

TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN QUALITY & IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE	
DATE:	21/01/19
REPORT AUTHOR:	Lynsey Thurgood, Business Manager
SUBJECT:	Learning and Improvement Plan
PURPOSE:	To provide TfC Quality and Improvement Committee with an overview of progress against the Improvement Plan.

1. INTRODUCTION

A Learning and Improvement Plan has been developed in response to the Ofsted inspection report published 25th July 2018. The plan consists of 15 priorities that have been developed around the recommendations identified by the inspection team (see below). This report provides an overview on key areas of progress.

- *Priority 1: Urgently review ICRT and take action to ensure that risks to children are identified, that thresholds are applied appropriately to support effective decision-making, and that actions are timely and compliant with statutory guidance. (Ofsted Recommendation 1)*
- *Priority 2: Ensure that children at risk of child sexual exploitation and those that go missing have an up to date assessment of risks that informs a comprehensive response to keep them safe. (Ofsted Recommendation 2)*
- *Priority 3: Improve the timeliness of services to children and families, including the early help response, and the access to services to support victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse. (Ofsted Recommendation 6)*
- *Priority 4: Ensure that children's records are kept up to date and contain clear child focussed information so that children's histories and progress can be clearly evaluated to inform decisions. (Ofsted Recommendation 7)*
- *Priority 5: Ensure that all assessments are appropriately updated, that they evaluate individual risk, need and the experience of children, and that the resultant plans are outcome-focussed, are meaningful to children and families, and are regularly reviewed. (Ofsted Recommendation 8)*
- *Priority 6: Ensure that practice for children who are subject to private fostering arrangements meets statutory requirements. (Ofsted Recommendation 11)*
- *Priority 7: Ensure that applications to court are timely and of good quality, and that no children are left in situations of ongoing risk due to delay. (Ofsted Recommendation 9)*
- *Priority 8: Ensure that children who present as homeless fully understand their rights to become looked after under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989, and the benefit this brings. (Ofsted Recommendation 10)*
- *Priority 9: When children come into care or need an alternative home, ensure that they are provided with a placement that meets their needs and offers stability through more proactive matching. (Ofsted Recommendation 12)*
- *Priority 10: Ensure the timely completion of life story work for all children looked after so that they can understand their life history. (Ofsted Recommendation 13)*
- *Priority 11: Improve timely access to appropriate mental health services for children looked after and care leavers and develop a clear transition pathway for those care leavers who do not have an EHCP. (Ofsted Recommendation 14)*

- Priority 12: Improve access to vocational, training and employment opportunities for care leavers and particularly for those who have been NEET for long periods. (Ofsted Recommendation 15)
- Priority 13: Ensure that governance and scrutiny arrangements are rigorous and challenging and that there is an accurate understanding of the quality of practice, to enable the council to hold TfC to account and to ensure that progress is made, that children are protected, and that their experiences improve. (Ofsted Recommendation 3)
- Priority 14: Improve the training and development offer for social workers and managers to ensure that all staff have the right skills and knowledge for their role. (Ofsted Recommendation 4)
- Priority 15: Ensure that managers provide reflective and direct supervision for all workers, with additional challenge from IRO's and conference chairs, to improve the quality of practice and planning for all children. (Ofsted Recommendation 5)

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Committee is asked to review this summary together with the updates provided within the plan.

3. SUMMARY

All actions in the Learning and Improvement Plan are RAG-rated. A key to the RAG-rating system is below:

RED	The action has not yet started or there is significant delay in implementation.
AMBER	The action has started but there is some delay in implementation.
GREEN	The action is on track to be completed by the agreed date.
COMPLETED	The action has been completed and evidenced.

There are 95 actions within the plan. The table below shows the current RAG status for actions assigned to each of the 15 priorities.

CURRENT RAG RATINGS	PRIORITIES															Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
Red	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Amber	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Green	9	6	6	6	7	6	5	1	7	3	2	3	5	4	4	74
Completed	7	0	1	0	2	0	1	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	16
New Actions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	16	8	8	6	10	6	6	3	10	3	2	3	6	4	4	95

Overall, there are currently 2 actions that are delayed (red) and 4 actions with a potential delay to implementation (amber). 94.7% of actions are either on track (green) or completed and evidenced (blue).

4. DETAIL

Actions due by 31/01/19

There are twenty one actions due by the end of January 2019.

