

Torbay Council Children's Service Improvement Plan - 2018



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forward thinking, people orientated, adaptable - always with integrity.

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We are committed to protecting all children and giving them the best start in life.

In January 2016, Ofsted judged Torbay Children's Services as inadequate. This was the second such judgement in recent years with the improvements noted in 2013 not being sustained.

In May 2016, John Coughlan, Chief Executive of Hampshire County Council was appointed by the DfE as the Commissioner for Children's Services and Hampshire Children's Services appointed as our improvement partner. In addition to overseeing our improvement work, the Commissioner was also tasked with exploring alternative models for the delivery of Children's Services in order to deliver sustained improvements in the quality of practice and outcomes for children. In July 2016 a new DCS was appointed to work with the Commissioner and Torbay Council on these issues.

We have made steady progress over the past two years although we know that our services require further improvement to be good. We

want the best possible outcomes for children and recognise that we have more work to do over the next year to achieve this.

With Hampshire's support a robust improvement plan has been put in place focussed on responding to Ofsted's recommendations and securing compliance with the requirements of Working Together 2015. This was further informed by the ISOS/LGA research on securing meaningful improvement in Children's Services.

Progress against the improvement plan has been overseen by a multi-agency Children's Improvement Board chaired by the DfE Commissioner and bringing together senior leads from across the local partnership.

Our work with Hampshire and our Ofsted Monitoring Visits have highlighted the urgent need to translate the work to establish the essential infrastructure for safe and effective practice into meaningful change and impact for the child. This refreshed improvement plan summarises the progress made to date and the key strategic actions for the next 12 months. The latter focussed heavily on how we progress from a focus on compliance towards the quality of practice and impact for the child.

Our improvement plan for 2018/19 has brigaded improvement activity under three key areas of focus. These are set out below and in each case have identified how these link with the recommendations made by Ofsted in 2016.

- **The Quality of Partnership and Governance**
Ofsted Recommendations: 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 10 and 11
- **The Quality and Effectiveness of Frontline Practice**
Ofsted Recommendations: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, 14, 15, and 16
- **Capacity, Capability and Culture**
Ofsted Recommendations: 1, 2, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 16

The actions within our improvement plan will align with a wider set of strategic actions within the refreshed children and young people's plan. Both will be subject to oversight via the Children's Improvement Board and over the longer term by the Children's Strategic Steering Group.

Torbay Children’s Services Improvement Plan

Ofsted Recommendation	What have we focussed on?	What have we achieved?	What has been the impact?
<p>1. The Chief Executive should ensure that leadership in Torbay is strong, consistent and sharply focused on improving and sustaining outcomes for children throughout children’s social care services (paragraphs 111-131)</p>	<p>Our focus has been to place children’s services at the heart of the Council’s vision for the community of Torbay. This has involved working with senior politicians, corporate leadership and partners to ensure that Children’s Services is an integral part of the Council’s governance, planning, resource management and delivery arrangements.</p>	<p>The Chief Executive, Executive Lead Member are now routinely provided with comprehensive performance reports covering key safeguarding and social care activities and outcomes achieved for children. A robust improvement plan is in place and subject to regular oversight by the Children’s Improvement Board (CIB), Corporate Leadership and Elected Members. Key plans and strategies are now subject to elected member oversight and incorporated within Council’s Forward Plan. A cross party Members Scrutiny Group is also in place to further support improvement activity.</p>	<p>Elected Members and senior officers now have a much greater appreciation of the performance of Children’s Services and the challenges it faces in meeting the needs of children and young people in Torbay. This awareness has underpinned a zero based budget exercise which has resulted in an additional £3m into the 2018/19 budget and new family premises. The Council’s Corporate Parenting offer has also been substantially enhanced with Council Tax exemption granted to Care Leavers and first priority for Council apprenticeships being ring fenced for Care Leavers. Elected Members have also taken key difficulties decisions around the Medical Tuition service, SEMH provision and new primary provision in recent months.</p>
<p>2. Improve the quality of performance management and monitoring through an improved and robust suite of data, effective and challenging management</p>	<p>Our focus has been on ensuring that the Council is able to objectively determine the effectiveness of its Children’s Services through a robust reporting cycle that compares its</p>	<p>A comprehensive suite of performance indicators is now in place, alongside the capability to analyse data at team and practitioner level.</p>	<p>Performance is improved in most areas with the result that children are being seen more quickly and more frequently. This has taken place within a work stream which</p>

