• Links with universities</li> <li>• Links with new registration body</li> <li>• Clear CPD programme</li> </ul>	JE	Universities Training providers Social Work England DfE	<p>Feb 18</p> <p>Providers in place Jun 18</p>	
7.11	Skilled workforce [Rec 2, Para 110]	Establishing an L&D Board which will shape and oversee the delivery of the L&D strategy.	JE	N/A	Dec 17	

7.12	Skilled workforce [Rec 2, Para 110]	Ensure that the induction programme for all council staff covers safeguarding and corporate parenting, to raise awareness of the importance of keeping children safe across the organisation.	SM	N/A	Jan 18	
7.13	Skilled workforce [Rec 2, Para 110]	Deliver rolling programme of basic safeguarding training for all frontline council staff.	MF	CSCB	From Mar 18	

#### What good looks like

- The workforce is sufficient, suitably qualified and accredited to deliver high-quality services which improve outcomes for children and their families
- Managers and practitioners are experienced, effectively trained and supervised and the quality of their practice improves the lives of vulnerable children, young people and families
- There is effective organisational support for the professional development of social workers and managers
- Leaders provide the right environment for good social work to take place

#### Children say:

- I have a consistent social worker in my life who helps me
- I have a good relationship with my social worker, who knows me well
- I see my social worker regularly and he/she has time for me

#### Staff say:

- I am proud to work for Croydon
- I can see a clear career path here/opportunities to progress
- I know who to turn to if I need help

#### Partners say:

- There is consistency in who I speak to as staff turnover is low
- I am able to develop effective working relationships with Children's Services staff to support and protect children
- I have confidence in the skills of my social work colleagues

# People and performance

## 8. Strengthen management oversight and ensure robust quality assurance and performance management

Senior Responsible Officer (SRO): Barbara Peacock (BP)

### 8. Strengthen management oversight and ensure robust quality assurance and performance management - Ofsted recommendations and identified issues

**Recommendation 1.** *'Ensure that managers have sufficient oversight of practice, and provide social workers with effective, clearly recorded supervision to support good social work practice.'*

**Recommendation 8.** *'Review the roles and responsibilities of managers at all levels in relation to decisions about children's permanent care, to ensure that they are confident and competent enough to make these decisions. Establish robust tracking processes to ensure that plans are progressed and delay is minimised.'*

**Recommendation 10.** *'Ensure that child protection conference chairs and independent reviewing officers (IROs) provide appropriate challenge that prevents drift and delay in planning for children. Ensure that formal escalation systems are used to record and monitor actions raised, to make sure that purposeful work is done in order to achieve improved outcomes for children.'*

**Recommendation 21.** *'Strengthen training and work on complaints and embed a culture of feedback. Improve the analysis of complaints and the understanding of the reasons why children, families and foster carers complain, in order to address issues raised.'*

- Management oversight of practice
- Supervision
- Decision making for permanency
- Robust tracking leads to less drift and delay
- Quality assurance framework
- IROs and CP chairs challenge effectively and timely action is taken
- Performance management

No.	Issue [Ofsted Ref]	Actions	Lead	Partner involvement	By when	Progress RAG
<b>Management oversight, supervision and decision making</b>						
8.1	Supervision [Rec 1]	Refresh the supervision policy and recording template so that social workers and managers are clear about the expectations and standards for the frequency and quality of supervision.  Undertake regular audits to ensure compliance.	TS	N/A	Jan 18  From Jan 18	
8.2	Timely decision making [Rec 8]	Produce and implement a revised scheme of delegation to ensure manager at all levels understand the roles and responsibilities of managers in relation to decisions making for children.	PS	N/A	Apr 18	
<b>Quality assurance, including performance information</b>						
8.3	Quality assurance [Para 103]	Review the current quality assurance framework in line with the proposed social work practice model, with support from Achieving for Children (AfC).  Ensure that all quality assurance activity leads to recommendations for improvements in practice and service development, and that these recommendations are followed and formally monitored to ensure that they have an impact on outcomes for children and families.  Undertake an external review to assess how well this work is embedding.	PS	AfC	Dec 17  May 18	
8.4	Quality assurance [Para 103]	Deliver a series of communication and training events to launch the revised quality assurance framework and processes to all staff. To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In person communication such as presentations at team and service meetings and an all staff launch event</li> <li>Written communication (e.g. an email or letter to all staff from the DCS)</li> <li>Physical and electronic materials (e.g. accessible version of quality assurance framework booklet and posters)</li> </ul> Feedback from staff and actions taken from feedback.	PS	AfC	Jan-Apr 18	



