



Meeting: **Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Date/Time: **Monday, 6 March 2017 at 11.00 am**

Location: **Sparkenhoe Committee Room, County Hall, Glenfield**

Contact: **Ms R Palmer (0116 305 6098)**

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Membership

Mr. S. D. Sheahan CC (Chairman)

Mr. G. Hirst Mr. T. J. Pendleton CC
Mr. J. Kaufman CC Mr. J. Perry
Ms. K. J. Knaggs CC Mrs. C. M. Radford CC
Mrs. C. Lewis Mr. E. D. Snartt CC
Mr. L. J. P. O'Shea CC Mr. G. Welsh CC
Mr. A. E. Pearson CC

A G E N D A SUPPLEMENT

The following report has now been published, agenda item 8 of the main agenda refers.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Report by</u>	
8. Ofsted Inspection of Services for Children in Need of Help and Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers.	Director of Children and Family Services	(Pages 3 - 36)



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CABINET – 10TH MARCH 2017

**OFSTED INSPECTION OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN NEED OF
HELP AND PROTECTION, CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER, AND CARE
LEAVERS**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY
SERVICES**

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet of the outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection of children's social care services in Leicestershire and to present the Action Plan which has been developed to address the recommendations in the Ofsted Report and which sets out the way forward for the development of the Council's Children and Family Services Department.
2. The Cabinet is also asked to note the Department's Improvement Plan which was developed in preparation for the inspection and charts progress made from the time of the inspection to date.

Recommendations

3. The Cabinet is recommended to -
 - (a) Note the content, grades and recommendations of the Ofsted inspection report on children's social care services in Leicestershire;
 - (b) Note the Children and Family Services Improvement Plan which was developed in preparation for the inspection and charts progress made;
 - (c) Note the Action Plan which has been prepared in response to the recommendations in the Ofsted Report and includes proposals for the future development and improvement of services to children and families, and approve the Action Plan as the County Council's formal response to the Ofsted Inspection Report.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. To ensure that members are aware of the measures being taken in response to the Ofsted Report and for the overall development of Children and Family Services.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

5. The findings of the Ofsted inspection were presented to members at a briefing on Monday 13th February.
6. The Children and Family Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider this report at its meeting on 6th March 2017 and its comments will be reported to the Cabinet.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

7. The inspection was carried out in accordance with Ofsted's Single Inspection Framework. The resulting Action Plan will, when implemented, have an impact on the County Council's Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). It will also affect departmental and operational plans which inform the work of the Department.

Resource Implications

8. In the preparation for the Ofsted Inspection, officers of the Council, together with the Independent Chairman of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Boards undertook a self-assessment into the services provided to children and their families. This highlighted a number of areas where improvements needed to be made, the costs of which were reflected in the recent MTFS report approved by the County Council in February 2017.
9. Following the publication of the Ofsted report and the preparation of the Action Plan further work is being undertaken to understand fully the financial implications for the service. This work will be carried out over the next few months and will need to have regard to the impact of changes already made, the views of frontline staff about the effectiveness of change and suggestions for improvements and the Council's extremely challenging financial position.
10. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedures

11. Given the significance of the issues covered, this report will be circulated to all members via Members' News In Brief.

Officer to Contact

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PART B

Background

12. Ofsted is commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) to undertake what is known as the Single Inspection Framework on all English local authority children's social care services. Most councils have now been inspected, with outstanding ones due to be completed in 2017. A new inspection framework will commence in 2018.

The Review Process

13. The inspection of Leicestershire's children's social care services was carried out over four weeks, from 14th November to 8th December 2016. Ten inspectors and one shadow inspector were involved. The inspectors attended 120 meetings, looked at 276 case files, and were provided with around 700 documents.
14. The inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that was being made by the service to the lives of children, young people and their families. They read case files, watched how professional staff worked with families and with each other, and discussed the effectiveness of help and care being given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families.
15. The inspectors also considered the Council's self assessment of its performance which set out its view about how well it is performing and what difference it is making for the young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after and areas for improvement. A copy of improvements underway prior to the inspection which now includes the findings of the Ofsted inspection and the progress made since is attached as Appendix A to this report.

Inspection Findings

16. The findings of the inspection are contained in a detailed report, the executive summary of which is attached at Appendix E. This includes gradings indicating how the service is perceived to be performing in five broad areas and an overall effectiveness rating using the same grading system. The grades are (1) inadequate - which will trigger formal intervention by DfE, (2) requires improvement in order to achieve good, (3) good, and (4) outstanding.
17. To date in relation to overall effectiveness circa 25% of councils have been classed as inadequate, 50% require improvement and 25% are good or outstanding with only two achieving the top grade.
18. Leicestershire has been graded as follows:

Overall effectiveness - Requires improvement to be good

- 1. Children who need help and protection - Requires improvement**

2. **Children looked after and achieving permanence** - Requires improvement
 - 2.1 Adoption performance - Requires improvement
 - 2.2 Experiences and progress of care leavers - Requires improvement
3. **Leadership, management and governance** - Requires improvement.

Report Headlines

Overall effectiveness

19. The report identifies many areas of good practice but also a number of aspects which do need to improve and is a fair and accurate evaluation. Ofsted's appraisal of the service is in line with the Council's own self-assessment, which is recognised within the Report and is a strength. The Service had already identified the need for investment in certain areas and had commenced improvement work prior to the inspection which is also identified positively within the report.

(1) Children who need help and protection

Strengths

20. The Report indicates that children at risk of significant harm are identified and protected through effective interventions by staff. This is the most important finding as it is the key aspect which underpins all of the Department's activities and is the most influential determinate of overall grade.
21. It was also recognised that the Council provides a wide range of good quality early help services which are having a positive impact for families. Child Protection Plans are reviewed effectively and on time and work to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation is robust and cutting edge. The Authority works closely with colleagues in other agencies such as the police and health services to support and protect children and this joint working is developing in areas such as the management of domestic abuse.