oversight and rigorous action planning (paragraphs 112-119, 123-124, 129-130)	own performance against meaningful statistical regional and national comparators.	Managers are beginning to grow in confidence and understanding the impact for children A monthly performance management meeting chaired by the Assistant Director and attend by Heads of Service and Team Managers is now well established. An ongoing programme of work has been delivered to ensure that the methodology used to generate data is robust.	has necessarily had to address historical weaknesses in data capture and reporting.
3. With partners, ensure that multi-agency thresholds are understood and consistently applied across the partnership (paragraphs 19, 20, 26, 30)	Our focus has been to facilitate a conversation around thresholds with our partners to ensure these represent a collective view rather than a gateway to statutory social care.	The TSCB threshold document has been refreshed and was approved by TSCB partners in June 2017. This has been launched as an interactive digital tool in April 2018. A revised MASH referral form was introduced in November 2016; this was followed by a 'single front door' referral pathway in March 2017.	The learning from ongoing Ofsted Monitoring Visits is that thresholds are well understood and consistently applied in most cases. As an example the improvement work we have undertaken has enabled us to deal with a growth that had occurred in CP numbers which reflected a lack of confidence in our CiN procedures in a managed and safe way.
4. Ensure that timely decisions are made on contacts and referrals and that initial visits to children are prompt (paragraphs 21,22)	Our focus has been to ensure that our MASH benefits from the input of a wide range of partners, either co-located or linked underpinned by robust decision making procedures that support effective and timely decision making in the interests of children.	MASH is consistently making timely decisions on all contacts, with partners fully engaged in the daily consideration of contacts. Initial visiting has improved since the inspection.	Our decision making in MASH is consistently timely at around x% and our re-referral rate is at or around national comparator.
5. Work effectively with partners to ensure that children receive timely	Working with our TSCB partners our focus has been to engage in a	A revised Early Help strategy was developed on a multi-agency basis	Early Help cases are being increasingly led by partner

<p>and effective help and that assessments and plans are in place for each child (paragraph 18)</p>	<p>collective discussion on Early Help with a particular emphasis on distinguishing this from targeted support arrangements. A further aim has been to develop our Early Help capacity and maximise its impact to prevent the drift of families into higher cost parts of the system.</p>	<p>with supporting systems and processes and launched in June 17. An Early Help consultation line (resource) has been established in the MASH. Single Point of Access for all contacts now in place. TSCB EH Sub Group in place which is well attended by EH Leads from across the system. A whole service quality assurance check has recently been completed to ensure that all children have up-to-date plans. The quality and use of plans and assessments is being monitored through QA processes – it has improved but remains variable.</p>	<p>agencies and the Early Help consultation resource within MASH is helping partners to develop confidence in their Early Help work.</p>
<p>6. Ensure that assessments are timely, proportionate and effectively identify the risks, needs and protective factors, leading to appropriate and measurable plans (paragraphs 22, 27)</p>	<p>Our focus has been on improving the quality of our single assessments through embedding the Signs of Safety model within our assessment work. A further work element has been to ensure that our performance reporting and quality assurance arrangements provide managers with the means to address drift and delay and improve quality.</p>	<p>Assessment timeliness is improved. The focus through performance management is now looking at improving proportionality by looking at the numbers of assessments completed within 20 days. The quality of assessments is not always good enough and this is a particular area of focus for our Quality Assurance, Supervision and Management oversight.</p>	<p>Assessment timeliness is improved at x% although it is recognised that further work is needed on both timeliness and quality.</p>
<p>7. Ensure that 16- and 17- year olds who are homeless are given the opportunity to have a comprehensive assessment and help and support according to their needs (paragraph 32)</p>	<p>Our aim has been to ensure that robust procedures are in place to meet the needs of any 16/17 year olds presenting as homeless and that through those processes, the additional benefits of becoming</p>	<p>All 16/17 year olds presenting as homeless are now routinely offered a single assessment. These arrangements have been subject to audit to ensure we are thoroughly</p>	<p>A recent audit has been undertaken and this has evidenced that some cases are focussing too heavily on homelessness rather than the wider needs of the child and whether they would benefit</p>