8.5	Quality assurance [Para 103]	Establish and embed a regular programme of auditing which is reported to senior officers and Elected Members.  Establish regular external auditing to validate the quality and judgements.	TS	N/A	From Nov 17	
8.6	Clear line of sight [Para 91 & 102]	Strengthen the current performance data set to include information around the experiences of children and ensure that accurate performance information informs an up to date understanding of the council's and partner agencies effectiveness	TS	AfC CSCB Health, Police	Jan 18	
8.7	Clear line of sight [Para 91 & 102]	Ensure that the current performance data set is aligned to practice priorities and that senior leaders and managers use the current performance data set to have effective oversight and scrutiny of practice that leads to swift action to address priorities.	PS	AfC	Jan 18	
8.8	Operational data [Para 98, 102]	Further develop, deliver and embed systems improvements to ensure the provision of effective operational data to support day-to-day decision making and risk management alongside strategic performance data.	TS	AfC	Jan 18	
8.9	Operational data [Para 98, 102]	Support first line managers and service leaders to proactively use data to drive performance and reduce drift and delay for children.	PS	AfC Link with good LA	From Nov 17	
8.10	Clear line of sight [Para 91 & 102] Operational data [Para 98, 102]	All unit managers to attend practice development group quarterly, where team-level performance data will be reviewed, challenged and actions agreed to improve areas of underperformance.	BP	N/A	Feb 18	
<b>Challenge from IROs and CP chairs</b>						
8.11	IRO & CP Chair challenge [Rec 10]	Amend form on CRS to record any informal challenge from IRO and CP chairs, which will include a drop list of themes for ease of identification and reporting  Relaunch the process of IRO and CP chairs challenge to promote understanding and ownership. IRO and CP Chairs to publicise with teams.  Develop a tracker to monitor all challenges and progress in resolution.	PS	N/A	Mar 18	

		Ensure that the challenge role of the IRO and CP Chairs is monitored as part of the audit/quality assurance process.				
8.12	IRO & CP Chair challenge [Rec 10]	Report quarterly to CSMT and CLT on use of the escalation system for IROs and CP chairs, identify practice themes and take remedial action.	TS	N/A	From Feb 18	
8.13	Complaints [Rec. 21. Para 109]	Corporate complaints team to report quarterly to CSMT on progress on complaints and positive feedback, and key emerging themes, which can be built onto service development and Learning and Development plan.  Heads of Service to establish a tracking system to ensure complaints are responded to in a timely way.  Corporate complaints team to present their annual report to CSMT and Improvement Board	RS	N/A	From Feb 18	

#### What good looks like

- Children are protected from harm, in a timely way, through effective and well-documented management oversight which details good quality decision making and ensures that children and families are offered the appropriate support without delay that minimises risks
- Social workers have access to effective support, supervision and challenge which enables them to manage risk, reach good decisions, be open about their difficulties and be supported to make the necessary steps that will improve outcomes for children and families
- Effective and timely planning, support and decision-making occurs during pre-proceedings work and this work is tracked and overseen by managers
- CP conference chairs ensure that child protection conferences are effective forums for timely information-sharing, planning and risk-based decision-making so that children and young people are protected through effective multi-agency arrangements
- IROs quality assure the care planning and review process and monitor the performance of the local authority as a corporate parent, challenge lack of progress and use the escalation policy to quickly resolve any identified issues
- The local authority uses performance management and monitoring to create a detailed and up to date understanding of its effectiveness and uses this to drive improvement