The following eleven actions have been completed and evidenced, therefore the Quality Assurance Service has rag-rated these as complete.

Priority 1: Urgently review ICRT and take action to ensure that risks to children are identified, that thresholds are applied appropriately to support effective decision-making, and that actions are timely and compliant with statutory guidance. (Ref: Ofsted Recommendation 1)

Action	Lead	Timescale	RAG
1.1 Commission an independent review of ICRT.	Director of Quality Assurance & Performance	01/09/18	C
1.2 Agree and implement new ICRT model	Director of Children's Social Care	31/10/18	C
1.3 Put in place multi-agency strategic and operational task groups to identify and tackle improvements within the ICRT process.	Director of Children's Social Care	30/09/18	C
1.6 Partners to ensure consent is gained prior to contact	Chair of SSCB	31/01/19	C
1.13 Formalise the process for planning child protection enquiries including visiting children and families, full analysis of risk, interim safety planning and conformance to statutory guidance (23).	Service Manager - ICRT	31/12/18	C

Priority 3: Improve the timeliness of services to children and families, including the early help response, and the access to services to support victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse. (Ref: Ofsted Recommendation 6)

Action	Lead	Timescale	RAG
3.1 Implement practice standards for Early Help and associated training.	Director of Early Help	31/07/18	C

Priority 5: Ensure that all assessments are appropriately updated, that they evaluate individual risk, need and the experience of children, and that the resultant plans are outcome-focussed, are meaningful to children and families, and are regularly reviewed. (Ref: Ofsted Recommendation 8)

Action	Lead	Timescale	RAG
5.3 Introduce quality assurance checks for the assessment process	Service Manager - ICRT	30/09/18	C
5.4 'Good Practice' files that include examples of plans and assessments to be placed within all teams	Service Manager - ICRT	30/11/18	C

Priority 7: Ensure that applications to Court are timely and of good quality, and that no children are left in situations of ongoing risk due to delay. (Ref: Ofsted Recommendation 9)

Action	Lead	Timescale	RAG
7.5 Review allocations process for cases within legal team.	Service Manager - Business	31/12/18	C

Priority 8: Ensure that children who present as homeless fully understand their rights to become looked after under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989, and the benefit this brings. (Ref: Ofsted Recommendation 10)

Action	Lead	Timescale	RAG
8.1 Develop a leaflet for children aged 16 and 17 who present as homeless to inform them of their right to be accommodated or helped.	Service Manager - CLA	31/10/18	C
8.2 For those children informed of their rights, formally record their decisions on a form and save a copy on their case record.	Service Manager - CLA	30/11/18	C

The following seven actions have been rated green as on track or completed. The Quality Assurance Service has not yet received sufficient evidence to rate these actions blue “completed and evidenced”.

Priority 1: Urgently review ICRT and take action to ensure that risks to children are identified, that thresholds are applied appropriately to support effective decision-making, and that actions are timely and compliant with statutory guidance. (Ref: Ofsted Recommendation 1)

Action	Lead	Timescale	RAG
1.4 Review and improve process for recording and screening of contacts in ICRT	Service Manager – ICRT	31/12/18	G

Priority 3: Improve the timeliness of services to children and families, including the early help response, and the access to services to support victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse. (Ref: Ofsted Recommendation 6)

Action	Lead	Timescale	RAG
3.2 Monitor the timeliness of early help response through application of practice standards.	Director of Early Help	01/09/18	G

Priority 9: When children come into care or need an alternative home, ensure that they are provided with a placement that meets their needs and offers stability through more proactive matching. (Ref: Ofsted Recommendation 12)

Action	Lead	Timescale	RAG
9.7 Permanence plans to be in place by the 2nd review and IRO challenge to be evident where this has not been achieved.	Service Manager and IRO Manager	31/12/18	G

Priority 12: Improve access to vocational, training and employment opportunities for care leavers and particularly for those who have been NEET for long periods. (Ref: Ofsted Recommendation 15)

Action	Lead	Timescale	RAG
12.3 Review membership and increase engagement with ELEET Team who will target employment and education for the 19-21 group.	Service Manager CLA	31/12/18	G

Priority 13: Ensure that governance and scrutiny arrangements are rigorous and challenging and that there is an accurate understanding of the quality of practice, to enable the council to hold TfC to account and to ensure that progress is made, that children are protected, and that their experiences improve. (Ref: Ofsted Recommendation 3)

