

CHESHIRE EAST IMPROVEMENT NOTICE - PROGRESS AND NEXT STEPS

| Ref | Action | Progress | Next Steps |
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| IN1 | Develop and implement a whole systems framework to manage families pathways across the continuum of need - part of step up/step down -review and monitor effectiveness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSCB has reviewed and revised thresholds document • CHECS monitoring through audits • Review of Children in Need (CiN) plans from September 2013 • CAF refreshed training launched • New CAF forms and processes framework | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Policy and procedures against new thresholds document • Continue to monitor through ChECS performance management framework |
| IN2 | Improve the quality, delivery and management of child protection plans. Child protection plans comply with Working Together 2013 (WT13). Review points with other professionals/child and evidence of management oversight and decision making set out in each case. Information from case audits confirm that all actions have been carried out in accordance with stat guidance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New practice standards launched • Performance reporting extended and enhanced • Revised supervision policy and procedure • Implemented practice excellence training • Auditing cases against areas for development • Actions plans and tracker in place from audits • New S47 training • Independent Review of Independent Safeguarding Chair (IRO) role carried out • Implemented new combined assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice standards for ISCs • Increase compliance with statutory visits and core groups • Review risk assessment models, core CP planning tools and paperwork to establish set format • Improve measureable outcomes in plans • Implement new model • Review and monitor effectiveness of new model through audits |
| IN3 | Views of children and young people, their experiences and needs are recorded on their case files inform care plans and work of LSCB. Include requirement in QA framework that Council sets up systems to ensure that info is recorded and report shared with LSCB | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included in practice standards • Quality checks through audits • IRO report to LSCB • New Children's Rights and Participation (CR&P) Service, delivered by the Children's | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full implementation of CR&P Service • Ensure views of children and young people is included in the Quality Assurance Framework |

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| IN4 | Develop and implement a system of risk assessment to inform developments on all CP and CIN plans ensure consistent judgements made | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See IN2 above | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See IN2 above |
| IN5 | All management oversight must be conducted in line with standards set out in 'WT13'. Council to set standards agreed with IB. Regular qualitative feedback reports to IB/LSC. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See action plans A2 and A4 • Practice standards launched that set out requirements re management oversight • Improvement Board quality assurance framework established • Additional auditing capacity secured to carry out bi-monthly audits • Supervision audits | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-monthly audit reports to Board |
| IN6 | Ensure that individual children, families and staff are engaged and provide regular feedback to improve and shape practice. Ensure staff views considered re work and workplace using staff surveys etc. Report back to IB | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See action plan C4 • New Children's Rights and Participation (CR&P) Service, delivered by the Children's Society • Staff survey completed November • Staff engaged through practice and performance workshops, Transforming Social Work Practice Group and Practice Champions • Policies and procedures around complaints, compliments etc reviewed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to Improvement Board on engagement with staff, children, young people and their families |
| IN7 | Ensure that performance management systems are reviewed. Focus on mgt oversight and role of CPC Chair and IRO. Points from review implemented and impact of changes monitored to check resulted in improvements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See action plan A4 • Revised refreshed and enhanced range of reports easily accessed • Performance challenge sessions • Bespoke report to identify gaps • Practice & performance workshops • Impact report developed • Performance book developed • Realigned functions of ISC to focus on cared for and other • Independent review of ISCs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor impact of changes to check these have resulted in improvement |

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| IN8 | <p>Improve adoption timescales. Working closely with voluntary adoption agencies to share projections of the demand for adopters and ensure the right number and type of adopters are available at the right time. Developing and implementing a robust plan to place older children, those with disabilities and sibling groups more swiftly with an adoptive family; and</p> <p>Making best use of the funding available through the Adoption Reform Grant to put in place innovative and sustainable processes to clear any backlogs, find adopters for harder to place children and address any structural challenges</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action plan completed to improve timescales and performance • Established Four4Adoption – collaborative arrangements between 4 LAs, including Cheshire East • Established family finding meetings on a monthly basis (including invitations to the the VAAs) • Commissioned voluntary provider (After Adoption) to family find for hard to place • Increased recruitment capacity • Increased advertising • Employed sessional workers to assist in assessing prospective adopters • Contracted with Families that Last re child specific recruitment – using bulk ‘buying power’, and pooling resources such as commissioning and contracting • Delivered recruitment, preparation and assessment training and information evenings more frequently through collaboration • Developed new collaborative adoption tracker • Established adoption activity days | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor and improve timescales for adoption • Continue to roll out adoption activity days • Roll out ‘Aadopt’ therapeutic programme for adoptive parents of children aged 3-8. • Roll out ‘fostering to adopt’ • Continue to look at innovative ways to improve adoption numbers • Develop self-directed learning material |
| IN9 | <p>Ensure the Council’s quality assurance systems are prepared taking into account the Children’s Safeguarding Performance Information Framework, LSCB quality assurance and joint-auditing, and the LSCB local learning and improvement framework referred to in ‘<i>Working Together</i>’.</p> <p>Ensure that quality assurance systems focus on qualitative evidence and the experience of</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement Board quality assurance framework agreed by the Board • Increased audit programme for Council and LSCB • Existing wider framework reviewed • Good practice examples researched • Safeguarding Peer Review arranged for March 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular qualitative feedback reports of the audits to be made available to the Improvement Board and LSCB • Wider quality assurance framework to be presented to the Board |