Areas for Improvement

22. Children who are not at significant risk do not always receive a timely service which happens due to staffing shortages and inefficient business processes. This was being addressed at the time of the inspection but changes had not had time to have sufficient impact.
23. Whilst there was evidence of good quality assessments and of care or protection plans overall standards were too inconsistent. The number of repeat child protection plans are too high although were seen to be reducing and since the inspection there have been a further reductions to become close to the national average.
24. Although no children with disabilities were seen to be at immediate risk there was a need for more engagement with partner agencies and a need to

improve the quality and timeliness of assessments. Vulnerable 16/17 year olds at risk of homelessness need speedier support.

(2) Children looked after and achieving permanence

Strengths

25. Given that the Council is experiencing increases in the numbers of those in care, it is encouraging to note that the Report indicates it is only taking children into care when necessary and is then placing them in appropriate placements that are well commissioned and monitored. Although numbers of looked after children are increasing, early help services are having a positive impact on keeping overall numbers below the national average. Where the Authority uses adoption this is achieved in a timely way and children are well matched to adoptive parents. The Council is also very good at keeping in touch with care leavers.
26. The service to support Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UAS children) is good and sensitive to support the special needs of this group.
27. There are two very active Children in Care Councils which are supported by senior officers and the Cabinet Lead Member and which are valued by young people. All of the work undertaken to engage and advocate for young people was seen to be of very high quality.

Areas for Improvement

28. Support for those at high risk of coming into care or those returning home from care works well in some cases but overall could be more effective. Although the Council does progress adoptions well it does not provide enough on-going support and does not enable the adoption of enough children with more complex needs.
29. Assessments are not routinely updated and care plans are of variable quality and not always specific enough around what is required. Social workers do not always visit children as they should do or as young people would like.
30. Inspectors were critical of the lack of therapeutic support particularly from the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) provided by the Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust for children in care which is detrimental to achieving good outcomes.
31. Although children who go missing from home are routinely offered return interviews of good quality this is not always the case for those who go missing from care. There is also too much inconsistency in the support offered to care leavers.

(3) Leadership, management and governance

Strengths

32. Senior managers, political leaders and partners are engaged and prioritise children's services. Additional funding has been provided in recognition of

the on-going service pressures particularly in the looked after system and also the need to reduce caseloads, develop quality assurance work, and advocate for children.

33. There is robust member oversight, scrutiny and challenge and a very experienced and committed Lead Member who is focused on improvement. (Appendix B sets out the findings in relation to strategic leadership and provides a brief summary of current arrangements in place for member involvement and oversight).
34. The report recognises the positive impact of the interim Director and Assistant Director who have identified weaknesses and provided a catalyst for recent improvements. The Signs of Safety initiative is also positive and there is a very impressive commitment to the participation of children.

Areas for improvement

35. Caseloads are too high for many staff, which is having a detrimental impact upon standards and can be linked to some shortcomings identified within the report.
36. There are deficiencies and inconsistency in the management oversight of casework practice and provision of good quality regular staff supervision.
37. Developmental support for senior staff and managers is limited as is the support offered to newly qualified social workers, which does not always meet requirements.
38. There are data quality issues in some areas particularly the First Response Team which has led to under reporting of poor performance.

Key Actions

39. The report contains 17 recommendations and the Action Plan prepared in response is attached as Appendix C. The Action Plan provides the blueprint for taking the service forward to achieve good and outstanding standards of practice and the best possible outcomes for the children, young people and the families it supports. A high-level summary (Action Plan on a Page) sets out the vision to improve services and is attached as Appendix D.
40. As mentioned previously, improvement activity was underway prior to the inspection and as a result of this improvements are already being noted in certain areas. These are identified in the Improvement Plan set out in Appendix A.

Staff and member briefings

41. Three briefings have been held for departmental staff regarding the findings in the Ofsted Report and a presentation has been prepared for use by managers who will cascade the findings at service and team levels. The Senior Inspector who oversaw the inspection has visited the Department and held sessions with the Lead and Cabinet Support Member, Senior Managers, and the Director and Assistant Directors. Reports will be made to

the Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children Board, the Children and Families Partnership and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Conclusion

42. The Ofsted Report does provide a comprehensive and largely accurate evaluation of the strengths and aspects requiring development in the Council's social care services for children and families that is in line with internal assessments. The updated Action Plan produced in response will be submitted to Ofsted as is required. Additional work needs to be undertaken to understand the further improvements needed and the how these will be resourced and how this work interrelates with Children and Family Services' overall improvement plans.
43. There will be no further engagement from Ofsted in relation to this inspection or the Single Inspection Framework. Future inspections of social care services will be undertaken under a new framework that commences in 2018. There are however outstanding inspections of SEND and School Improvement Services which have no timeline being unannounced.

Background Papers

Ofsted Report - Leicestershire: Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers
<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/leicestershire>

Appendices

Appendix A - Issues being addressed in the Improvement Plan December 2016 that were identified by Ofsted to require further work

Appendix B - Strategic Leadership - Political and Officer

Appendix C - Draft Ofsted Action Plan 2017-2020

Appendix D - Children and Family Services Improvement Plan 2017-2020 'The Road to Excellence'

Appendix E - Ofsted Report Executive Summary

Equality and Human Rights Implications

44. There are no specific equality or human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report. The findings apply to all children and young people with whom the Council is engaged regardless of any protected characteristic. The changes as a result of the Action Plan will help improve the outcomes for children and their families.
45. Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments will be undertaken as appropriate should there be any reviews of Departmental strategies or services.

