CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. This report provides an overview of changes to the Learning and Improvement Plan that are currently being considered by members of the Improvement Board. In December 2016, the Directors together with the Commissioner of Children's Services reviewed the position of the 59 actions to determine those that can be safely removed from the plan and those actions that need to be amended to reflect our current position and progress. A number of new actions have been identified that we believe will drive further improvements over the next 12 months. The changes take into consideration findings from performance datasets, internal reviews including case file and themed audits, and the following external reports:
 - Ofsted Monitoring Visit August 2016 on the experience and progress of Care Leavers. Report published 2nd September 2016.
 - Review of Sunderland Children's Services by the Commissioner for Children's Services and DfE October 2016
 - Ofsted Monitoring Visit November 2016 on help and protection, with a focus on contact, referral and assessment arrangements. Report published 8th December 2016.
- 1.2. The refreshed plan can be found in Appendix A

2. Current Position - Updated Position of Priority Actions

Table 1: Current RAG Rating Assigned to Action by Priority

Delovity	RAG Ratings										
Priority	R	ed	Am	ber	Light (Light Green		Dark Green		Completed	
	Nov 16	Current	Nov 16	Current	Nov 16	Current	Nov 16	Current	Nov 16	Current	
 Recruiting, retaining and developing a skilled and confident social care workforce. 	0	0	2	0	1	0	2	3	2	4	
2. Providing coherent and coordinated early help services to children and their families.	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
3. Improving the quality and timeliness of assessment and care planning.	0	0	4	1	10	3	0	10	6	6	
 Ensuring high quality support and services for looked-after children and effective permanency planning. 	0	0	3	3	6	2	1	4	2	3	
5. Putting the voice of the child at the centre of social care practice.	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	
 Supporting young people leaving care to have a positive and successful transition to adulthood and independence. 	0	0	2	2	2	0	2	2	0	2	
7. Embedding strong quality assurance and governance mechanisms to drive continual improvement in services.	0	0	1	1	9	3	1	6	0	1	
Totals	0	0	13	8	29	8	6	26	11	17	

Priority 1: Recruiting, retaining and developing a skilled and confident social care workforce

- 2.1. The workforce strategy has been developed and approved and the success measure that requires 90% of social work posts to be filled with permanent staff has been achieved. It is however acknowledged that the recruitment of social workers remains a challenging area. In the region, demand for recruiting social care posts is high with other neighbouring local authorities also recruiting for the same positions. Joanne Parkinson (from HR) has been identified to support the development of a recruitment and retention strategy. We need to renew our efforts for recruiting high quality permanent staff to underpin the improvement work that is still needed. Therefore a new action regarding the recruitment of a permanent workforce to support the needs of the company is proposed in section 3 (P8).
- 2.2. There is an agreed profile for our social care workforce to ensure we have sufficient capacity to deliver the current levels of activity. At the time of the inspection in June 2015, 269 cases were unallocated. At the end of December 2016, 14 cases were unallocated, all of which were then allocated within 48 hours. Also in December 2016, the average caseload across all teams was 17 or less.
- 2.3. A career progressions framework was implemented in December 2015 for social workers that is in line with the Professional Capabilities Framework and other regional schemes. We have developed a Learning and Development plan which is based on our practice standards and required competencies. In preparation for moving to a company, we intend to complete a further skills audit to baseline the current competencies of the workforce and to inform our learning and development offer.
- 2.4. A revised supervision policy is operational. Although the frequency of supervision has improved, recent audits show the quality and recording of supervision remains variable. Additional training is scheduled for January 2017 with a view to improving the quality and recording of management oversight. A programme of further audits is scheduled for March 2017 to see if training and practice standards have been effective.
- 2.5. The following table shows the changes to the actions under priority 1

Action	Previous	Current
1.1 - Ofsted 7 (a) Implement a workforce strategy and strategic working group with a focus on improving the recruitment and retention of social workers	А	DG
(1.2) - Complete a skills and audit of the workforce to determine the current levels of professional competence and to inform the design of the learning and development offer	DG	С
(1.4 – Ofsted 7) Commission training to improve the qualifications, skills and confidence of all practitioners responsible for supervising contact.	А	DG
(1.5) Improve the quality and recording of professional supervision to ensure that it is reflective, improves the quality of practice through case discussion and focuses on professional and personal development.	LG	DG
(1.6 - Ofsted 8) Determine manageable caseloads for social workers and ensure compliance so that they can respond appropriately and in a timely manner to the needs of children and young people.	DG	с

2.6. Priority 2: Providing coherent and coordinated early help services to children and their families

2.7. The following action remains Amber.

Action	Previous	Current
(2.1 - Ofsted 18) Engage with partner agencies to implement an early help strategy and operational framework which clearly sets out the early help offer and referral pathways.	А	A

2.8. Following the inspection in 2015 our Early Help service engaged with partner agencies to develop an early help strategy and operational framework which set out the early help offer and referral pathways. Training, guidance and information to support the framework were also developed. In December 2016 the service reported that 84% of early help assessments were closed with one or more outcomes achieved which is above the target of 70% set in the improvement plan. Although the framework has been revised we acknowledge that further improvement is required to provide a coherent and coordinated early help offer. The new Director of Early Help, Karen Davison has started with the Authority (on 1st February 2017) and will initiate a further review of the service with an aim to provide targeted early help interventions that are effective at preventing the escalation of children's needs.