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| | <p>the child and family and are implemented by all those in the Council's Children's Service. The system must include regular qualitative auditing arrangements of case files, with independent oversight and challenge to ensure the quality and timeliness of recording and compliance with recording in individual case records (as set out in '<i>Working Together</i>') and that an assessment of risk is recorded. The frequency of the oversight and challenge must be agreed by the Improvement Board who should also work with the LSCB. Regular qualitative feedback reports of the audits must be made available to the Improvement Board and LSCB which demonstrate continuing improvement in the quality and effectiveness of support to vulnerable children.</p> | | |
| IN10 | <p>Agree with the Improvement Board and the LSCB the frequency, scope and number of quality assurance audits. Ensure that the quality assurance audits are carried out and the performance information and evidence from the audits are analysed and reported to the Improvement Board and LSCB. Analysis should be used to inform action taken by the Council and partners to bring about improvements in safeguarding social work practice and casework. The Council and agency partners must demonstrate that findings from file audits are used to improve social work practice and that there is compliance with management and case work practice standards. The impact of these areas will be evidenced through the continuous</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Assurance Framework agreed by the Board • Audit schedule established • Additional audit capacity recruited | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report audit activity to the Board • Revise action plans based on audit findings |

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| | improvement of social work practice. | | |
| IN11 | <p>Implement a programme of induction, training, mentoring and continuous professional development for all children's social care staff including managers – Working with partners to improve this within their own organisations To ensure staff have the skills to complete high quality and timely assessments. Attention must be paid to the eight standards for employers of social workers[1].</p> <p>In particular, ensure that this programme includes training for staff and managers on risk analysis.</p> <p>The Council should report the impact of the training on improving outcomes for children to the Improvement Board.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme of induction, training, mentoring and CPD established • New framework for training systems • Social Work charter implemented • Practice champions identified • Improved IT for Social Workers • Better office accommodation for Social Workers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing programme of induction, training, mentoring and CPD • Work with partners to improve collaborative work around induction, training, mentoring and CPD. • Evaluate training for staff and managers on risk analysis • Report to the Board on workforce development and impact on improving outcomes for children and young people |
| IN12 | <p>Develop an overall workforce strategy. The workforce strategy must include clear recruitment and retention strategies. It should be implicitly linked to the improvement plan, and clearly related to service plans and audit outcomes.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Development Strategy drafted • Recruitment and retention strategy approved • Developing bespoke ILM course for Practice Consultants • Coaching and mentoring in place • S47 training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review recruitment and retention strategy • Report workforce strategy to the Board |
| IN13 | <p>Social worker responsibilities and workloads must be clearly and tightly defined and reviewed consistent with their level of experience and competence. Evidence must be provided to show that supervision and support meets social workers needs and that practitioners' workloads do not prevent them carrying out what they and their managers feel</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented workload management system • Caseloads have reduced, as have average caseloads • Realigned structures to reduce changes in Social Workers • Supervision audits • Developing bespoke ILM course | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement actions from supervision audits • Continue to monitor Social Worker caseloads and responsibilities |

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| | <p>to be effective social work practice. Ensure that: workloads and supervision take into account the experience of social workers' and reflect the expectations of the Employer Standards and Supervision Framework , particularly paying attention is paid to case allocation, and case management; and provision of a workload management scheme is used. It is vital that those with responsibility for supervising social workers have relevant experience and have the opportunity to access training and support to fulfil this responsibility Ensure that the Improvement Board receives management information to confirm that this is achieved and sustained.</p> | | |
| IN14 | <p>Ensuring the Council sets out a statement of their vision and ambition for children's services (with a clear set of objectives and timescales) Ensuring this statement is communicated to and implemented by staff and partners such that they have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are held to account in delivering this vision and ambition of the Council, and overall improvement.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing vision and priorities established across LSCB and Children's Trust • Task and finish group established from Children's Trust to review vision • Practice standards in place • 'Child's Journey' workshops planned for February 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-state vision etc to all staff working with children and families across Cheshire East |