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Issues being addressed in the Improvement Plan Dec 16 that were identified by Ofsted to require further work

<u>Improvement Plan July 16 – Dec16</u>	<u>Ofsted found Nov-Dec 16</u>	<u>Ofsted Recommendations</u>	<u>Progress of change Nov16 – Feb 17</u>
<p><u>First Response (FR) Review of processes</u></p> <p>Resulted in Strengthening of Safeguarding processes to ensure compliance with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015. Strengthened strategy discussion/Section 47 investigations. Processes to audit work in place. Had began work on quality of Single Assessment and setting quality standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding and Out of Hours Service identified to be strong • Contact / referral – delay in response and not all work recorded appropriately or in a timely way. • Management oversight needs to be stronger • Caseloads too high. Impact of a large number of newly qualified Social Workers being appointed to the Service Sept/October 2016. 	<p align="center">1</p> <p align="center">2</p> <p align="center">4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing processes from contact, triage, referral (Nov/Dec) • Management plan in place to address all areas of work (Nov16) • Additional SM capacity in place (Nov 16) • Additional SW capacity in place from Nov and ongoing. • Review of resources required going forward (commenced Feb17)
<p><u>Established performance management reports</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management systems to manage / monitor service delivery in place • Monthly performance meeting established to provide drive and challenge • Improving how managers use Performance Information data to measure progress and performance. 	<p>Some progress but need to continue work in this area and particular issues in First Response about the accuracy of the data reports</p>	<p align="center">1</p>	<p>Performance Management Consultant now in post (interim). Developing more detailed report. Work on FR has been the priority and better reporting programmes in place from the end of Feb 2017.</p>

<p><u>Supervision</u> policy reviewed and managers engaged in the process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st Nov 16 established monthly reporting – (audit) for supervision to SMT every month. 	<p>Some good examples of compliance in frequency and quality but not consistent</p>	<p>2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly reporting in place. Overview report to SMT and Performance meeting SM reviewing paperwork to make sure it supports the process (March 17) SM have to show in Service Delivery Plan how they will drive this forward (March 17) SMT exploring L&D requirements (March 17)
<p><u>Caseloads</u> – monthly reporting re numbers of open cases. Increased social worker capacity put in place in some areas (First Response and Child Protection). Reviewing what needs to be in place longer term to ensure reasonable caseloads.</p>	<p>Caseloads too high in some areas eg FR, Care Leavers (PA) and for some individual workers in other areas</p> <p>Ofsted acknowledged the work ongoing but as caseloads too high in some areas they noted the impact on quality of service delivery</p>	<p>3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased social worker capacity via agency. This is proving to be challenging due to shortage of good quality available agency staff. Reviewing service requirements across the whole service (commenced Feb 17) Impact of addressing the work flow in FR has resulted in large number of cases going to other teams. Need to increase social worker capacity in the short term whilst we determine if this is a short term problem or if it requires permanent increased resources (ongoing Dec 16)

<p><u>Update SW assessments</u> – on every child</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed paperwork to update assessment for CiC • Assessment standards developed and distributed in November 16 for all who complete Single Assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistent practice. Some assessments are detailed and assess risk and are outcome focused. Others lack depth and are too superficial • Need to develop strong risk assessment and more outcome focused plans 	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing workshop / guide in SMART planning for all staff (March 17) • Improving managerial oversight (immediate action Dec 16) • Quality Assurance role is supporting development in quality practice (Nov 16) • Practice Standards (complete March17) • Quality assurance and improved framework (Completed by March17)
<p><u>Use of Chronologies</u></p> <p>Practice guide (Principle Social Worker) completed Spring 2016</p> <p>Sessions with Staff held by PSW Spring 2016</p>	<p>Chronologies in place but not used consistently to record the child's experiences / significant events</p> <p>Some good examples but not consistent</p>	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice Standards (March 17)
<p><u>Permanence planning</u> for all children in care to be stronger</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong if plan is return to family or adoption. Focus began on Review of Section 20 and long term care • Permanence Panel established (March 16). Began work on tracking, pre proceedings and long term FP 	<p>Permanence Panel established and making progress but too early to report longer term impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strength when return home or adoption but requires improvement for long term care cases. Some evidence of drift in planning for children in long term FP 	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanence Panel driving forward this area of work • Audit / QA framework (March 17) • Practice Summit to drive the understanding of permanence (April 17)

<p><u>Health assessments of CiC</u> Timescales for completion need to improve. Improvements being made (Performance data).</p> <p>Decision making panels (Placement and Additional Resources) and complex cases (integrated with CSC, education and health) established March 16.</p> <p>Improve consistency of SDQ – to understand individual needs and to identify and/or service development eg CAMHS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapeutic needs of some children / young people are met but others do not receive timely services • Need to ensure a consistency of approach of work with CAMHS 	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed processes and clear decision making route re therapeutic input
<p><u>Missing From Home interviews</u> – reviewed process and reporting to SMT training delivered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saw increased completion (Performance Report). • Identified the further work required for CiC. October agreed resource in Listening and Support service to do all interview Training completed and all picked up from Dec16. Close monitoring by SMT (weekly report to AD) and identified the need to look at quality, themes and input • Monthly report to Lead Member. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MFH interviews for children at home are “Good” • MFH interviews for CiC need to be more robust. Endorsed the progress of the work in place but too soon to report impact. • CSE Hub and response to CSE across the Service seem to be very strong. 	9	<p>New process in place and working (Dec 16). 90% RI completed (80% in time)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed process of reporting with police. Delay in the police logging the MFH which impacts on RI interviews addressed • Work on themes, impact in development. New CSE Hub and resources in place