#### Children say:

- I receive help when I need it
- I know why my social worker is involved in my life and what is happening to me
- I am involved in decisions about my life
- I know how to make a complaint, and that people will respond/do something
- My IRO meets me before meetings, listens to me and helps me get my voice heard

#### Staff say:

- My supervision is more regular, reflective and relevant, and helps me to do my job

- I get good support from my manager, who helps me to understand what I need to do to move cases forward
- Where cases are drifting, managers intervene to make thing happen
- IRO's and CP chairs are challenging at times, they make sure that we are doing the right things in a timely way for children and young people
- I understand the purpose of audits and they help me to improve my work
- People are generally more open to feedback about their work than before, and are challenging one another more
- I know how to escalate things where I have concerns
- I know how to use performance information (data) better to manage my team/service

**Partners say:**

- CP conferences are more effective and challenge is taken seriously
- LAC reviews are more effective and challenge is taken seriously
- If I raise concerns about children they are heard and responded to

# People and performance

## 9. Strengthen strategic commissioning

Senior Responsible Officer (SRO): Richard Simpson (RS)

### 9. Strengthen strategic commissioning - Ofsted recommendations and identified issue

**Recommendation 15.** *'Review the provision and take-up of advocacy and independent visitor services to ensure that all children who would like this can access these services.'*

- *Commissioning of Advocacy, Independent Visitor and Return to Home interviews (RHIs)*
- *Accommodation and 'Staying Put' arrangements for care leavers*
- *Therapeutic support services*
- *Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)*

No.	Issue [Ofsted Ref]	Actions	Lead	Partner involvement	By when	Progress RAG
9.1	Commissioning RHI's [Para 39]	Review and recommission services to support children missing from home and care. To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring short term solution of increasing capacity of RHIs</li> <li>• Developing a commissioning strategy for children missing from home and care and recommission a new service</li> <li>• New service fully mobilised</li> </ul>	SI	N/A	Oct 17 Feb 18 Sep18	
9.2	Commissioning advocacy and independent visiting [Rec 15, Para 38, 56]	Review the provision and take-up of advocacy and independent visitor services, and put in place short term measures to increase capacity.  Recommission a new Advocacy and Independent visiting support services to ensure they meets the needs of young people.	SI	N/A	Oct 17  Sep 18	

9.3	Commissioning health visiting [Para 64]	<p>Review and strengthen the commissioning, service delivery and efficacy of the health visiting service to ensure that it meets the needs of vulnerable children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review current service provision and ensure it is being delivered effectively</li> <li>Invest both short term resources for 2017/18 and confirm additional investment for 2018/19 with clear expected outcomes</li> </ul> <p>Recommission new services as part of the Early help strategy.</p>	RF	CCG/CHC	<p>Dec 17</p> <p>Jan 18</p> <p>Apr 19</p>	
9.4	Therapeutic support [Para 65]	<p>Work with CAMHS commissioners and the Looked After Children CAMHS team manager to improve social workers' awareness of, and access to, therapeutic support for children and young people.</p> <p>Review the capacity and provision of Looked After Children CAMHS, ensuring it is responsive and meets the needs of children and young people including how the CAMHS pathway with social care can be.</p>	ST	CCG Health and Wellbeing Board Joint Commissioning Executive	Jan 18	
9.5	Accommodation for care leavers [Para 89]	<p>Increase the supported living capacity within the borough for care leavers, specifically for young people who are living in houses of multiple occupancy.</p> <p>Provide regular reports on the impact of improving accommodation for care leavers to corporate parenting panel.</p>	MM	Housing providers Voluntary sector	From Dec 17	
9.6	JSNA [Para 104]	<p>Evaluate the impact of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) in commissioning decisions and strategy development.</p> <p>Review and strengthen the JSNA to ensure that it accurately reflects the needs of children who need help and protection, looked after children, care leavers and children with disabilities.</p>	RF	Health and Wellbeing Board Joint Commissioning Executive	<p>Dec 17</p> <p>Mar 18</p>	