2.9. Priority 3: Improving the quality and timeliness of assessment and care planning

- 2.10. The work within the ICRT team has been refocused. Decision-making has been improved together with the prompt allocation of cases for assessment or section 47 investigations. The November Ofsted Monitoring Visit confirmed that "arrangements for contact and referrals have been reviewed and strengthened to ensure a more coordinated, timely and appropriate response".
- 2.11. Work is continuing to improve the Duty and Advice arrangements. The Service Manager is working comprehensively with Team Managers, utilising performance data to assess any cases out of timescale. Ofsted confirmed in their November Monitoring Visit that "the timeliness and quality of assessments are improving" and "arrangements for contact and referrals have recently been reviewed and strengthened to ensure a more coordinated, timely and appropriate response".
- 2.12. PLO Panel meetings are chaired by our Strategic Managers and dedicated business support personnel record and review actions. The meetings provide greater management oversight and enable decision making on cases entering care proceedings. In December 2016, 98% of cases were reviewed within the last 12 weeks.
- 2.13. Processes have been reviewed to ensure assessments, care plans and decisions to initiate S47 investigations are approved and clearly recorded by a manager. All decisions to initiate Section 47 investigations are made in strategy meetings, chaired by Team Managers or Advanced practitioners.
- 2.14. The quality of assessments for children with disabilities, including the assessments of young people that are due to transition to adult services has improved. In November 2016 a themed audit was carried out on Children with Disabilities cases. 18 audits were completed and 13 were graded 'Good'. In the main, the audits show evidence that improvements have been made and children do have good plans and assessments in place. A further audit will take place in February 2017 to review the quality of a sample of assessments.
- 2.15. We have put in place clear arrangements to systematically gather information in relation to children missing from home, children missing from care and children missing from education. Multi-agency MSET meetings are a forum for sharing information, identifying risks and making decisions regarding safety plans for children identified as being at risk. We have embedded a risk assessment tool for child sexual exploitation with the aim of improving referrals and responses. In our recent Ofsted Monitoring Visit, Inspectors stated that "Sunderland's multi-agency arrangements to respond to children at risk of going missing and being sexually exploited and trafficked have been strengthened. The quality of information recorded and collated in the risk management tool ensures a well-coordinated multi-agency response".

- 2.16. The completion of return home or return to care interviews has increased significantly rising from 37% in October 2016 to 78% in November 2016. In our recent Ofsted Monitoring Visit, Inspectors stated that "arrangements for return interviews for children missing have been strengthened through the commissioning of a voluntary agency to undertake this work". The performance team will continue to work closely with commissioning to drive up the actual completion of interviews for missing episodes.
- 2.17. The following table shows the changes to the actions under priority 3

Action	Previous	Current
(3.2 - Ofsted 3) Refocus the work of the MASH so that it becomes an effective front-door into early help and children's social care services, with appropriate and timely decision-making and the prompt allocation of cases for assessment or S47 investigation.	LG	DG
(3.3 - Ofsted 3) Implement a duty social work team responsible for receiving referrals from the MASH for assessment or S47.	А	DG
(3.7 - Ofsted 5) Ensure that assessments, care plans and decisions to initiate S47 investigations are approved and clearly recorded by a manager in a timely manner; implement a mechanism to monitor compliance.	LG	DG
(3.9) Implement a single assessment framework and supporting protocol for all early help and children's social care assessments for children pre-birth to age 18 years.	LG	DG
(3.11) Implement the CAADA-DASH tool to identify and assess the risk of domestic abuse and determine which cases should be referred to the MARAC and what other support should be provided	LG	DG
(3.12 - Ofsted 19) Implement a tracking tool for children missing from home, care and education which bring together key information from partner agencies to inform risk assessment and safety planning.	LG	DG
(3.13 - Ofsted 19) Ensure that return home or return to care interviews is routinely completed for all missing children in line with agreed local protocols.	LG	DG
(3.14 - Ofsted 19) Embed the risk assessment matrix for child sexual exploitation and improve the referral pathway into the multi-agency sexual exploitation group in line with agreed local protocols	LG	DG
(3.18) Improve the quality of assessments for children with disabilities, including the assessments of young people that are due to transition to adult services.	А	LG
(3.19) Develop and implement a formal case escalation procedure for the child protection conference service and the independent reviewing service	LG	DG
(3.20) Provide or commission a family group conference service.	А	DG

2.18. The following table shows actions within priority 3 that have a RAG rating of Red or Amber.

Action	Previous	Current
(3.10) Continue to improve the consistency and quality of case chronologies and genograms and ensure these are consistently used to inform assessment and care planning	A	Α

2.19. Improving the consistency and quality of case chronologies and genograms remains a priority for the service. The format of the chronologies has been improved, standards and guidance have been produced and training delivered. We are expecting to see improvements from our next round of audits.

2.20. Priority 4: Ensuring high quality support and services for looked-after children and effective permanency planning

- 2.21. A permanence tracker has been developed to provide assurance that every child with a plan for long-term care has a robust plan for permanence. A life story tracker has also been developed to ensure effective life story work is progressing. Performance relating to the percentage of CLA with an up-to-date care plan (within 6 months) has remained consistently high over the last year. Life story work is progressing in accordance with the age and circumstances of each child but remains a priority for the service.
- 2.22. A review of the arrangements for supervised contact has been concluded and changes are being implemented. Plans are being considered to relocate the team to more suitable accommodation. It is envisaged that the new arrangements will be more appropriate to meet children's needs.
- 2.23. Although mechanisms to track the progress of CLA have been enhanced the service is continuing to seek ways to reduce the gap between CLA and other children at all stages. In October 2016 the Commissioner for Children's Services and DfE undertook a review of our Children's Services and concluded that the educational needs of CLA were not well enough understood or addressed. During this visit the service was able to demonstrate how they were going to address the issues and what action was to be taken.
- 2.24. The following table shows the changes to the actions under priority 4

Action	Previous	Current
(4.8) Implement an awareness campaign with all agencies with high-time access to children and young people to promote private fostering requirements	LG	DG
(4.9) Ensure that all private fostering arrangements have a current assessment and children are visited regularly (every 6 weeks in the first year and every 12 weeks in subsequent years).	LG	DG
(4.10 - Ofsted 23) Establish an effective recruitment strategy for adopters including a foster to adopt policy.	LG	DG
(4.11 - Ofsted 24) Develop and implement a comprehensive post-adoption support offer.	LG	DG
(4.12) Provide guidance to the adoption panel chair and the fostering panel chair on the requirements of their reports so that the panels are able to demonstrate the impact of their work on achieving permanency for children.	DG	с

2.25. The following table shows actions within priority 4 that have a RAG rating of Red or Amber.

Action	Previous	Current
(4.3 - Ofsted 14) Update the Placement Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy to ensure the local authority has sufficient breadth and quality of placements to meet the needs of children looked-after	А	A
(4.4 - Ofsted 20) Review the arrangements for supervised contact to ensure these are driven by children's needs.	А	A
(4.6 - Ofsted 22) Improve the quality and monitoring of all personal education plans with clear targets and action plans to achieve those targets.	Α	A

2.26. Our Placement Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy have been updated to increase the placement choice for children looked after but requires further review. The number of CLA with unplanned placement moves and the percentage of CLA who have experienced 3+ placement moves in the last 12 months continue to perform well and are below the latest reported statistical neighbour and national average.