<p><u>Children With Disabilities under-represented in CP figures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice summit held in 2016 • Audit of position completed • Task and Finish group established to report to LSCB (October 2016) 	<p>Some evidence of robust / holistic assessments but not consistent</p> <p>Review of CIN plans don't always reflect an up to date assessment, informed by a voice of child and undertaken by a qualified and registered SW.</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>Systems being reviewed and resource implications considered (April 17)</p>
<p><u>SMART plans that are outcome / focused need to be in place</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding from audit • Reporting cases have plan in place • QA audit developing learning workshop on SMART planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans are on all open cases • Plans not always outcome focused/ SMART. Some good examples but not consistent • Parents / carer not always clear what they must do to improve things • Post adoption support / SGO support needs to be more robust • Support plans for children going home / edge of care don't always address long term sustainability 	<p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>14</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop workshop (March 17) • Practice standards (March 17) • Policy re post adoption support revised (Feb 17) • Task and Finish group SGO established to drive work in this area (Jan 17)
<p><u>Management oversight</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency across all service areas • Points in process/systems when a manager must sign/record oversight • Linked to supervision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some good examples but inconsistent. • Lack of challenge / oversight 	<p>12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase management capacity in FR (Dec 16) • Work with managers re standards and expectations (immediate action) • Work with L&D at Management Leadership development (April 17)

<u>New emerging issues as part of the Ofsted Inspection</u>	<u>Ofsted found Nov-Dec</u>	<u>Ofsted recommendations</u>	<u>Progress of change Dec16 – Feb17</u>
<u>Private Fostering</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not clear who is responsible for this area • Limited numbers of known children/young people • Private fostering Annual report to LSCB not completed for 2016 	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy/strategy being revised (March 17) • Annual report completed (Feb 17) • Review how best to support this group of children/young people in future (April 17) • Campaign to publicise responsibility / reporting (April 17)
<u>Thresholds</u>	Thresholds not consistently understood at all stages across the service	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases manager capacity in First Response to improve robustness of oversight (Dec 16) • Work with all Managers to ensure stronger oversight (Dec 16) • Performance management reports/meetings to be used to monitor performance (Feb 17) • Audit progress– Jan-Mar concentrating on First Response and Children with Disabilities. Learn, from these audits to inform practice.
Pathway plans for care leavers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality inconsistent 	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included in Practice

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice and support including entitlement and health business needs to be offered to all • Management oversight 		<p>standard (March 17)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing capacity of PA's needed to improve (April 17)
NEET – Strategic and Education, Employment and Training (Not in Education, Employment or Training)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher number of care leavers need to be EET • Strategy needs to reflect offer to vulnerable groups eg care leavers 	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEET strategy being reviewed to strengthen offer to care leavers (March 17) • Reviewing Prospect control to ensure above (April 17)
<p><u>Homeless 16 + 17</u> – LA had reviewed all cases and provided management oversight and follow up</p> <p>Audit cycle in place</p>	Some delays when decision to move to Section 20 made in getting this in place	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear guidance / expectations (Nov 17) • Audit cycle already in place (Nov 17) • Performance to be reported to SMT on a quarterly basis (Jan 17)
Accreditation / progression for ASYE (Assessed and Supported Year in Employment), Senior Practitioner and Team Manager	Support for ASYE, SP and TM not in place. Lack of consistency and training.	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing AsYE programme and support to ASYE's had already began. (Nov 17) • Re-established SW meeting across CSC and L&D to look at SW reform (Dec 17), accreditation and progression • Discussion at Director and AD level with L&D (Feb 17)

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Strategic Leadership (Political and Officer)

In terms of strategic leadership the Inspection report acknowledges the 'clear political focus on children's services in Leicestershire'. Paragraph 80 of the report states:-

'80. *There is clear political focus on children's services in Leicestershire. The committed and experienced lead member has a clear focus on improving outcomes for children and there is regular member oversight and challenge through the overview and scrutiny panel. Children's services have received additional funding to support progress and improvement in the context of the council needing to make overall savings. This has ensured improvements in early help services, through the SLF work stream, in the sufficiency and quality of placements and in the timeliness of health assessments for children looked after. The recently appointed interim DCS and assistant director for social care have strengthened the local authority's improvement plan. Though this identifies clear areas for focus it is not yet sufficiently comprehensive.'*

This endorsement of the current arrangements in place for involving members (the Lead Member and the Children and Families Scrutiny Committee Chairman and Spokesmen) is particularly welcomed. For the benefit of the wider Council membership set out below is a brief summary of the arrangements.

The County Council established new governance arrangements for Children's Social Care in 2014. This was in response to a need to ensure that the full scope of children's social care services could be considered by elected members and that there was clarity of accountability. The new arrangements also responded to the requirement in the new Ofsted Inspection Framework that leaders, including elected members, should have a comprehensive and current knowledge of what is happening at the 'front line' and how well children and young people are helped, cared for and protected.

There are three Member Panels covering this area of work; the overarching Children's Social Care Panel and two subpanels, the Children in Care Panel and the Child Protection Panel. These Panels do not meet in public and thus allow issues to be considered in much greater depth than at a public meeting, including through the sharing of information that is not in the public domain.

For this reason, the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee often requests that the Children in Need Panel or Child Protection Panel considers a particular issue which has usually been identified through the quarterly performance report. The Panels also consider detailed performance reports, for the Child Protection Panel these focus on Child Protection Plans and for the Children in Care Panel these cover children admitted to care, children leaving care and children currently in care.