Action	Lead	Timescale	RAG
13.2 Short life task and finish group to consider existing scrutiny and reporting arrangements, the integration of the quality assurance framework and to devise a revised model to be agreed by the Council, TfC Board and the DfE.	CEO of TfC & Head of Contractual Relationships in Sunderland Council	31/01/19	G

Priority 14: Improve the training and development offer for social workers and managers to ensure that all staff have the right skills and knowledge for their role”. (Ref: Ofsted Recommendation 4)

Action	Lead	Timescale	RAG
14.3 Principal Social Worker and workforce development colleagues to develop a programme of training on equality, diversity and identity - Community Care Live to be invited to improve their current offer to address the learning needs.	Principal Social Worker	31/01/19	G

Priority 15: Ensure that managers provide reflective and direct supervision for all workers, with additional challenge from IRO’s and conference chairs, to improve the quality of practice and planning for all children”. (Ref: Ofsted Recommendation 5)

Action	Lead	Timescale	RAG
15.4 Front line managers to utilise performance and quality reports to effectively scrutinise and challenge the quality of social work practice, children’s assessments and plans.	Director of Children’s Social Care	31/12/18	G

The three actions that are delayed and rated red or amber are as follows:

Priority 3: Improve the timeliness of services to children and families, including the early help response, and the access to services to support victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse”. (Ref: Ofsted Recommendation 6)

Action	Lead	Timescale	RAG	Update from Service
3.8 Undertake process mapping of referrals of DV and routes to interventions to further identify any gaps in provision to be addressed.	Service Manager	31/12/18	A	The funding bid that the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioners submitted to the Home Office fund for ‘children affected by domestic abuse’ has been successful and will address the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking a whole school approach and offering schools an educational programme; • Offering PHSE inputs for children across key stages 1-4; • Providing schools with dedicated school safeguarding liaison staff. Action is amber pending the completion of the Imkaan consultation.

Priority 5: Ensure that all assessments are appropriately updated, that they evaluate individual risk, need and the experience of children, and that the resultant plans are outcome-focussed, are meaningful to children and families, and are regularly reviewed. (Ref: Ofsted Recommendation 8)

Action	Lead	Timescale	RAG	Update from Service
5.7 Disabled children's needs to be reassessed to ensure that children are safe and their parents are adequately supported to meet children's additional needs	Children with Disabilities Team Manager	30/11/18	R	The backlog is now allocated and being worked. The team are on target to have these completed by the end of January as confirmed in previous update. Whilst the team are currently striving to ensure that all CIN assessments are updated within 2 years; the aim is that this will be reduced to 1 year.

Priority 9: When children come into care or need an alternative home, ensure that they are provided with a placement that meets their needs and offers stability through more proactive matching. (Ref: Ofsted Recommendation 12)

Action	Lead	Timescale	RAG	Update from Service
9.10 TfC to develop a process and policy for the monitoring of children who are in unregulated placements.	Service Manager	31/12/18	A	Review of the Permanence Planning process is in progress that will include a policy for the monitoring of children who are in unregulated placements.

Actions to be completed by 31/03/19

There are 47 actions that are due for completion between 01/02/19 and 31/03/19, of which 4 are currently rated blue and 41 rated green. The remaining 2 actions are rated red and amber as follows:

Action	Lead	Timescale	RAG	Update from Service
2.4 Implement Liquid Logic workspace for Missing and CSE.	Service Manager	31/03/19	R	SSCB Business Unit are continuing to support with the development of this workspace. MSET Co-ordinator is visiting other local authorities to look at the use of LL for missing and CSE. Given the amount of time the development and implementation may take, a red rating has been applied as there is a potentially significant delay.
2.5 Implement a regular reporting cycle from MSET to SLT which provides assurance as to whether children are receiving an appropriate and timely response to keep them safe.	MSET Co-ordinator	31/03/19	A	Report was requested for November but not received. Business Manager to raise with Chair of MSET Operational Group.

Ofsted Monitoring Visit

Together for Children were subject to a Quarterly Ofsted Monitoring Visit on 15th and 16th January. Any recommendations coming from the resulting report will be factored into the Learning and Improvement Plan in the next version.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

7. CONTACT

Name: Lynsey Thurgood
Position: Executive Business Manager
lynsey.thurgood@togetherforchildren.org.uk
Tel: 561 1653