



SHORT GUIDE FOR PROFESSIONALS
Cheshire East
Children and Young People's
Improvement Plan
 to meet the Ofsted Recommendations
November 2015-2016



What is the Children and Young People's Improvement Plan?

Our Improvement Plan sets out how children's services in Cheshire East, as a partnership, will continue to improve outcomes for children and young people by ensuring that **all our services are good or better**. The plan addresses the recommendations from the Ofsted Inspection in July 2015.

What do we want to achieve?

We want to make Cheshire East a **great place to be young**, where children and young people are happy, healthy, safe, and have lots of opportunities to enjoy life, learn and develop.

We want all children and young people in Cheshire East to:

- o **Be safe, and protected from harm**
- o Have a **loving, caring and stable environment** where they can grow and develop
- o Have a **permanent home as soon as possible** when they need to become cared for by the local authority
- o **Achieve to their full potential**
- o Have a range of opportunities for and the **right support to go into employment, further education or training** when they reach adulthood

Children, young people and parents have told us they want:

- o **To be listened to**
- o **To be included in their plans, and understand what the concerns are and why they need a plan**
- o For **professionals to be clear with them** about what is going to or could happen

We have achieved significant improvements to services over the past two years, and we do have good quality practice in Cheshire East. This plan is about ensuring that **all our practice is consistently good or better** so that we can ensure that all children, young people and families experience good outcomes, and get the right service they need at the right time.



How will make it happen?

Our plan focuses on developing a culture of good practice, which means that all professionals **put children and young people first** – making sure we find ways to hear their views, that we consider what it’s like to be them, that we champion their best interests, and that we put them at the heart of all our decision making.

Inspire
Believe
Succeed

We will develop **a culture of continual learning, support and challenge**, where everyone supports each other to get the best outcomes for children and young people.



We will invest in and recognise the skills of our staff. We have very passionate, committed and creative professionals in Cheshire East, we will cultivate these people and make the most of their skills, and continue to attract new highly qualified people excited to work with us.

What will we do?

Our plan has four priorities that we will concentrate on:

1. Embedding listening to and acting on the voice of children and young people throughout services

We know that children, young people and parents experience better outcomes when they understand what professionals are doing, how and why. We will involve children, young people, parents and carers in decision making from the outset, as they are the people best placed to know what works for them.

We will:

- **Strengthen the use of feedback from complaints** to drive improvements to services
- **Use feedback** from children, young people, parents and carers for all services **to evaluate how well we are performing.**

“The participation of children and young people is a real strength in Cheshire East. Political and senior leaders create meaningful opportunities for young people to join them in strategic thinking and planning.”

2. Ensuring frontline practice is consistently good, effective and outcome focused

Overall, practice needs to be more consistent to provide a good service to children and young people. We will support managers to be leaders for good practice, and we will continue with our successful recruitment programme attracting the right people to work with our families in Cheshire East.

We will:

- **Develop one way of working across children's social care services** and deliver training to support this so that the support provided throughout the child's journey is consistently good.
- **Produce clear guidance so all professionals know what is expected of them**, what good practice looks like, and feel confident to challenge and support others where this is not happening. This includes the Multi-agency Practice Standards, Cheshire East Social Work Practice Standards, Missing from Home and Care Protocol, Policy on step up and step down, and revising the Escalation Process.
- **Support practitioners through a comprehensive training programme** from the LSCB Multi-agency training, and launch a new mandatory core training offer for Social Workers and their Managers.
- **Strengthen supervision** through delivering training on effective supervision to Social Workers and Managers, introducing minimum standards and completing monthly audits on the quality of supervision.
- **Share and celebrate good practice** to increase recognition and understanding of the features of good practice.
- **Introduce the Safer Children Model for Child Protection Conferences.** This model focuses on ways to include the family in planning, and focuses on the strengths of the family as well as the areas that need to improve, which will help to engage children, young people and families in the planning process. It also helps families to understand why the plan is in place and what needs to happen to achieve it.
- **Establish the Early Help Brokerage Service**, which will ensure timely referrals to early help, and will identify the best service for the child or young person and the family's needs.
- **Increase management capacity and appoint a newly designated lead Group Manager and Practice Manager for Care leavers**
- **Hold sessions on specific areas in Practice and Performance Workshops to raise awareness and understanding**, including on Private Fostering and Connected Persons Arrangements, Child Sexual Exploitation, and Missing from Home and Care.

“Children's views and ideas are included in assessments and recorded on case files. Social workers see children regularly and speak warmly about them.”

4. Improving senior management oversight of the impact of services on children and young people

We will improve how we measure the impact of services on children and young people so that we have a clear picture, and a joined up approach for all our services. This will help us to effectively target our efforts on the areas that need it most, and help us to learn from the services we know are working really effectively. We will ensure that all managers have the information they need to know how effectively their service is operating in order to drive improvements day to day within their teams.

We will:

- **Develop an overarching performance monitoring framework** for children's services
- **Develop performance reporting** for all children's services
- **Introduce a system for regular reporting on services to senior managers and partnership boards**

3. Ensuring the partnership effectively protects and ensures good outcomes for all children and young people in Cheshire East

We need to unite our services and continue to develop partnership working by developing one way of working. This will make it clear what is expected from each person's role, and will ensure that everyone is focused on achieving the best outcome for children and young people. We will improve links between the strategic decision-making partnership boards, and we will involve practitioners across the partnership in driving changes to services. This will help us to continually improve our services and will make sure that our partnership services are joined up.

We will:

- **Establish a multi-agency Missing from Home and CSE Team.** This will improve joint working and information sharing and will provide a specialist resource for advice and support for practitioners.
- **Launch a new campaign around the neglect strategy** to embed the use of the graded care profile, a tool to help practitioners assess the impact of neglect.
- **Continue to work with practitioners across the partnership to embed ownership, challenge, reflection and support** through LSCB communications and partnership forums such as the Safeguarding Children Operational Group.



How will we know we are making a difference?

We are improving our services so that children and young people experience better outcomes. To assess the impact of our improvements on children and young people, we will use information from four different sources.

<h3>Performance</h3> <p>An up to date, month by month picture, showing a clear trajectory of progress. Allowing us to set targets and evaluate our performance against our statistical neighbours.</p>	<h3>Feedback from Children and Young People, Parents and Carers</h3> <p>What children and young people, parents and carers want and is important to them, what their experience is of our services.</p>
<h3>Qualitative Information</h3> <p>Detailed information on what is working well and areas for improvement for specific services, including what the causes of issues are.</p>	<h3>Feedback from Staff</h3> <p>What staff know would help them to work with families, what is working well, and what could work better.</p>

This will allow us to triangulate the evidence so that we know what impact improvements are making. We think it is important to have a continual learning and self-improvement culture, and we will use information from these sources to continually evaluate and improve our services throughout the year. We will continue to communicate the findings of this activity to staff, children and young people, partners, and other key stakeholders through our e-newsletters, staff forums, and partnership Boards.

The Health and Wellbeing Board will receive quarterly updates on progress against the actions in our plan, performance and quality assurance information to ensure that we achieve our goals.

This plan is focused on activity to improve services over the next year as part of a larger improvement programme over three years. A new Improvement Plan will be developed in September 2016 for the next stage in our improvement journey.

Feedback

If you have any thoughts or views on this plan, or how well we are progressing, please do contact us at C&FSpeakUp@cheshireeast.gov.uk