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DRAFT OFSTED ACTION PLAN 2017-2020

Learning Organisation

Requirement	Links to Ofsted Recommendations	Early Actions	Key Lead	Timescale	Progress to date	Smart Targets
Develop a quality assurance framework for children's social care	14,6, 13,	<p>Agree a Quality Assurance framework to govern all work.</p> <p>As part of the framework an audit model is being developed and will include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of consistent use of thresholds, improved quality of assessments care planning and strong management oversight at all stages of child's journey. • All audit work will be within the Quality Assurance framework and directly feed into Learning and development of individuals and teams. • It will be an inclusive model that provides a mentor/learning opportunity for each social worker team and service managers and heads of service. • Feedback from children, young people and families evidences quality and positive impact of interventions • To call this Growing Quality – Together. • Set out range of improvement activity required for 2017 to monitor and drive all improvement work 	Head of Service, Safeguarding Assurance	Ready to launch in March 17	Work underway. Draft to be ready by the end of Feb.	Routine audit shows consistent application of thresholds, improved quality of assessment and care planning and strong management oversight to all stages of a child's journey

Requirement	Links to Ofsted Recommendations	Early Actions	Key Lead	Timescale	Progress to date	Smart Targets
Develop clear learning programme for social work staff - from induction to exit	17	<p>Use the Practice Development group to develop and embed practice standards for practice and management across the workforce.</p> <p>Agree shared post with L&D to support social work learning pathway</p> <p>Review and consider infrastructure needed to support this work</p> <p>Consideration to develop 'social work academy' and 'grow your own' approaches to ensuring a sustainable workforce</p>	<p>Head of Service, Practice Workforce Development Lead</p> <p>AD, Children's Social Care</p>	<p>Group established Jan 2017.</p> <p>March 2017</p> <p>Feb/March 2017</p> <p>April 2017</p>	<p>Social work steering group now re-established</p> <p>Targeted support delivered to ASYE workers in First Response</p> <p>Review of current cohort of ASYE training</p>	Strong, appropriately trained workforce delivering good service that evidences improved outcomes for children.
Develop approach to social work progression and accreditation at all levels	17	Develop a methodology to implement the social work reforms and build career pathways for Leicestershire	L&D/CSC Resources	May 17	Work ongoing	Strong, appropriately trained workforce delivering good service that evidences improved outcomes for children.
Strong leadership to create learning culture	1 – 17	<p>External SMT to set standard and lead on implementation.</p> <p>Ensure there is good two-way communication between managers and staff to disseminate and embed learning from all improvement activity.</p> <p>Use good practice examples identified through inspection and audit to assist shared learning to build on good practice.</p>	AD, Children's Social Care	June 17	<p>Practice Development Group in place</p> <p>WikiLeeks in place</p> <p>External SMT sessions established.</p> <p>Performance meeting (monthly)</p>	Routine audit shows consistent application of thresholds, improved quality of assessment and care planning and strong management oversight to all stages of a child's journey

Practice Excellence

Requirement	Links to Ofsted Recommendations	Early Actions	Key Lead	Timescales	Progress	Smart Targets
Fidelity to the signs of safety model	6	<p>Involve practice development group in ensuring fidelity to model.</p> <p>Establish posts within the infrastructure which will support practice development (advanced practitioners)</p>	<p>Head of Service, Practice Workforce Development Lead</p> <p>AD, Children's Social Care</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>June 2017</p>	<p>Group established. First meeting held in Jan 2017.</p> <p>TOR membership agreed.</p> <p>Await success of bid for 2nd part of national programme (SoS)</p>	<p>Feedback from children, young people and families evidences quality and positive impact of interventions.</p>
Application of practice framework	6	<p>Ensure workforce strategy includes the practice framework and is embedded in day to day business.</p>	<p>Head of Service, Practice Workforce Development Lead</p>	June 2017	<p>Practice framework is developed</p>	<p>Performance indicators evidence improving outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p>Routine audit shows consistent application of thresholds, improved quality of assessment and care planning and strong management oversight to all stages of a child's journey</p>
Application of practice & management standards	1-17	<p>Consultation and launch with all managers</p> <p>Ensure consistency in using existing standards where there are gaps.</p> <p>Practice standards developed.</p> <p>Examples of good practice shared across the Service.</p>	<p>Head of Service, Safeguarding Assurance</p> <p>Head of Service, Practice Workforce Development Lead</p> <p>Head of Service, Children's Social Care Field Work</p>	March 2017	<p>Work is underway to identify where standards are in place and where there are gaps.</p> <p>Practice standard being drafted.</p> <p>Practice Development Group established.</p>	<p>Routine audit shows consistent application of thresholds, improved quality of assessment and care planning and strong management oversight to all stages of a child's journey</p>

Requirement	Links to Ofsted Recommendations	Early Actions	Key Lead	Timescales	Progress	Smart Targets
<p>Identify good practice as exemplars to model good engagement.</p> <p>Ensuring we take account of issues of diversity and inclusion in families in all care planning.</p>	1-17	<p>Each area to identify examples of good engagement for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with diversity and issues of identity Working with transgender issues Working with learning difficulties <p>Action learning sets to be established across the service to share and build on best practice. Initially to focus on advice given in WikiLeeks on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chronologies Genograms 	<p>Head of Service, Safeguarding Assurance</p> <p>Head of Service, Practice Workforce Development Lead</p> <p>Head of Service, Children in Care</p> <p>Head of Service, Children's Social Care Field Work</p> <p>Head of SEND</p>	<p>March 2017</p>	<p>Diversity and identity introduced to core training for foster carers 2017.</p> <p>Transgender module introduced to foster carers training for 2017.</p>	<p>Routine audit shows consistent application of thresholds, improved quality of assessment and care planning and strong management oversight to all stages of a child's journey</p>
<p>Quality of assessment planning and recording supported by reflective supervision that shows effective challenge</p>	2,6,17	<p>Practice standards set out expectations in relation to high quality assessment planning recording and decision making.</p> <p>Managers ensure that these are embedded in practice.</p> <p>Tracking of performance to evidence improved timeliness monitored through performance meetings</p> <p>Assessment and supervision – Need to set out development expectations and timescales.</p> <p>Develop a learning programme for senior practitioner and team managers to include training and mentoring approaches to develop supervisory skills and competence.</p>	<p>Head of Service, Children in Care</p> <p>Head of Service, Children's Social Care Field Work</p> <p>Head of SEND</p> <p>AD, Children's Social Care</p>	<p>March/April 17</p> <p>March 2017</p>	<p>Monthly returns to show supervision has taken place.</p> <p>Meeting with L&D planned.</p> <p>Social Worker development group re-established.</p> <p>Director/AD in discussion with L&D to identify a resource.</p>	<p>Routine audit shows consistent application of thresholds, improved quality of assessment and care planning and strong management oversight to all stages of a child's journey.</p> <p>Improved timeliness from contact to completion of assessment.</p> <p>Length of time that children are looked after before a permanency decision reduces year-on-year</p>