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| IN15 | <p>Agree objectives, actions and timescales to monitor progress and assess impact of improvement in the delivery of children's safeguarding services. The Improvement Board must ensure that these actions and timescales are communicated to all staff and the Council's partners who require this information so that they understand their roles and responsibilities in delivering these objectives and improvements. The Improvement Board must also ensure that plans are implemented to agreed timescales</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framework for planning, monitoring and signing off the improvement plan agreed by the Board • Quality assurance framework and schedule agreed by the Board • Improvement newsletter and website established and communicated to all Council staff and partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop ways to communicate with Council and partner agency staff • Report on progress of plans to the Board |
| IN16 | <p>Undertake a review of the effectiveness of partnership working. The implementation of those actions and the impact on improving the working relationship of the Council and their partners will be monitored by the Improvement Board. Working with senior representatives from health, police, schools and voluntary sector to support the LSCB through providing it with the information it requires to undertake an effective role.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance and structures of LSCB reviewed • New Executive Group of LSCB and new ways of working established • Children's Trust governance reviewed and 'new ways of working' agreed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners continue to present safeguarding arrangements and audit activity to LSCB |
| IN17 | <p>Effective assurance arrangements are in place within the Council and across the partnership in line with DfE statutory guidance 'roles and responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children Services'[1] and 'Working Together'; and The ambition for children and young people across Cheshire East is understood and endorsed in practice throughout the Council and across the partnership.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See IN14 above • LSCB governance revised • Weekly meetings with DCS and lead Member • Principal Social Worker reports quarterly to LSCB • Monthly Safeguarding review meeting established with DCS and leadership team, CEO, lead Member and portfolio holder and LSCB Chair re accountability • Regular reports on safeguarding to Scrutiny Committee and Policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See IN14 above • Reports to the Improvement Board |

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| | | Development Group | |
| IN18 | Develop a strategy for strengthening the leadership team across children's services. Includes a plan for permanency, in structure and appointment of personnel, and effective lines of accountabilities to ensure an effective delivery of services. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy included in workforce development strategy • Recruitment and retention plan in place • New council restructure complete | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop further leadership training, grow your own and team building programmes • Review recruitment and retention policy |
| IN19 | Ensure the LSCB is able to scrutinise, monitor, challenge and provide strategic direction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New experienced Chair appointed with additional capacity • Revised governance to improve accountability and effectiveness, including new Executive Group • Revised performance framework agreed • Business plan aligned with Improvement Plan • Principal Social Worker member of Board and provides reports to LSCB • Peer challenge of LSCB arranged for early 2014 • Increased audit activity in place • Learning and Development Framework revised | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report LSCB audits and findings of peer challenge to the Board |
| IN20 | Ensure that multi-agency audits are undertaken by the LSCB and reported to the Improvement Board. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Assurance framework developed and approved by the Board, including multi-agency audits • Programme of multi-agency audits established | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report outcomes of multi-agency audits to the Board |
| IN21 | Establish a clear remit for the Improvement Board, Children's Trust (where relevant), and the LSCB with clear governance, lines of accountability and specific roles of each body in driving forward improvement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of reference established for LSCB, Improvement Board, Executive Group, Safeguarding Review Meeting, including their role in driving forward improvement • Governance document drafted | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present governance document to the Improvement Board |

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| IN22 | Establish procedures that will ensure that each member of the Improvement Board, Children's Partnership Board and the LSCB are aware of the terms of reference for their respective boards and the overall governance, responsibilities and specific roles and the organisations that they represent, in driving forward improvement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of reference established for LSCB, Improvement Board, Executive Group, Safeguarding Review Meeting, including their role in driving forward improvement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly review terms of reference for relevant groups |
| IN23 | Develop and implement a communications strategy that includes mechanisms for listening to 'the voice of the child' (including those who are under five years of age), families, staff and delivery partners. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline communication strategy developed • Foundation work taken place with key stakeholders including Communications Team and Children's Society around communicating with children and young people • Additional communication capacity secured | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise communication strategy with stakeholders • Improvement Board to endorse communication strategy |
| IN24 | Put in place an Improvement Board. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement Board established June 2013. Terms of reference and framework for planning, monitoring and signing off improvements agreed. | |
| IN25 | Develop an improvement plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement plan for Ofsted recommendations approved and part signed off by the Board. • Cross-cutting improvement plan developed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update cross-cutting improvement plan with actions arising from themes from audits, complaints etc |