#### What good looks like

- All children that go missing from home or care are offered a return home interview and a majority are completed
- Children and families can access advocacy and independent visiting services
- The JSNA and sufficiency statements are aligned and set out clear local priorities and the range of available services that respond to and meet the needs of local children, young people in need of help, care and protection, care leavers and children with disabilities
- Commissioned services respond to and meet the needs of local children, young people and families in need of help, care and protection
- All providers have shared understanding of the outcomes they are seeking to achieve and how that supports children and families

<b>Children say:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When I was going missing, people stepped in to help me and make me safer</li> <li>• When I felt unwell someone from the mental health team helped me get back on track</li> <li>• When it is was time for me to leave care, I was able to move into accommodation that suited me</li> </ul>
<b>Staff say:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We understand how providers support the work we do and how to access their services</li> <li>• We commission enough services to meet the needs of children and families</li> <li>• When we need to get access to CAMHS for looked after children we can do this quickly</li> </ul>
<b>Partners</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services for children and young people in Croydon meet local needs</li> <li>• I understand my contribution and how other services support the work we do with children and young people</li> <li>• I understand how to access services for children and young people</li> </ul>

# Partnerships

## 10. Improve Croydon Children Safeguarding Board (CSCB) and strengthen partnership working

Senior Responsible Officer (SRO): Barbara Peacock (BP)

### 10. Improve Croydon Safeguarding Children Board and strengthen partnership working - Ofsted recommendations and identified issues

*'The CSCB is inadequate. It has not fully established effective arrangements for discharging its statutory functions. In particular, it does not understand the experiences of children and young people locally, and has failed to sufficiently monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of frontline practice.'* [LSCB executive summary, p. 33].

#### Ofsted recommendations 113-117

- Discharge of statutory functions and responsibilities
- Understanding the experiences of children and young people
- Monitoring and evaluation of front-line practice
- Early Help Strategy
- Embedding learning from serious case reviews
- Use of procedures around CSE and Missing among practitioners

No.	Issue [Ofsted Ref]	Actions	Lead	Partner involvement	By when	Progress RAG
10.1	Discharging statutory functions [Para 118]	Review the membership of board and exec group to ensure that CSCB is fit for purpose, meets statutory functions and that the work is focussed on clearly identified priorities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish Executive Group with senior level representation from 3 safeguarding partners, local authority, police, clinical commissioning group and Education</li> </ul>	DS	All partners	Oct 17	Completed



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree remit of Executive Group including strategic leadership and oversight of CSCB improvement plan and transition to new local safeguarding arrangements (Children and Social Work Act 2017)</li> <li>• Executive Group to review Board and Sub Groups to ensure fitness for purpose</li> </ul> <p>Review and rationalise sub-groups. Establish clear remits and terms of reference to ensure these are focussed on the priorities and outputs/outcomes are evidenced and impact positively on front line and families.</p> <p>Evaluate impact on frontline practice through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neglect Audit</li> <li>• CSE Audit</li> <li>• SCR Action Plans</li> <li>• Thematic Reviews</li> </ul>			<p>Dec 17</p> <p>Apr 18</p> <p>Apr- 18</p>	<p>Process started 18.10.17</p> <p>Process started 18.10.17</p>
10.2	Discharging statutory functions [Para 118]	<p>Strengthen the Board's relationships with other key partnerships/groups and identify cross-cutting issues and priorities.</p> <p>Ensure active links are maintained with the Safeguarding Adults Board</p> <p>See action 6.5 and link to outcomes of Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) review.</p>	DS	LSP Independent Chair Health and Wellbeing Board Community Safety Partnership Safeguarding Adults Board	Dec 17	
10.3	Discharging statutory functions [Para 118]	<p>Establish and agree clear expectations for all CSCB partners and ensure senior level engagement. Support and encourage all board members to robustly monitor, scrutinise and evaluate the work of all partners, establishing a climate of constructive challenge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree and clarify understanding of 'constructive challenge'</li> <li>• All partners to recommit to CSCB Compact agreement</li> <li>• Identify and agree with partners data to be routinely provided as part of CSCB multi-agency data set</li> <li>• Secure partnership commitment to multi-agency audit</li> </ul>	DS	All partners	Dec 17	