	accommodated are fully explored where appropriate.	exploring the additional benefit of becoming accommodated. Improving the timelines of our assessments is a particular area of focus.	from becoming accommodated. This review has enhanced the quality of our Southwark work and led to a small number of children becoming accommodated who would otherwise not have done so.
8. Ensure that the threshold for a referral to the designated officer is well understood across the partnership (paragraph 131)	Our aim is to ensure that the thresholds and referral pathway for LADO are well understood across partners and regularly refreshed to ensure emerging concerns are dealt with speedily and appropriately.	Our LADO procedures have been refreshed and published via the TSCB website. Regular briefings are held to ensure partner agencies are clear on the process, for example with Designated Safeguarding leads (DSL) in schools.	Our LADO cases in 2016/17 were x and the ongoing dialogue with partners has highlighted a greater awareness and utilisation of our LADO procedures.
9. Ensure that all children who go missing from home or care are offered a timely and comprehensive return interview and that information from these interviews is collated to inform effective targeting of preventative and protective services (paragraphs 37,60)	Our focus has been to ensure that RHIs form a key part of our approach to missing episodes and that the learning is used to inform our care planning in the interests of children.	All young people are offered RHIs, and 2017/18 data shows that 94% are offered a RHI within 72 hours; 22% refused an RHI. All missing referrals are sent to the MASH and are screened and monitored alongside the RHIs which are sent through and collated once completed. Missing Monday meetings continue to take place weekly and are attended by Police, Social Care, Health Education and Checkpoint. Each missing episode and RHI is reviewed and individuals/groups of concern and locations/trends are escalated to the MACSE forum. All information is held on the Missing Tracker.	The learning from our RHIs is forming an increasingly important element within our work to review and intervene as necessary with children placing themselves at significant risk or localities of particular concern.

		A Missing / CSE Co-ordinator is located within the MASH.	
10. Monitor the progress of children looked after more closely at Key Stage 4 and pay greater attention to ensuring that they achieve five GCSE grade A* to C, including English and mathematics (paragraph 63)	Our focus has been to ensure that our virtual school is delivering good educational outcomes for our children looked after with a particular focus on using research to inform the learning offer.	A comprehensive performance management framework is in place via the Virtual School which encompasses progress and attainment data.	Our Key stage 4 performance for 5 GCSE Grad A* to C is 13.6% which is broadly in line with national. However, it is important to note that all our Mathematics were Grade 5 (strong pass) which is significantly above national at 9%. The Virtual School has also led a significant programme of attachment training for education and social care practitioners.
11. With partners, ensure that timely and effective services are in place, particularly in relation to domestic abuse, adult mental health, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the emergency duty service (paragraphs 28, 31, 43, 62)	Our focus has been on developing a whole family approach within which Children's Social Care can draw on the expertise of a range of practitioners from adult services for substance misuse, adult mental health, domestic abuse.	A CAMHS Development Strategy is in place to drive service improvement with performance reported on a regular basis to TSCB and CIB. Children's Services have developed a Therapeutic Service for CLA, CIN and CP with 4 practitioners (3 FTE) to provide support to children falling below CAMHS threshold. DA Coordinator is embedded part of each week with Children's Social Work Team to be followed by Substance Misuse Worker. 'On the Edge' – youth intervention pilot commencing April 2018. Revised DV working protocol with EDS – experienced team with good leadership.	Our therapeutic service is now in place and 99 appointments have been offered since commencement in December with around 20 children benefitting from direct work and a further 20 being referred to CAMHS as threshold has been met. The Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator is also embedded within the Safeguarding Teams two days a week to ensure children and adults can access support services.