Requirement	Links to Ofsted Recommendations	Early Actions	Key Lead	Timescales	Progress	Smart Targets
Good case management	7	Existing performance meetings are used to ensure that the practice standards, performance information and analysis of improvement activity are being used effectively by operational managers. Where we are working to get children home, or in permanence planning trajectories are used as a case management tool to ensure milestones and timelines are clear and robust.	AD, Children's Social Care	Established now	Work on improving performance data underway. Work on practice standards underway.	Routine audit shows consistent application of thresholds, improved quality of assessment and care planning and strong management oversight to all stages of a child's journey.
Robust Commissioning framework across Children and Family Services	1 - 17	Commissioning framework and monitoring in place for CiC.	AD, Children's Social Care and Service Manager, Commissioning Support	Established now	Placement commissioning and monitoring in place. Work began on SENA (Special Educational Needs)	All placements are commissioned against assessment needs of children and young people Placement Stability – percentage of children remaining in the same placement for three years or more.

Right action Right time

Requirement	Links to Ofsted Recommendations	Early Actions	Key Lead	Timescales	Progress	Smart Targets
Achieving permanency	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early identification of adoption plans and tracking through Permanence Panel. • Development of permanence champions who provide the wider concept of permanence? • Permanence Panel established. 	Head of Service Children in Care Head of Service, Children's Social Care Field Work	March 2017	Manager meeting Feb to look at Permanency Planning. Establishment of Task and Finish group re Special Guardianship Orders. Task and Finish group re Legal Planning Meetings Court process/Connected Carers. Practice summit to be held.	Length of time that children are looked after before a permanency decision reduces year-on-year.

Requirement	Links to Ofsted Recommendations	Early Actions	Key Lead	Timescales	Progress	Smart Targets
Pathway plans	12 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure review for Children in Care Plans are informed by up to date assessments. Plan audit- commissioned through Quality Assurance audit model Review role of PA and number required. Review NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) strategy to ensure focus on Care Leavers. 	Head of Service, Children in Care Service Manager, CiC and Post Permanence Support	Feb 2017 April 2017	Structure and resources being considered (Feb/March 17)	Proportion of children in care and care leavers in education, employment or training increases year-on-year.
Ensure Strong Front door including Out of Hours Service	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Plan and resource in place. Review processes 	AD, Children's Social Care Head of Service, Children's Social Care Field Work	Immediate action	Capacity in place. To oversee improvement. Review of Out of Hours rota and structure to ensure the best possible service.	Improved timeliness from contact to completion of assessment. Routine audit shows consistent application of thresholds, improved quality of assessment and care planning and strong management oversight to all stages of a child's journey.
SGO (Special Guardianship Order) and Post adoption and therapeutic support	8, 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post adoption plan audit Review of CAMHS contract Introduction of consultation hubs Adoption website (Core offer and community links) Offer to birth parents is in place 	Head of Service, Children in Care Service Manager, Fostering, Adoption & Sufficiency	Jan 2017 May 2017 June 2017 Jan 2017 Sept 2017	Proposal to DMT implemented. CAMHS contract review underway. Therapeutic offer to parents procedure amended.	Number of appropriate and proportionate post adoption support packages increases year-on-year. Number of support packages offered to birth parents increases year-on-year.
NEET Young people enjoy education, employment and training.	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised NEET Strategy Reviewed IAG contract Implemented new LC team 	Head of Service, Children in Care Service Manager, 16-19/25 Learning	March 2017 March 2017 June 2017		Proportion of children in care and care leavers in education, employment or training increases year-on-year.

Requirement	Links to Ofsted Recommendations	Early Actions	Key Lead	Timescales	Progress	Smart Targets
Edge of Care (Help to keep families together) Linked to quality of support to Children in Need	14 16	Review model and service specification to manage edge of care work.	Head of Service, Children's Social Care Field Work	March/April 17	Review underway.	Routine audit shows consistent application of thresholds, improved quality of assessment and care planning and strong management oversight to all stages of a child's journey.
Child Protection planning/permanency		Focus on- Percentage of children subject to a repeat child protection plan for a second or subsequent time reduces year-on-year Length of time children are subject to a child protection plan reduces year-on-year	Head of Service, Safeguarding Assurance Head of Service, Children's Social Care Field Work	March 2017	Children in Need practice guidance in place. Task and Finish Group (multi-agency) established.	Percentage of children subject to a repeat child protection plan for a second or subsequent time reduces year-on-year. Length of time children are subject to a child protection plan reduces year-on-year. Length of time that children are looked after before a permanency decision reduces year-on-year.

Policy and Performance

Requirement	Links to Ofsted Recommendations	Early Actions	Key Lead	Timescales	Progress	Smart Targets
Ensure policies supporting practice are in place	8,11,12,13,15,16	Review/create policies or written statements on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying Put • Care Leavers offer • Private Fostering • Adoption support offer • NEET strategy 	Head of Service, Children in Care	April 2017	Staying Put Policy revised and signed offer - SMT (Feb)	Performance indicators evidence improving outcomes for children and young people.