10.4	Discharging statutory functions [Para 118]	Introduce induction programme for Board members, which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of board members (e.g. challenge and monitoring impact on outcomes for children). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board awareness induction pack and presentations offered to all agencies</li> <li>• Board member induction</li> </ul>		All partners	May 18	
10.5	Discharging statutory functions [Para 118]	Introduce a culture challenge programme at the 2017 CSCB Development Day to establish greater commitment to and engagement in the CSCB improvement plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission further events to secure and embed culture change</li> </ul>		All partners	Apr 18	
10.6	Learning from SCRs [Para 128]	Review and revise the learning improvement framework to ensure that it is focused on the priorities of the board and the learnings from serious case reviews. <p>Ensure that learning from SCR's informs improvements in frontline practice and establish arrangements for evaluating the impact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify opportunities to align learning from SCRs with Croydon Children's Improvement Plan</li> <li>• Introduce range of methods for dissemination learning from SCRs</li> <li>• Feedback evaluations of impact</li> <li>• Analyse emergent SCR repeated themes</li> <li>• Summary of multiple findings shared</li> </ul>	MF	All partners	Jan 18  Apr 18	
10.7	Monitoring practice/imp act [Rec 113 & Para 120]	Establish effective quality assurance arrangements, ensuring a balance between quantitative performance information and qualitative learning from audits, practice information and feedback from children, young people and families. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish regular feedback loop from CYP and frontline staff including the use of existing forums</li> <li>• Single agency audit reports to include quantitative and qualitative information</li> <li>• Triangulate information from CYP, agency feedback and performance data</li> </ul>	MF	All partners	Jul 18	
10.8	Monitoring practice/imp act [Rec 113 & Para 120]	Revise the multi-agency dataset to include appropriate information so that members can actively quality assure, evaluate and challenge the effectiveness of services. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish agreed performance indicators</li> <li>• Executive to scrutinise over-arching data</li> </ul>	MF	Council Police CCG	Jan 18	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dataset to include demographic data, performance data and priority improvement data</li> <li>Link with Public Health and Croydon Observatory to provide triangulation and additional source material for the dataset</li> <li>Relevant data to be provided to and monitored by sub-groups</li> </ul>				
10.9	Monitoring practice/impact [Rec 113 & Para 120]	<p>Ensure that the multi-agency audit programme is sufficiently targeted on priority areas and enables the board to monitor, evaluate and challenge frontline practice and its impact on children and families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree multi-agency audit programme for 2018</li> <li>Audit programme linked to priorities and learning from SCRs</li> <li>Re-audit in place to measure effectiveness and improvement</li> </ul>	MF	All partners	Feb 18	
10.10	Monitoring practice/impact [Rec 113, 117 & Para 120]	<p>Use the refreshed s11 audit tool to develop an accurate understanding of how well partners are safeguarding children, so that essential improvements can be supported and challenged, and quickly put into effect.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>S11 Tool introduction to wider partners and agencies</li> <li>Section 11 Challenge Day achieved</li> <li>Section 11 incorporated into Commissioning processes</li> <li>Introduce engagement tools with frontline staff to test effectiveness</li> </ul>	MF	All partners	Apr 18	
10.11	Monitoring practice/impact [Rec 113, 117 & Para 120]	Maintain a challenge log which clearly details expected improvements, with tight timescales, and offer support and challenge to effect rapid improvements. Clearly record and challenge any blocks so that barriers to improvement are removed.	MF	CSCB Executive	Apr18	
10.12	Early help services [Rec 11, Para 26]	<p>Relaunch the Early Help Sub-Group with new Terms of Reference and evaluate its impact in reporting to the CSCB Board regularly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set out the business plan</li> <li>Revise the ToR</li> <li>Ensure links to EH Strategy &amp; Action Plan</li> <li>Data provision – to enable EHSG to scrutinise &amp; monitor EH provision</li> </ul>	DS	CSCB Executive and Chair of Early Help sub group	Dec 17	
10.13	Early Help Strategy [Rec 116]	Ensure that partners are fully engaged in developing, launching and implementing a new Early Help strategy.	DS	All partners	Apr 18	