2.27. Following our Ofsted Monitoring Visit of Care Leavers in August 2016, Inspectors concluded that although young people were receiving appropriate support to access education and college, personal education plans are not consistently provided or updated. Since the monitoring visit a new template has been provided for PEPs and a self-assessment sheet has been shared with schools to allow them to monitor their own PEP quality before submitting them to the Virtual School. Improving the quality of the plans remains a priority.

2.28. Priority 5: Putting the voice of the child at the centre of social care practice

- 2.29. To ensure the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people are fully considered we have improved our capacity and monitoring processes. This has allowed children to be seen more regularly in line with agreed timescales. In December 2016, 95% of CLA had had a statutory visit within the last 6 weeks compared to 70% in June 2015.
- 2.30. The following table shows the changes to the actions under priority 5

Action	Previous	Current
(5.1 - Ofsted 6) Ensure that children are seen regularly in line with agreed timescales and that their views inform assessments, care planning and reviews.	LG	DG

2.31. Priority 6: Supporting young people leaving care to have a positive and successful transition to adulthood and independence

- 2.32. In August 2016 Ofsted conducted our first Monitoring Visit which reviewed the progress made in respect of the experiences and progress of care leavers. The report concluded that the local authority is making significant progress to improve services for care leavers.
- 2.33. We have a clear policy that informs care leavers about their rights and entitlements. The Next Steps Team moved into new premises in June 2016 to allow care leavers to have drop-in access to the service. Following the August Monitoring Visit, Ofsted confirmed that "the 'Next Steps' service has been relocated close to the city centre, which enables care leavers to meet with their allocated workers more easily and is resulting in better support for them". In December 2016, 73.6% of care leavers had a contact within the last 8 weeks compared with 30% in June 2015.
- 2.34. A team has been created with staff from Next Steps, Sunderland Virtual School and Connexions to support care leavers into EET (ELEET Team). This team works with Young People who are currently NEET to provide them with a number of Education/Employment opportunities, including apprenticeships. In August 2016, Ofsted commended the support provided to care leavers to access education and employment opportunities. The number of care leavers who are NEET has improved from the time of inspection from 85% to 53.4% in December 2016, however progress is slower than expected and performance is still outside of national and statistical neighbour averages.
- 2.35. Following a review of housing commissioning arrangements, care leavers have a greater choice of accommodation options. In May 2015 only 44% of care leavers were living in suitable accommodation compared with 66.9% in December 2016. Following the Care Leavers Monitoring visit, Ofsted Inspectors stated "a key aspect of improvement for care leavers has been in their access to better housing options. Increasing use and promotion of staying put arrangements and supported lodgings helps to ensure that care leavers have a better range of options".

2.36. The following table shows the changes to the actions under priority 6

Action	Previous	Current
(6.1 - Ofsted 25) Improve ways for social workers and personal advisers to keep in touch with care leavers by providing them with a space for them to drop-in and have access to the Leaving Care Team.	DG	С
(6.2) Produce a clear and accessible statement and policy that sets out the rights and entitlements of care leavers. A financial policy for care leavers is in place and leaflets are provided to young people	DG	с
(6.4 - Ofsted 27) Improve arrangements to provide and monitor education, employment and training opportunities for care leavers and increase the range and take-up of apprenticeships and work-based training.	LG	DG
(6.5) Implement improved commissioning arrangements to secure a broader range of housing options for care leavers.	LG	DG

2.37. The following table shows actions within priority 6 that have a RAG rating of Red or Amber.

Action	Previous	Current
(6.3 - Ofsted 26) Improve pathway plans so that they reflect the needs and aspirations of young people and which involves them in the planning process.	A	A
(6.6) Implement a health passport or equivalent for each care leaver to record their health history.	А	Α

- 2.38. Pathway planning has been a priority for the Next Steps service to ensure that care leavers' needs are identified and action is taken to provide support. The pathway plan template has been revised in consultation with Care Council. In December 2016, 87.8% of care leavers had a pathway plan compared with 69% in November 2015. Whilst the number of pathway plans has improved, a recent sampling exercise has shown that the quality of plans is not consistently good. This was noted as an area for improvement in our first Ofsted Monitoring Visit and is a priority for the service.
- 2.39. The health needs of care leavers are addressed within the pathway planning process. However, care leavers do not always receive their medical histories or health passports, despite raising this with our health partners. The CCG has recruited a dedicated CLA Nurse who is working with young people to develop the health passports. Immediate improvements are to be expected following the appointment of the LAC nurse in October 2016. The proposed new performance measure will also monitor the percentage of CLA with an annual health assessment.

2.40. Priority 7 Embedding strong quality assurance and governance mechanisms to drive continual improvement in services

- 2.41. The Children's Strategic Partnership (CSP) was established in January 2016. In October 2016, a workshop took place to decide the priorities of the partnership and how they will be delivered. Work is progressing to finalise the multi-agency strategic plan.
- 2.42. Strategic and operational datasets are in place. Performance information is used at all levels of the service to monitor performance and inform practice and service development. Inspectors commented in the recent monitoring visit that "Performance management processes are being used effectively to focus on key priorities and to help to drive improvement in services and practice".

- 2.43. The Scrutiny Committee has been strengthened. The Committee has new terms of reference, meets regularly and focuses on actions contained within its Children's Workplan. Our Corporate parenting group also has clear terms of reference, appropriate membership and a workplan in place. Children in Care Council now attend the Corporate Parenting Board and we have published our pledge to CLA.
- 2.44. The QA framework is operational and a reporting timeline agreed. In the recent Ofsted Monitoring Visits inspectors have commented that "Improved performance monitoring and quality assurance processes are key factors in securing improvement". Inspectors also stated "Quality assurance processes, including auditing on children's cases and thematic audits, are enhancing senior managers' understanding of the underlying factors influencing performance".
- 2.45. Policies and operating procedures are updated regularly and all staff have access via the social care online hub. Audit programmes are determining compliance and identifying any necessary changes to policies and procedures or training requirements. An electronic recording case management system for allegations made against the children's workforce and reported to the LADO has been implemented.
- 2.46. The following table shows the changes to the actions under priority 7.