Requirement	Links to Ofsted Recommendations	Early Actions	Key Lead	Timescales	Progress	Smart Targets
Accurate performance data is available for all areas of service and to ensure that progress is made on the specific recommendations made by Ofsted.	1,2,3,4,6,7,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	Scope all performance data requirements Design of performance reports Test and implement new reports with business.	Performance consultant	June 17	Scoping work underway	Performance indicators evidence improving outcomes for children and young people.
All managers actively use data to support monitoring and service management	1,2,3,4,6,7,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16	SMT to ensure that service led performance management is consistent across all parts of the business	Heads of Service & Performance consultant	Feb 2017	Performance meeting in place Performance reports being delivered.	Performance indicators evidence improving outcomes for children and young people.
All staff understand the requirement of good quality data and their role in recording all information in the right way	1	Work with business, BI and QAIF team to identify and rectify existing errors in system. Service managers to lead and drive everybody's changing behaviours to ensure all are responsible and accountable for their data. Performance indicators evidence improving outcomes for children and young people- This is an element of the Quality Assurance framework and will directly inform the audit activity.	Heads of Service & Performance consultant	March 2017	Performance meeting established.	Performance indicators evidence improving outcomes for children and young people.
Management oversight to ensure effective case management and decision making	2	Create reports which show when children have had management oversight/supervision Practice and Management standard clear re expectation	Heads of Service & Performance consultant	June 2017	Scoping work underway	Routine audit shows consistent application of thresholds, improved quality of assessment and care planning and strong management oversight to all stages of a child's journey.

Requirement	Links to Ofsted Recommendations	Early Actions	Key Lead	Timescales	Progress	Smart Targets
Use of data to support monitoring management	1 - 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultant commissioned to work with all stakeholders to agree requirements and deliver reports. 	AD, Children's Social Care Performance Consultant	June 2017	Principles underpinning performance reporting agreed.	<p>Performance indicators evidence improving outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p>Routine audit shows consistent application of thresholds, improved quality of assessment and care planning and strong management oversight to all stages of a child's journey.</p>
Caseload size	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on current position re caseload sizes run monthly Additional capacity (agency) across First Response, Child Protection + Supporting Families + Children with Disabilities. Review structure to see how best response is deployed. Recruitment strategy to be developed – JDs rewritten/rolling progress of adverts/reached with clear social work offer. 	AD, Children's Social Care	Dec → March/April 2017	<p>Some additional capacity but challenges of agency availability.</p> <p>Discussed developments to have ongoing recruitment.</p>	
Up to date strategies in place	13 15 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private fostering strategy revised. NEET strategy revised to be stronger re vulnerable group. Proportion of children In care and care leavers in education, employment or training increases year-on-year Staying Put Policy revised. Post adopted support offer reviewed. Number of appropriate and proportionate post adoption support packages increases year-on-year. 	Head of Service, Children in Care Service Manager, 16-19/25 Learning	March 2017	<p>Private fostering – annual report and communication strategy agreed.</p> <p>NEET policy under review.</p> <p>Staying Put Policy revised Feb 2017.</p> <p>Participation support Jan/Feb 2017</p> <p>DMT paper – resource request (March/April 17)</p>	<p>Improved timeliness from contact to completion of assessment.</p> <p>Routine audit shows consistent application of thresholds, improved quality of assessment and care planning and strong management oversight to all stages of a child's journey.</p>

Requirement	Links to Ofsted Recommendations	Early Actions	Key Lead	Timescales	Progress	Smart Targets
Review process in First Response to ensure timely and proportionate response to Children in Need	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Plan in place All processes reviewed. Additional SW and management capacity in place. Supervision and additional support to ASYE's. Admin and business support in place. Working group established to drive the work. 	Head of Service, Children's Social Care Field Work AD, Children's Social Care	Dec → New systems to be fully operational end of March.	Additional capacity being recruited to. Business analysis to support Do you want date of first meeting?	Routine audit shows consistent application of thresholds, improved quality of assessment and care planning and strong management oversight to all stages of a child's journey.
Service Delivery Plan to ensure all key areas of improvement are embedded	1-17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Service delivery plan being agreed to cover all key areas of practice, management assessment and performance. 	AD, Children's Social Care	March/April 2017 for sign off	Draft plan to be discussed at SMT on 10 02 2017 AD met with each HoS and SM to give clear message of expectations.	Performance indicators evidence improving outcomes for children and young people.

The Road to Excellence

Our vision - Leicestershire is the best place for children and families

What we'll do

Our priorities

- High quality evidence-based practice
- Strong and effective management oversight

Our focus

We will:

- Ensure consistently good services for children and their families
- Engage them in a timely and proportionate way to bring about better outcomes
- Enable families, when safe to do so, to successfully parent their children
- Enable children to live within their family network
- Provide good quality care when children need to be looked after
- Act in a timely way to provide permanence for children who cannot be kept safe by their families
- Robust commissioning and contract compliance

How we'll do it



Embedding excellent practice

- Consistent use of signs of safety model
- Application of our practice framework
- Application of new work standards
- Inclusive practice
- High quality of assessment planning and recording
- Rigorous decision making
- Quality supervision
- Compliant commissioning and contracting



Developing policy and performance

- Review and improve key policy documents
- Effective use of accurate data
- Effective management oversight
- Appropriate caseload size

Taking the right action, at the right time

- Ensure a strong 'front door'
- Achieving permanency for children
- Quality pathway plans
- Good post adoption and therapeutic support
- Young people enjoy education, employment and training
- Help to keep families together



Being a learning organisation

- Quality assurance framework
- Develop progression routes for social workers and managers
- Learning from improvement activity
- Clear communication disseminates learning
- Workforce strategy supports a learning organisation