<p>12. Review the permanency policy and ensure that permanence planning is pursued for all children in a timely manner and that consideration is routinely given to Fostering to Adopt arrangements and concurrent planning, where appropriate (paragraphs 78, 83)</p>	<p>Our focus has been on developing a more robust approach towards permanence within which the full range of opportunities are available to children and permanence planning commences at the earliest opportunity.</p>	<p>Permanence Policy has been revised and approved by Council in April 2017 supported by a programme of practitioner briefings. This has led to the identification of a number of children suitable for the unification or an SGO and a dedicated Connected Persons Social Worker is under recruitment to accelerate this work. We have substantially revised our panel arrangements to ensure decision making is timely and child centred.</p>	<p>Consideration is now given to Foster to Adopt on a routine basis. 6 Foster to Adopt placements have taken place since last inspection and a further 3 will be delivered shortly. 20 adoptions were delivered in 2017/18 and the proportion of our exits from care due to adoption are at 18% which compares favourably with national and statistical comparators.</p>
<p>13. Strengthen the quality assurance role of independent reviewing officers and child protection conference chairs and ensure that reviews and conferences result in effective information sharing and purposeful, timely plans for children (paragraphs 26-27, 53-55)</p>	<p>Our focus has been on developing our IRO and Conference Chair capacity to provide effective challenge to Social Care practitioners and managers as a key driver for improvements in quality and outcomes for children.</p>	<p>Established Lead IRO role and increased IRO capacity. IRO's are now linked to Team Meetings and the Lead IRO holds regular meetings with Heads of Service to review issues. A revised DRP in place and being used to progress professional differences Lead IRO observing Child Protection Conferences</p> <p>It is acknowledged that it is not yet showing significant impact but more recent evidence emerging.</p>	
<p>14. Develop ways for care leavers to receive clear and effective advice and guidance on their next steps, which include more formal</p>	<p>Our focus has been to work with our Care Leavers to ensure they are clear around their entitlements and are accessing these in support of their</p>	<p>Arrangements to ensure that care leavers are aware of their entitlement have been significantly strengthened. A new handbook and</p>	

<p>communication to them of their entitlements (paragraph 95)</p>	<p>transition to independent living and to maximise their potential.</p>	<p>website are in place and care leavers report that they are aware of their entitlements and how to access information. PA's capacity has been increased to ensure they are accessible and responsive care leavers' needs. Intensive work has been underway to ensure care leavers are visited and their accommodation is suitable as part of an ongoing focused programme of engagement.</p>	
<p>15. Ensure that the quality of pathway plans is consistently good and that care leavers are actively encouraged to contribute to the development and content of these plans (paragraphs 103-104)</p>	<p>Our aim has been to actively involve our Care Leavers in the development of our pathway plan template and utilising new digital technologies to secure their active engagement in their completion and review.</p>	<p>The format of our pathways plans has been substantially revised with good input from our care leavers, whose wishes and feelings are incorporated. Plans are up to date and quality is improving although further work is needed to ensure they are all of consistently good quality and reflect significant events in the life of a Care Leaver.</p>	