Action	Previous	Current
(7.3 - Ofsted 10) Develop and implement a quality assurance framework that clearly establishes how the service will test the quality of practice, prioritise areas for improvement, and measure the impact of change on children and young people.	LG	DG
(7.4 - Ofsted 11) Develop and implement a performance management framework and datasets (strategic and operational) so that managers are able to address areas of poor performance and celebrate improved performance.	LG	DG
(7.6 - Ofsted 13) Ensure that the Corporate Parenting Group has clear terms of reference and the appropriate membership to be focused on improving the quality of services provided to looked-after children and care leavers. This to include a forward plan of scrutiny areas	DG	с
(7.7 - Ofsted 16) Review all strategies, policies and operating procedures to ensure these are current, appropriate and in line with statutory and other best practice guidance. Ensure that all strategies, policies and protocols are accessible and understood by all the professionals working to them.	LG	DG
(7.8 - Ofsted 16) Develop and implement a practice framework or methodology that sets out the standards of practice expected from social workers and Early Help practitioners.	LG	DG
(7.10) Develop and implement minimum standards for case recording.	LG	DG
(7.11) Develop and implement an electronic case management system for allegations made against the children's workforce and reported to the LADO.	LG	DG

2.47. The following table shows actions within priority 7 that have a RAG rating of Red or Amber.

Action	Previous	Current
(7.9) Procure and implement a new electronic social care recording system which enables effective case recording and data sharing and provides appropriate management information.	A	Α

2.48. Slow progress has been made against the implementation of a new electronic social care recording system. The IT contact has been awarded and implementation is in progress. In the meantime steps are being taken to improve the current system in order to support social workers and managers.

3. Actions to be Added to the Plan

- 3.1. Following our two Ofsted Monitoring Visits and the Commissioners review of Children's Services the following actions are to be added to the Improvement Plan. Success measures will be determined for each action:
 - NEW1: Recruit and retain a workforce that meets the needs of young people in line with the new structure for the service
 - NEW2: Improve the recording and consistency of assessments
 - NEW3: Reduce the number of re-referrals to children's social care
 - NEW4: Evaluate the effectiveness of support services for children and families who are at risk of domestic violence
 - NEW5: Review all children in need under section 17 to ensure they have a plan aimed at reducing risk and improving their welfare that is consistently reviewed and updated to reflect children's changing needs
 - NEW6: Improve procedures to assure the quality of alternative educational provision, particularly for those placed outside the LA area
 - NEW 7: Leaving Care staff to receive adequate training and development to ensure they have the skills to respond to young people's needs around mental health and well-being, domestic abuse, drug and alcohol use and sexual health.
 - NEW8: All services to seek the voice of children when considering the quality of services provided and making decisions regarding service development

4 Conclusion

4.1 The report will provide members with an overview of the progress being made in implementing the Safeguarding Children Learning and Improvement Plan focusing on the Improvement Plan priority to provide coherent and coordinated early help services to children and their families.

5. Recommendations

5.1 The Scrutiny Committee is asked to:-

(1) To note the improvements made to date and the proposed changes to the Learning and Improvement Plan that are currently being considered by members of the Improvement Board. If all changes are agreed there will be 50 actions contained within the Plan (excluding 'completed' actions). 26 of the 50 actions will be ragged Dark Green to be monitored for several months to ensure the improvements are sustained before moving to a completed status. A full version of the plan can be found in Appendix A.

(2) To note that the third Ofsted Monitoring Visit (2nd & 3rd February 2017) focused on Children Looked After and achieving Permanence. Once the report is published in March 2017 we will consider if further actions need to be added to plan.

6. Glossary

None

7 Background Papers

Safeguarding Children Learning and Improvement Plan

Priority1: Recruiting, retaining and developing a skilled and confident social care workforce.

Outcome: There is permanent and stable social work workforce. The workforce is well qualified and motivated with access to high quality professional development and supervision focused on delivering excellent outcomes for children, young people and their families. There are attractive career pathways enabling the organisation to retain social workers and support them into advanced practitioner and management roles.

Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Time	RAG Initial	RAG Previous	RAG Current
1.1 - Ofsted 7 (a) Implement a workforce strategy and strategic working group with a focus on improving the recruitment and retention of social workers	90% of social work posts are filled with permanent employees; 80% of social work management posts are filled with permanent employees. There is a reduced reliance on agency social workers. <u>To be evidenced through performance</u> <u>information</u>	Principal Social Worker & Director of Children's Social Care	03/16	A	A	DG
1.4 - Ofsted 7 (c) Commission training to improve the qualifications, skills and confidence of all practitioners responsible for supervising contact.	Children have appropriate and supported contact with family members and other people who are important to them. <i>To be evidenced through casework audits.</i>	Principal Social Worker & Director of Children's Social Care	03/16	A	A	DG
1.5 Improve the quality and recording of professional supervision to ensure that it is reflective, improves the quality of practice through case discussion and focuses on professional and personal development.	Supervision records are clear, up-to-date and demonstrate reflective practice. <u>To be evidenced through performance information and</u> <u>observation.</u>	Associate Director	12/15	A	LG	DG
NEW 1: Recruit and retain a workfoce that meets the needs of young people in line with the new structure for the service.	TBC	ТВС	TBC			

Priority 2: Providing coherent and coordinated early help services to children and their families.

Outcome: Children and families in need of help are identified early and their needs are assessed; targeted support is provided to address the assessed needs child and their family which brings multi-agency services together to improve outcomes and reduce the likelihood of needs escalating so that they require support from statutory social work services.

Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Time	RAG Initial	RAG Previous	RAG Current
2.1 - Ofsted 18 Put in place a coherent and	The framework clearly sets out the early help offer and	Director of	06/16	А	А	Α
coordinated early help offer.	referral pathways. The early help offer is available to	Children's				
	children and families which meets their needs.	Services &				
	Tourstad and hale intercentions are affective at an entities	Director of				
	Targeted early help interventions are effective at preventing the escalation of children's needs.	Early Help				

Priority 3: Improving the quality and timeliness of assessment and care planning

Outcome: Assessments and plans are timely and analytical with clear identification of needs and risks and a focus on measurable goals and outcomes for children and young people, including planning for permanency where this is appropriate.

Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Time	RAG Initial	RAG Previous	RAG Current
3.2 - Ofsted 3 (a) Refocus the work of the MASH so that it becomes an effective front-door into early help and children's social care services, with appropriate and timely decision-making and the prompt allocation of cases for assessment or S47 investigation.	The MASH process and team structure is reviewed to facilitate timely decision-making on contacts into children's services. 90% of contacts have decisions made on their outcome (referral, IAG, NFA etc.) within 24 hours. <u>To be evidenced through compliance reporting and performance information</u>	Director of Children's Services & Director of Early Help	12/1	LG	LG	DG
3.3 - Ofsted 3 (b) Implement a duty social work team responsible for receiving referrals from the MASH for assessment or S47.	Review current processes and arrangements to ensure that they provide a safe, appropriate and timely response.	Director of Children's Social Care	01/16	A	Α	DG

Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Time	RAG Initial	RAG Previous	RAG Current
	Look at best practice and establish proposal for implementing Duty and Advice arrangements that are safe, appropriate and sustainable Consult with partners on proposed arrangements					
	Implement new arrangements					
	There is an effective duty social work team in place facilitating the appropriate and prompt allocation of cases for assessment or S47 investigation					
	65% of initial child assessments are completed within agreed timescales (60% core assessments; 90% of S47 investigations are completed within agreed timescales (15 w/days). <u>To be evidenced through compliance reporting</u> <u>and performance information.</u>					
3.7 - Ofsted 5 Ensure that assessments, care plans and decisions to initiate S47 investigations are approved and clearly recorded by a manager in a timely manner; implement a mechanism to monitor compliance.	Assessments, care plans and decisions to initiate S47 investigations are approved and clearly recorded by a manager in a timely manner. Practice is monitored through regular performance reports and casework audits. <u>To be</u> <u>evidenced through performance information and casework</u> <u>audits.</u>	Director of Children's Social Care	09/15	A	LG	DG

Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Time	RAG Initial	RAG Previous	RAG Current
3.9 Implement a single assessment framework and supporting protocol for all early help and children's social care assessments for children pre-birth to age 18 years.	A single assessment framework (with supporting guidance and/or protocol) is in place which helps to improve the quality of assessments. <u>To be evidenced through</u> <u>compliance reporting and casework audits.</u>	Director of Children's Social Care)	10/15	A	LG	DG
3.10 Improve the consistency and quality of <u>case</u> <u>chronologies and genograms</u> and ensure these are consistently used to inform assessment and care planning.	 50% of case files have a complete and up-to-date chronology (updated within the last 6 weeks) which has been used to inform assessment and care planning. 75% of case files have a complete and up-to-date chronology (updated within the last 6 weeks) which has 	Director of Children's Social Care	06/16	A	A	A
	been used to inform assessment and care planning <u>To be evidenced through performance information and</u> <u>casework audits.</u>					
3.11 Implement the CAADA-DASH tool to identify and assess the risk of domestic abuse and determine which cases should be referred to the MARAC and what other support should be provided.	There is an effective tool in place to identify and assess the risk of domestic abuse on children and young people which ensures that appropriate support is provided and appropriate cases are referred to the MARAC.	Director Children's Services & Partners	03/16	A	LG	DG
	Information provided informs the development of strategy and services for families affected by domestic violence <u>To be evidenced through compliance reporting and</u> <u>casework audits and service development</u>					4

Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Time	RAG	RAG	RAG
				Initial	Previous	Current
3.12 - Ofsted 19 (a) Implement a tracking tool for children missing from home, care and education which bring together key information from partner agencies to inform risk assessment and safety planning.	There are clear arrangements in place to systematically gather information in relation to: children missing from home; children missing from care; Children missing education;	CSE Strategic Co-ordinator	12/15	A	LG	DG
	There are agreed multi agency arrangements in place to: share information assess and identify risk; ensure that there is a safety plan in place for children identified as being at risk;					
	There is a training programme in place to ensure that staff are able to assess and respond appropriately to children who are missing from home or care and those missing education; <u>To be evidenced through compliance reporting</u> <u>and casework audits.</u>					
3.13 - Ofsted 19 (b) Ensure that return home or return to care interviews is routinely completed for all missing children in line with agreed local protocols.	 100% of children who have been missing from home or care receive a return interview. Cumulated learning from return interviews is used to inform service development. <u>To be evidenced through</u> 	Head of Looked After Children CSE Strategic	12/15	A	LG	DG

Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Time	RAG	RAG	RAG
				Initial	Previous	Current
	performance information and casework audits.	Co-ordinator				
3.14 - Ofsted 19 (c) Embed the risk assessment matrix for child sexual exploitation and improve the referral pathway into the multi-agency sexual exploitation group in line with agreed local protocols.	Children at risk of sexual exploitation are identified and risk-assessed to ensure appropriate safety planning, intervention and referral to the multi-agency sexual exploitation group. <u>To be evidenced through casework</u> <u>audits.</u>	CSE Strategic Co-ordinator	12/15	A	LG	DG
3.15 Implement a template for child in need plans and child protection plans.	A template for child in need plans and child protection plans (with supporting guidance is developed; Template reviewed to assess impact and amended as required. <u>To be evidenced through compliance reporting</u> <u>and casework audits.</u>	Director of Children's Social Care	06/06	A	LG	LG
3.16 Implement a template for recording actions and progress with CIN for use at CIN and core group meetings. This should clearly identify the task, lead professional and timescale for completion.	Template, with supporting guidance, is developed; Template reviewed to assess impact and amended as required. <u>To be evidenced through compliance reporting and</u> <u>casework audits.</u>	Director of Children's Social Care	06/06	A	LG	LG
3.18 Improve the quality of assessments for children with disabilities, including the assessments of young people that are due to transition to adult services.	Improved assessments of children with disabilities lead to the timely provision of support and services. <u>To be</u> <u>evidenced through casework audits.</u>	Director of Children's Social Care	03/16	A	A	LG
3.19 Develop and implement a formal case escalation procedure for the child protection	A formal case escalation procedure is in place and effective at progressing cases towards improved outcomes where	Director of Children's	12/15	LG	LG	DG

Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Time	RAG Initial	RAG Previous	RAG Current
conference service and the independent reviewing service.	there is professional disagreement. <u>To be evidenced</u> <u>through compliance reporting and casework audits.</u>	Services (IRO Manager)				
3.20 Provide or commission a family group conference service.	Family-based solutions are fully considered for children subject to a child protection plan or all children likely to enter care proceedings. <u>To be evidenced through</u> <u>compliance reporting and casework audit and reduction in</u> <u>the number of children looked after is reduced</u>	Director of Children's Services	12/16	A	A	DG
NEW 2: Improve the recording and consistency of assessments	ТВС	ТВС	ТВС			
NEW 3: Reduce the number of re-referrals to children's social care	ТВС	ТВС	ТВС			
NEW 4: Evaluate the effectiveness of support services for children and families who are at risk of domestic violence	TBC	TBC	ТВС			
NEW 5: Review all children in need under section 17 to ensure they have a plan aimed at reducing risk and improving their welfare that is consistently reviewed and updated to reflect children's changing needs	TBC	TBC	ТВС			

Priority 4: Ensuring high quality support and services for looked after children and effective permanency planning

Outcome: Looked-after children have access to high quality care planning, review and support. They are supported in stable care placements and have access to and attend good schools. There are sound arrangements to plan for and achieve permanency where the decision is that a child will not be able to return home. There are effective corporate parenting approaches.

Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Time	RAG	RAG	RAG
				Initial	Previous	Current
4.2 Complete a review of all care plans for looked- after children to ensure that every child with a plan	Life story work has taken place or is planned, in accordance with the child's age and circumstances life-story work. <u>To</u>	Director of Children's	03/16	А	LG	LG
for long-term care has a robust plan for permanence; also ensure that there is effective life- story work.	be evidenced through performance information and casework audits.	Social Care				
4.3 - Ofsted 14 Update the <u>Placement Sufficiency</u> <u>and Commissioning Strategy</u> to ensure the local authority has sufficient breadth and quality of placements to meet the needs of children looked-	There is placement for choice for children becoming looked-after.	Director of Children's Social Care	12/16	A	A	A
after.	Placement stability for looked-after children is good: 89% of looked-after children who have been in care for 2.5 years or more have been in the same placement for 2 years. <u>To be evidenced through compliance reporting and performance information.</u>					
4.4 - Ofsted 20 Review the arrangements for supervised contact to ensure these are driven by children's needs.	Supervision Contact policy developed Supervised contact arrangements are appropriate and are based on children's assessed needs. <u>To be evidenced</u> <u>through compliance reporting and casework audits.</u>	Director of Children's Social Care	03/06	A	A	A
4.5 - Ofsted 21	Mechanisms to track the progress and achievement of	Director of	03/16	LG	LG	LG

Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Time	RAG	RAG	RAG
				Initial	Previous	Current
Strengthen the Virtual School by implementing mechanisms to track the progress of all looked-after children and care leavers and ensure appropriate action is taken where they are not meeting levels of expected progress.	looked-after children 4-16 are in place.Procedure and process for escalating cases where children are not making expected progress in place.Data on cases escalated gathered and analysed to inform service developmentGap between looked after children and other children is reduced at all stages. To be evidenced through compliance reporting and performance information.	Education				
4.6 - Ofsted 22 Improve the quality and monitoring of all personal education plans with clear targets and action plans to achieve those targets.	Guidance on Personal Education Plans reviewed and reissued evidenced through documentation and feedback from participants	Director of Education	03/16	LG	A	A
	95% of eligible looked-after children have a current personal education plan. <u>To be evidenced through performance information and casework audits.</u>					
4.8 Implement an awareness campaign with all agencies with high-time access to children and young people to promote private fostering requirements.	Awareness campaign developed; Awareness campaign There is a 100% increase in private fostering notifications to the local authority. <u>To be evidenced performance</u> <u>information.</u>	Director of Children's Social Care	09/16	A	LG	DG

Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Time	RAG Initial	RAG Previous	RAG Current
4.9 Ensure that all private fostering arrangements have a current assessment and children are visited regularly (every 6 weeks in the first year and every 12 weeks in subsequent years).	100% of children known to be living in private fostering arrangements have a current assessment and are visited regularly. <u>To be evidenced through performance</u> <u>information.</u>	Director of Children's Social Care	03/16	A	LG	DG
4.10 - Ofsted 23 Establish an effective recruitment strategy for adopters including a foster to adopt policy.	There is an effective recruitment strategy for adopters in place. There is a 25% increase in the number of prospective adopters in Stage 2 (assessment). <u>To be evidenced through</u> <u>performance information.</u>	Director of Children's Social Care	06/16	A	LG	DG
4.11 - Ofsted 24 Develop and implement a comprehensive post-adoption support offer.	Revised post-adoption support offer in place which provides children and adopters with support that meets their needs. There are a low number of adoption breakdowns. <u>To be</u> <u>evidenced through compliance reporting and performance</u> <u>information.</u>	Head of Looked After Children	03/16	A	LG	DG
NEW 6 : Improve procedures to assure the quality of alternative educational provision, particularly for those placed outside the LA area	TBC	TBC	ТВС			
NEW 7 : Leaving Care staff to receive adequate training and development to ensure they have the skills to respond to young people's needs around mental health and well-being, domestic abuse, drug and alcohol use and sexual health.	TBC	TBC	ТВС			

Priority 5: Putting the voice of the child at the centre of social care practice.

Outcome: The views, wishes and feelings of children and young people are fully and consistently considered in social work assessments, care plans (including the PEP), case conferences, visits and reviews.

Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Time	RAG Initial	RAG Previous	RAG Current
5.1 - Ofsted 6 Ensure that children are seen regularly in line with agreed timescales and that their views inform assessments, care planning and reviews.	75% of children are seen in a timely manner by social workers when completing social work assessments (within 10 w/days). 80% of children subject to child protection plans are seen every 10 w/days. 80% of looked-after children are seen every 6 weeks. 100% of children in need are seen every 8 weeks. <u>To be evidenced through</u> <u>performance information, casefile audit and dialogue with</u> <u>children.</u>	Associate Director	09/15	LG	LG	DG
NEW 8: All services to seek the voice of children when considering the quality of services provided and making decisions regarding service development	TBC	TBC	ТВС			

Priority 6: Supporting young people leaving care to have a positive and successful transition to adulthood and independence.

Outcome: Plans for young people leaving care are effective and address their individual needs. They have the skills and emotional resilience to move to independence, and are able to successfully access education, employment, training and safe housing.

Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Time	RAG Initial	RAG Previous	RAG Current
6.3 - Ofsted 26 Improve pathway plans so that they reflect the needs and aspirations of young people and which involves them in the planning process	Current pathway plan revised; Care experienced young people consulted on the revised format; 100% of eligible looked-after children have a current pathway plan that supports their transition into adulthood and appropriately reflects their needs and aspirations. <u>To</u> <u>be evidenced through performance information and</u> <u>casework audits.</u>	Director of Children's Social Care	03/16	LG	A	A
6.4 - Ofsted 27 Improve arrangements to provide and monitor education, employment and training opportunities for care leavers and increase the range and take-up of apprenticeships and work-based training.	 Opportunities for apprenticeships and work-based training for care leavers are increased ; 70% of care leavers are in education, employment or training. <u>To be evidenced through performance</u> <u>information.</u> 	Director of Education	03/16	LG	LG	DG
6.5 Implement improved commissioning arrangements to secure a broader range of housing options for care leavers.	Commissioning arrangements for care leavers are reviewed Looked-after children have a greater choice about their accommodation when they leave care. 90% of care leavers live in suitable accommodation. There are low levels of tenancy breakdown. <u>To be evidenced</u> <u>through performance information.</u>	Director of Children's Social Care Head of Housing	03/16	LG	LG	DG

Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Time	RAG Initial	RAG Previous	RAG Current
6.6 Implement a health passport or equivalent for each care leaver to record their health history.	 Heath passport implemented which gives care leavers access to their health history. <i>To be evidenced through surveys and focus groups</i>. 100% of care leavers are provided with their Health Passport and helped to understand their health history 	Director of Children's Social Care Designated LAC Nurse	06/16	LG	A	A

Priority 7: Embedding strong quality assurance and governance mechanisms to drive continual improvement in services.

Outcome: Services and outcomes for children and young people are continually improving because there are effective management and governance systems in place.

Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Time	RAG Initial	RAG Previous	RAG Current
7.1 - Ofsted 9 Develop and implement a multi- agency strategic plan with agreed priorities to shape services for children and young people in Sunderland based on a clear understanding of local need.	Children's Strategic Planning Group Established; Information on local need gathered and analysed Priorities agreed; Strategic plan is in place which informs the work of multi- agency partners and the local commissioning of services in line with need. <u>To be evidenced through compliance</u> <u>reporting.</u>	Director of Children's Services	03/16	A	LG	LG
7.2 Ensure that governance arrangements are in place to drive forward the strategic plan and working closely with the LSCB and improvement board.	See above	Director of Children's Services	03/16	LG	LG	LG

Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Time	RAG Initial	RAG Previous	RAG Current
7.3 - Ofsted 10 Develop and implement a quality assurance framework that clearly establishes how the service will test the quality of practice, prioritise areas for improvement, and measure the impact of change on children and young people.	A comprehensive quality assurance framework is in place. Information gathered through the quality assurance framework informs practice and service development. <u>To be evidenced through minutes of the Practice</u> <u>Improvement Group, Service and Training Plans.</u>	Director of Children's Services	12/15	LG	LG	DG
7.4 - Ofsted 11 Develop and implement a performance management framework and datasets (strategic and operational) so that managers are able and address areas of poor performance and celebrate improved performance.	Strategic and operational datasets are in place; Practice Improvement Group established; Performance Management Information is used at all levels of the Service to monitor performance and informs practice and service development. <u>To be evidenced</u> <u>through minutes of the Practice Improvement Group,</u> <u>Service and Training Plans.</u> . <u>To be evidenced through</u> <u>compliance reporting.</u>	Director of Children's Services	12/15	A	LG	DG
7.5 - Ofsted 12 Strengthen the function of the Scrutiny Committee so that it has a clearer impact on improving outcomes for children. This to include (a) training and development of Elected Members and (b) implementation of clear forward plan for scrutiny.	The scrutiny committee is able to demonstrate its impact on improving outcomes for children and young people. <u>To</u> <u>be evidenced through an annual review or impact</u> <u>statement.</u>	Director of Children's Services	12/15	LG	LG	LG
7.7 - Ofsted 16 (a) Review all strategies, policies and operating procedures to ensure these are current, appropriate and in line with statutory and other best practice guidance. Ensure that all strategies, policies and protocols are accessible and understood by all	Standards of social work practice are improved through the implementation of a clear and accessible manual of strategies, policies and operating procedures. <u>To be</u> <u>evidenced through compliance reporting.</u>	Principal Social Worker	12/15	A	LG	DG

Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Time	RAG Initial	RAG Previous	RAG Current
the professionals working to them.						
7.8 - Ofsted 16 (b) Develop and implement a practice framework or methodology that sets out the standards of practice expected from social workers and Early Help practitioners.	Standards of social work practice are improved through the implementation of a clear and accessible practice framework. <i>To be evidenced through compliance reporting.</i>	Director of Children's Services Principal Social Worker	12/15	LG	LG	DG
7.9 Implement a new electronic social care recording system which enables effective case recording and data sharing and provides appropriate management information.	A new electronic social care recording system is in place that supports the delivery of effective social work practice. <u>To be evidenced through compliance reporting.</u>	Director of Children's Services &	09/16	A	A	A
7.10 Develop and implement minimum standards for case recording.	Minimum standards for case recording are in place that supports the delivery of effective social work practice. <u>To</u> <u>be evidenced through compliance reporting</u> .	Director of Children's Services	12/15	A	LG	DG
7.11 Develop and implement an electronic case management system for allegations made against the children's workforce and reported to the LADO.	An electronic recording system for the LADO service is in place that enables effective case management and information sharing. <u>To be evidenced through compliance</u> <u>reporting.</u>	IRO Manager	03/15	A	LG	DG