10.14	Thresholds [Rec 116]	<p>Develop a shared understanding across all partners represented on the board around the application of thresholds and pathways across the partnership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thematic Review on Neglect, incl. m/a audit &amp; analysis of previous SCRs and Audit</li> <li>• Analysis of NFA decisions from MASH by agency</li> <li>• Increase awareness of pathways to support, EH or CSC</li> <li>• Continued delivery of Threshold awareness training</li> <li>• Use feedback information and contact analysis to develop further training proposals</li> <li>• Delivery and awareness raising at Safeguarding lead meetings</li> </ul>	DS	All partners	Jul 18	
10.15	CSE and missing [Rec 114. Para 123]	<p>Expand and clarify the remit of the child sexual exploitation (CSE) and missing sub-group to provide oversight and improve coordination of all vulnerable adolescents at risk of exploitation, gang affiliation, county lines and those who go missing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise and expand membership</li> <li>• Provide regular data on relevant groups of young people, missing, CSE, Harmful behaviours etc.</li> <li>• Analysis of patterns and trends, plus emerging themes</li> <li>• Establish link between strategic and operational activities</li> <li>• Ensure escalation of risk</li> </ul>	DS	All partners	Jan 18	
10.16	CSE and missing [Rec 114. Para 123]	<p>Ensure that agreed procedures to support vulnerable adolescents (e.g. those at risk of CSE and going missing) are applied consistently across the partnership and the board is able to identify and challenge where required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New London CSE procedures introduced &amp; disseminated</li> <li>• Analysis of the CSE procedures application</li> <li>• Undertake audits to assess impact on children's lives</li> </ul>	DS	All partners	Apr 18	
10.17	CSE and missing [Rec 114. Para 123]	<p>Target workforce learning to increase knowledge, skills and confidence to understand and identify children at risk of CSE and going missing. Introduce a system of monitoring and evaluation of training to focus on impact on practice.</p>	MF	All partners	Apr 18	
<b>What good looks like</b>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) complies with its statutory responsibilities in accordance with the Children Act 2004 and the Local Safeguarding Children Board Regulations 2006 and The Children and Social Work Act 2017</li> </ul>						

- The LSCB co-ordinates the work of partners in helping, protecting and caring for children and there are mechanisms in place to monitor the effectiveness of those local arrangements
- Regular and effective monitoring and evaluation of multi-agency front-line practice to safeguard children identifies where improvement is required in the quality of practice and services that children, young people and families receive

#### **Children say:**

- Adults know how to spot when I need help (e.g. my teacher, social worker)
- When I am worried, people listen to me and take me seriously
- When I started to have problems, I was offered help quickly by school and other people
- I am given information about staying safe and know where to get help if I need it
- I feel like my safety and happiness really matters to the people and services who work with me (e.g. my teacher, social worker)

#### **Staff say:**

- I am aware of the purpose and function of the CSCB and I know how it links to my work
- I understand the role of partners (e.g. schools) in safeguarding children and can see that they are actively doing this
- Where failures to protect children occur, we learn (and teach others) so it doesn't happen again and the CSCB provides us with a lot of multi-agency training about these issues
- I feel confident to escalate professional concerns

#### **Partners say**

- I understand my role in keeping children safe in Croydon
- I understand the priorities of the CSCB and how my agency contributes
- I feel that the CSCB is effective in challenging the quality of safeguarding in Croydon

# Platforms

## 11. Establish organisational support and fit for purpose systems that enable high quality social work

Senior Responsible Officer (SRO): Richard Simpson (RS)

### 11. Establish organisational support and fit for purpose systems that enable high quality social work - Ofsted recommendations and identified issues

**Recommendation 2** ‘...Take steps to ensure that ... social workers ... have sufficient time to complete essential work.’