<p>16. Ensure that learning from audit activity and training is systematically evaluated and contributes to a learning culture within the organisation (paragraph 116)</p>	<p>Our aim is to embed case file auditing as business as usual using the learning it delivers as a key element within our improvement journey with a particular focus on evidencing the impact on the child.</p>	<p>We have a well established QA framework with a case file auditing programme providing an insight into the quality of practice. Monthly feedback is provided to Heads of Service and Team Managers, supplemented by a quarterly Newsletter for all staff. Key auditing themes are also discussed within the monthly performance meeting. It is acknowledged that the quality of moderation audits is good, Team Manager audits need to improve.</p>	
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Strategic Action Plan 2018/19		
The Quality of Partnership and Governance Ofsted Recommendations: 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 10 and 11		
Aim/Strategic Action	How will this improve outcomes for children and young people	Lead Officer/Agency
The Torbay Early Help offer is clear and well communicated internally and to TSCB Partners.	Children and Families receive the right support at the right time for the right reasons	Head of Service Early Help/TSCB Partner Agencies
A service map/directory of services is in place to outline both early help and targeted support offers.	Families will feel confident they are offered or signposted to the right service provision	Head of Service Early Help/TSCB Partner Agencies
To develop and implement a robust communication strategy around thresholds, pathways and level of offer.	Support will be targeted at the right children, young people and families to meet their needs.	Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding/TSCB Business Manager
To collect feedback and evidence from service users and professionals in a systematic manner in order to inform service development.	Families will feel they have been listened to and their feedback has helped to inform change.	Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding/ Head of Service Safeguarding and Quality Assurance
Deliver the 0-19 Commissioning Strategy.	Families will have access to an holistic service with service provision focused on the family unit.	Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding/ Head of Education, Learning and Skills
To secure a replacement Social Care Case Management system.	A work flow based case management system will better match the journey of the child and help support more effective and timely engagement with children and families.	Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding/ Head of IT
To establish a multi-agency operational delivery group to support the Corporate Parenting Forum, including promoting the engagement of care leavers within our corporate parenting arrangements.	Children and Young People will be directly engaged with our corporate parents to ensure their voice is prominent within the development of our arrangements.	Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding/ Head of Specialist Services
Successfully transition adoption services into a Regional Adoption Agency.	A greater number of children will achieve permanence through adoption in a more timely manner alongside better support for adoptive families.	Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding/ Head of Specialist Services

To continue to develop the offer to Torbay care leavers from the Local Authority and its partners.	Care Leavers will have better outcomes in relation to education, employment, training, personal and social development.	Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding/ Head of Specialist Services
Continue to develop our response to adverse childhood experiences(ACE) within Torbay's children and young people	Outcomes for children affected by ACE causal factors - CSE/Missing/Gangs/County Lines/DA/Peer violence - Sex Assault/Harm, EHE/PT timetable will improve.	Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding/ Head of Service Safeguarding and Quality Assurance
Continue to develop our multi-agency model for CIN/CP work through embedded/linked practitioner resources for DA/Substance misuse/CAMHS/Youth Services/Adult Substance Misuse	Services for children and families will provide a whole family response with Social Care practitioners supported by expertise to tackle parent and carer issues.	Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding/ Head of Service Safeguarding and Supporting Families

The Quality and Effectiveness of Frontline Practice Ofsted Recommendations: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, 14, 15, and 16		
Aim/Strategic Action	How will this improve outcomes for children and young people	Lead Officer/Agency
Ensure up to date and effective pathways and practice standards are in place for all core activities and are consistently followed.	Children and families receive an effective and consistent service appropriate to their needs.	Head of Service Safeguarding and Quality Assurance
Ensure visits are timely and purposeful with particular reference to impact for the child.	Children are seen regularly with their situation and experiences well understood, clearly documented, and any concerns addressed in a timely manner.	Operational Heads of Service
Assessments are timely and of good quality.	Children and families benefit from timely and thoughtful assessment that encompasses and exhaustive appreciation of their situation as a basis for planning and service delivery.	Operational Heads of Service
Plans are purposeful, proportionate and informed by the views and wishes of children, evidencing a positive impact on their outcomes.	Children are kept safe and our plans impact positively on their situation in reducing risk and vulnerability as well as improving their outcomes.	Operational Heads of Service
Continue to integrate the Signs of Safety model as a key driver for improved social care practice.	Children and families experience consistency in the response they receive and understand what needs to change.	Principal Social Worker/ Operational Heads of Service
To collect feedback and evidence from service users and professionals, including complaints, in a systematic manner in order to inform practice improvements.	Families will feel they have been listened to and their feedback has helped to inform change.	Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding/ Head of Service Safeguarding and Quality Assurance/Principal Social Worker
To work with Torbay Youth Trustees and Play Torbay to develop an Edge of Care intervention.	Children and Young People on the edge of care will have access to a youth work/play based model of support.	Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding/Head of Commissioning/Youth Trust/Play Torbay
Continue to develop our learning from Audits as a key driver for practice improvement, with a particular focus on impact for the child and family.	Children and families receive an effective and consistent service appropriate to their needs.	Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding/ Head of Service Safeguarding and Quality Assurance/Principal Social Worker
Continue to develop our Safeguarding and Reviewing Service to ensure that it provides effective challenge in the interest of children and young people.	Children experience an Independent Reviewing Service which promotes what is best for them.	Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding/ Head of Service Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