Priority 1

Action	Success Measure (s)	RAG
1.2 Complete a skills and audit of the workforce to determine	A completed skills audit is used to baseline the current competencies of the workforce and	С
the current levels of professional competence and to inform the	informs the learning and development offer. <u>To be evidenced through compliance reporting.</u>	
design of the learning and development offer.		
1.3 - Ofsted 7 (b) Develop learning and development pathways	Learning and development pathways are in place based on the core skills and competencies	С
for social workers and Early Help practitioners that sets out the	expected of social workers and Early Help practitioners. Social workers and practitioners report	
core and wider learning expected of all professionals. The social	and are observed to have increased skills and competence. <u>To be evidenced through</u>	
work pathway to be based on the employer standards and the	observation, surveys and focus groups.	
Professional Competencies Framework for social workers.		
1.6 - Ofsted 8 Determine manageable caseloads for social	The average caseload for social workers is 20 and 10% of social workers hold caseloads above the	С
workers and ensure compliance so that they can respond	mean average. To be evidenced through performance information –	
appropriately and in a timely manner to the needs of children	The average caseload for social workers is 18 and 10% of social workers hold caseloads above the	
and young people.	mean average. To be evidenced through performance information	

Priority 3

Action	Success Measure (s)	RAG
3.1 - Ofsted 1 Take urgent action to review the cases of all	A management review of all children and young people who did not, at the point of inspection,	С
children and young people who do not have an allocated social	have an allocated social worker or were not being actively worked with is undertaken and	
worker or who are not being actively worked with, and provide	immediate and appropriate assessment and help is provided as necessary	
immediate and appropriate assessments and help as necessary	100% of cases that meet the threshold for assessment or S47 investigation are allocated to the	
	appropriate social work team. Training for staff on identifying high quality assessments. <u>To be</u>	
	evidenced through compliance reporting and performance information.	
3.4 - Ofsted 4 (a) Complete a management review of all children	The management review of all cases in PLO or care proceedings is completed and that there is	С
being worked with under the PLO or in care proceedings to	assurance that all cases have effective management oversight to ensure timely actions. To be	
ensure that robust plans are in place and that cases are	evidenced through compliance reporting.	
progressing at a pace that matches children's needs.		
3.5 - Ofsted 4 (b) Implement a case tracking system to ensure	A case tracking system is in place and used to monitor timely care proceedings.	С
effective management oversight of cases in the PLO or in care	80% of care proceedings are concluded within agreed timescales (26 weeks). <u>To be evidenced</u>	
proceedings to prevent drift and delay.	through performance information.	
3.8 - Ofsted 15 Commission or directly provide an out-of-hours	Review of existing arrangements completed;	С

Action	Success Measure (s)	RAG
service that meets the emergency needs of children and young	Arrangements in place which ensure that provides	
people and which is effectively coordinated with daytime	Effective out-of-hours support and intervention to children who are in immediate need.	
services.	Arrangements are in place to monitor the work undertaken by the out-of-hours service to inform	
	future planning. To be evidenced by new arrangements in place, reports to the Practice	
	Improvement Meetings and casework audits.	
3.17 Develop and implement a case transfer protocol which sets	There is clear transfer protocol in place which facilitates the smooth step-up/step-down of cases	С
out the pathways, minimum expectations and decision-making	between teams and services. To be evidenced through compliance reporting and casework	
for transferring cases between teams and services.	audits.	

Priority 4

Action	Success Measure (s)	RAG
4.1 - Ofsted 2 Review all cases where children are looked-after	All cases where children are looked after under voluntary arrangements have been reviewed.	С
under voluntary care arrangements (S20) to establish whether	Where voluntary arrangements are not sufficient to ensure a child's safety and emotional	
this legal basis is sufficient to ensure their safety and emotional	wellbeing appropriate action is initiated.	
security.	Information from the review is used to inform training and service development	
	To be evidenced through compliance reporting and casework audits.	
4.7 Put in place a system to ensure that all foster carers have	Foster carers are clear about their delegated authority to make day-to-day decisions for the	С
formal written confirmation of their delegated authority to make	children in their care. <u>To be evidenced through compliance reporting.</u>	
day-to-day decisions for the children in their care.		
4.12 Provide guidance to the adoption panel chair and the	Guidance provided to the adoption panel chair and the fostering panel chair on the requirements	
fostering panel chair on the requirements of their reports so that	of their reports	
the panels are able to demonstrate the impact of their work on	The reports of the adoption panel chair and the fostering panel chair are able to demonstrate the	
achieving permanency for children.	impact of their work on achieving permanency for children. <u>To be evidenced in the six-monthly</u>	
	and annual reports of the panel chairs.	

Priority 6

Action	Success Measure (s)	RAG
6.1 - Ofsted 25 Improve ways for social workers and personal	Leaving Care Team have access to space that enables care leavers to have drop in access to the	С
advisers to keep in touch with care leavers by providing them	service.	
with a space for them to drop-in and have access to the Leaving	80 per cent of Care leavers are in contact with their social workers and personal advisers. <u>To be</u>	
Care Team.	evidenced through surveys and focus groups.	
6.2 Produce a clear and accessible statement and policy that sets	Statement and Policy developed that informs care leavers about their rights and entitlements	С
out the rights and entitlements of care leavers.	leading to an increased take-up of services. To be evidenced through surveys and focus groups.	

Priority 7

Action	Success Measure (s)	RAG
7.6 - Ofsted 13 Ensure that the Corporate Parenting Group has	Terms of Reference and membership are agreed;	С
clear terms of reference and the appropriate membership to be	Work plan developed	
focused on improving the quality of services provided to looked-	The corporate parenting group is able to demonstrate its impact on improving outcomes for	
after children and care leavers. This to include a forward plan of	looked-after children. <u>To be evidenced through an annual review or impact statement.</u>	
scrutiny areas.		