- Organisational support for children’s improvement; creating the conditions for social work to flourish
- Sufficient resource to deliver the improvement plan
- Enabling administrative support
- Fit for purpose ICT systems
- Available and accurate operational data

No.	Issue [Ofsted Ref]	Actions	Lead	Partner involvement	By when	Progress RAG
11.1	Creating the conditions for social work to flourish [para 110]	Ensure there is sufficient organisational (corporate) support for children’s services, in order to deliver the actions outlined in the improvement plan at the required pace. This will be focused on creating the conditions for social work to flourish in Croydon.	JN	CSCB	Ongoing	
11.2	Creating the conditions for social work to flourish [para 110]	Ensure that the children’s improvement programme and children’s services is adequately resourced in order to invest in the necessary improvements, and deliver these at the required pace. To include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial investment in 2017/18 in key areas</li> <li>• Commissioned financial modelling to support the development of sustainable budget</li> <li>• Ongoing resource allocation through future budgets</li> </ul>	RS	N/A	Nov 17  Jan 18 Feb 18	

11.3	Enabling support [Rec 2, Para 64, 67]	Provision of high quality business support which enables social workers to maximise time spent on direct work with children and families. To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of quick wins</li> <li>• Design and implement new business support model</li> </ul>	GC	N/A	Nov 17 Jan 18	
11.4	Fit for purpose systems [Rec 2, para 27]	Develop fit for purpose electronic recording systems, processes and workflows that are aligned to the new social work practice model and support good social work practice.	PS	N/A	Apr 18	

#### What good looks like

- Social workers are freed from undertaking administrative tasks allowing them to spend more time with children and families
- Business support processes are streamlined, with manual processes automated where appropriate, resulting in reduced time spent on admin for social workers and on specific tasks for business support staff
- Business Support is flexible to meet the needs of the services
- Social workers and Business Support processes are automated and linked to CRS as far as possible
- Management and performance information provides ongoing assurances that key actions and support are timely and effective and in timely manner areas requiring focus and review

#### Children say:

- My Social Worker spends more time with me than before
- My social worker is easy to get hold of when I need him/her
- My Social Worker visits me regularly

#### Staff say:

- Business support helps me to do my job
- Business support responds to the changing needs of my team service
- I can do my job quicker allowing me to do more for the social care team I support (Business support staff)
- I am happy with the case recording system (CRS), it is easy to use and helps me do my job
- My case records are up to date
- Documents are uploaded to CRS easily
- I have been trained in using CRS



## Lead Officers

Each action within the plan will have a lead officer who will be held to account on progress and successful delivery by the relevant SRO. These are outlined in the table below.

LEAD OFFICERS
PS, Philip Segurola, Interim Director, Early Help and Children's Social Care
JE, Julian Ellerby, Director of Strategy and Partnerships
IL, Iain Low, Head of Early Help and MASH
BP, Barbara Peacock, Executive Director (People-Director of Children's Services)
DS, Di Smith, Interim CSCB Chair
MK, Moira Keen, Head of Children In Need
CB, Caroline Baxter, Assistant Director, 0-65 Disability Service
WT, Wendy Tomlinson, Head of Looked After Children and Resources
DB, David Butler, Director of Education and Youth Engagement
HD, Hannah Doughty, Head of Targeted Services
JHB, Jacqueline Harris-Baker, Head of Social Care and Education Law
JN, Jo Negrini, Chief Executive
SI, Sarah Ireland, Director of Commissioning and Improvement
JHB, Jacqueline Harris-Baker, Director of Law and Monitoring Officer
TS, Tom Stevenson, Head of Quality Assurance
SM, Sue Moorman, Director of Human Resources
MF, Maureen Floyd, CSCB Board Manager
RS, Richard Simpson, Executive Director of Resources and s.151 Officer
SI, Sarah Ireland, Director of Commissioning and Improvement
RF, Rachel Flowers, Director of Public Health
ST, Sam Taylor, Head of Integrated Commissioning Children and Families Partnership
MM, Mark Meehan, Director of Housing Need
GC, Graham Cadle, Director of Customer and Corporate Services

*[Note to reader: please note that an appendix to the plan will be included in future versions, in order to track the completion of actions]*

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