<p>Continue to develop the capacity of our Practitioners and Team Managers to utilise Performance, QA and research into practice as key drivers to improve the quality and impact of their work for children and families.</p>	<p>Children and families receive an effective and consistent service appropriate to their needs.</p>	<p>Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding/Principal Social Worker/Operational Heads of Service</p>
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Capacity, Capability and Culture Ofsted Recommendations: 1, 2, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 16		
Aim/Strategic Action	How will this improve outcomes for children and young people	Lead Officer/Agency
Work to ensure management oversight is consistently delivered and focused on impact for the child.	Children and families receive an effective and consistent service appropriate to their needs.	Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding/ Operational Heads of Service
Continue to ensure supervision takes place regularly and is of a high quality.	Children and families receive an effective and consistent service appropriate to their needs.	Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding/ Operational Heads of Service
Continue to develop our Workforce Development Strategy to ensure Torbay has a stable and competent workforce.	Children and families will benefit from consistent and good quality social care provision, underpinned by a continuity of engagement.	Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding/ Operational Heads of Service
Ensure that Torbay has a robust programme to support and develop newly qualified staff, subject to effective management oversight.	Children and families benefit from practitioners who are well supported and secure in their practice.	Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding/ Operational Heads of Service
To continue to develop our Head of Service/Team Manager cohort in order to drive and sustain our improvement journey.	Children and families receive an effective and consistent service appropriate to their needs.	Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding/ Operational Heads of Service
Continue to develop our staff engagement programme including an annual Social Worker Survey to ensure senior management are informed of staff perceptions/views.	Children and families benefit from practitioners who are well supported and secure in their practice.	Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding/ Operational Heads of Service
To ensure that Torbay LADO arrangements are visible and understood by practitioners across all agencies, with an effective response to allegations against people who work with children.	Children and families receive an effective and consistent service appropriate to their needs.	Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding/ Head of Service Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

We are committed to ensuring that this Plan makes a significant contribution towards our strategic aim of protecting all children and giving them the best start in life.

This plan sets out a high level set of aims and actions for the next 12 months building on the compliance focused work that has taken place since the last inspection. It is supported by more service level action plans which provide greater detail on the wide range of operational tasks that will be necessary to secure its delivery.

Oversight and scrutiny of progress will continue to be provided by the Children's Improvement Board, Corporate and Children's Services Leadership Teams, and Cross Party Members Monitoring Group. As a plan that aims to support the transition from a compliant based approach to one focussed on

quality, the resulting impact on the child will be key in judging its success. With this in mind our monitoring and review arrangements will draw upon a range of evidence.

Feedback from children, families, partners and stakeholders will be a key source of information. A key element within the plan itself is to embed a more systematic approach towards these information flows to ensure they make a meaningful contribution to practice improvement and that children and families feel their views and wishes have been heard. Our case file auditing and commissioned engagement services, such as advocacy and return interviews, will focus heavily on the voice of the child and the implications for practice.

Our performance and quality assurance arrangements will also play a significant role in our arrangements to monitor progress with this plan and our improvement journey. We will continue to develop our use of PARIS in lieu of a new case management system to ensure that it provides robust data and management information to test progress particularly in relation to the volume and timeliness of our activity. Whilst not evidencing quality directly many of those measures will act as proxy indicators for judging the quality of our work.

Our aim is to ensure that the suite of performance indicators and data sets we utilise mirrors the journey of the child and are reported through PARIS whenever practicable. We will measure our performance against meaningful statistical and national comparators with regular performance reporting to Team Manager through to the Mayors Executive and Children's Improvement Board.

Our performance and management information reporting will be underpinned by a rolling programme of case file audits with the aim of providing a insight into the effectiveness of practice and its impact for the child. We recognise that further work is needed to improve the quality of our case file audits and ensure the focus shifts from capturing the volume of activity towards a focus on impact. Our improvement partner Hampshire CC Children's Services will continue to play a prominent role as the partnership with Plymouth is embedded.