What success will look like

- Increase in number of school age children who receive specialist support for emotional wellbeing
- Performance indicators evidence improving outcomes for children and young people
- Routine audit shows consistent application of thresholds, improved quality of assessment and care planning and strong management oversight at all stages of a child's journey
- Feedback from children, young people and families evidences quality and positive impact of interventions
- All of the above are clearly influencing service design and delivery
- % of children subject to a repeat child protection plan for a second or subsequent time reduces year-on-year
- Length of time children are subject to a child protection plan reduces year-on-year
- Length of time that children are looked after before a permanency decision reduces year-on-year
- Number of appropriate and proportionate post adoption support packages increases year-on-year
- Number of support packages offered to birth parents increases year-on-year
- Proportion of children in care and care leavers in education, employment or training increases year-on-year
- Improved timeliness from contact to completion of assessment
- % of children remaining in the same placement for three years or more

Four behaviours that underpin everything

Voice

Listening to and responding to what the child and family tell us

Signs of safety

'Doing with' and not 'doing for' or 'doing to'

Outcome focussed

Striving to improve children's and families' lives

Leadership

Everyone is responsible and accountable

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Leicestershire

Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers

and

Review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board¹

Inspection date: 14 November 2016 to 8 December 2016

Report published: 13 February 2017

Children's services in Leicestershire require improvement to be good	
1. Children who need help and protection	Requires improvement
2. Children looked after and achieving permanence	Requires improvement
2.1 Adoption performance	Requires improvement
2.2 Experiences and progress of care leavers	Requires improvement
3. Leadership, management and governance	Requires improvement

¹ Ofsted produces this report under its power to combine reports in accordance with section 152 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. This report includes the report of the inspection of local authority functions carried out under section 136 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the report of the review of the Local Safeguarding Children Board carried out under the Local Safeguarding Children Boards (Review) Regulations 2013.

Executive summary

Children's services in Leicestershire require improvement to be good. Though the local authority has established cross-party support for children's services' priorities and this has delivered resources for some key services, such as early help and placement sufficiency, other services have not been adequately resourced or effectively led. This has been recognised by the interim director of children's services (DCS) and the interim assistant director for social care who have provided a catalyst for recent improvement work. However, some developments are too new to have had a positive impact, and gaps remain in the quality and consistency of performance data and first-line management oversight and scrutiny.

Children who are at risk of significant harm are identified and protected. However, children potentially in need are not seen in a timely manner and experience delay in receiving the help that they need. Thresholds are not yet applied consistently and, in a small number of cases, inappropriate management decision-making after a section 47 enquiry meant that initial child protection conferences (ICPC) were not convened. This has been acknowledged by the local authority and, during the inspection, it took appropriate steps to both strengthen capacity and improve processes in its First Response Service.

The children's service workforce is relatively stable and a workforce strategy is in place. However, there is insufficient focus on social workers, and there is a lack of developmental programmes for practitioners and first-line managers. This has contributed to an inconsistent application of practice standards when assessing and planning for children. Some social workers are not experiencing regular supervision meetings and, when supervision does take place, it is often not sufficiently directive or reflective. Senior managers are monitoring the regularity of supervision, which is now supported by a reflective group approach. Caseloads in some areas are high, but funding has just been agreed to increase the social work establishment, with the aim of ensuring more manageable caseloads.

An evidence-based model of practice has been implemented across the service and is well embedded. This has been used to engage children and their families in the assessment and planning process better and to ensure that their views are secured. However, the quality of assessments is not yet consistently good, with too many lacking sufficient depth and not informed by meaningful chronologies. Care plans are not specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely (SMART) and too many support plans for children returning home or discharged from care, subject to a special guardianship order or adoption order, are insufficient to promote sustainability.

The application of the local authority's quality assurance and improvement framework has had some positive impact, for example, with regard to early help evaluation, improvements in placement quality and stability and improved timeliness of children looked after initial health assessments. However, inappropriate processes

operating in the First Response Service have led to the reporting of inaccurate data with regard to contacts, referrals, assessments and their timeliness and the numbers of children allocated. This has prevented the local authority from understanding the true volume of work in this service area and from identifying delays in visiting children.

The local authority's early help offer provides a broad range of effective support and preventative services for children and their families and includes provision of intensive family support. This is having a positive impact on preventing the need for children to become looked after. Work with children at risk of child sexual exploitation is strong, both strategically and operationally, through both mainstream and dedicated services. Although the work to protect children going missing is improving, it lacks consistency, particularly for children looked after, who are not always offered a return home interview or have plans strengthened to mitigate the risks of going missing. While there were some examples of good holistic assessments of disabled children, which led to robust packages of support, their plans are reviewed by non-social work qualified staff and not always based on up-to-date assessments. This means that the local authority cannot be assured that these children's needs continue to be identified effectively and met.

As a corporate parent, the local authority, together with partner agencies, is improving health and education outcomes for children looked after. The quality of placements is good, and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are supported by a dedicated team that ensures appropriate consideration of their needs arising from diversity. However, timely access to mental health services is unavailable for too many children looked after, and permanence planning is significantly weaker for those who are achieving permanence through options other than adoption. Adopters are appropriately assessed and well supported to the point of the order being granted. At this point, as with children for whom special guardianship orders are granted, meaningful support to the child and their family ceases to be on offer.

The local authority demonstrates considerable commitment to engaging with children and young people and ensuring their participation, involvement and influence over the shape of service delivery. In so doing, they work collaboratively with a range of young people's representative groups, including two Children in Care Councils (CiCCs) and the Supporting Young People after Care Group. Two members of the CiCC co-chair the corporate parenting board. There are two children's rights officers providing an effective advocacy service for children looked after and for children who are the subject of a child protection conference. A wide range of well-received and well-attended activities are facilitated by a participation officer.

The majority of care leavers are well supported to make the right choices and to live independent lives. The local authority maintains very good contact with them and has worked with partners to improve the range and quality of accommodation available. All care leavers spoken to feel safe in their accommodation. The quality of pathway planning is, however, not consistent, and the support offered by personal

advisers is too variable. Too few care leavers, particularly the most vulnerable, secure a place in further education, employment or training.