

Torbay Children's Services Improvement Plan

TORBAY COUNCIL

VERSION 1 - OCTOBER 2019

INTRODUCTION

It will be immediately noted that this document has a changed title. We have moved away from it being a post Ofsted plan, reflecting the passage of time, the appointment of a new Improvement Board Chair but more importantly a considered shift in our thinking that all that we do must be focused unequivocally on the needs of our children while ensuring that in doing so we meet fully or exceed the expectations of Inspectors. It remains an iterative document that will be updated regularly to reflect progress and to respond to changing demands and priorities. The Improvement Plan will always capture the extent to which services are compliant with legal and statutory requirements and are successful in achieving quality standards.

This Improvement Plan responds to the specific recommendations of the June 2018 Ofsted Inspection Report and HMI's considered observations in subsequent improvement monitoring visits. It complements our council-wide transformation programme, and introduces improvement priorities which the council and its partners consider to be essential elements of Torbay's improvement journey.

OUR PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

The last Ofsted inspection revealed deep rooted and long-standing problems across the Children's Service which led to a judgement for the second time in consecutive inspections that overall effectiveness was inadequate and that there were serious and widespread concerns, including child protection concerns. Improvement actions that had initially proven successful following the first inspection (undertaken in 2015 and published in January 2016) were shown not to have consistently led to sustained change thereafter resulting in six repeated recommendations in the June 2018 inspection report. Inspectors reported in the two most recent monitoring visits on 1 February 2019 and 8 May 2019 that while subsequent restorative actions were showing some signs of progress, improvements were fragile, and children were still not considered to be consistently safeguarded. The letters additionally documented findings of continuing serious weaknesses in management, practice and quality assurance arrangements and expressed concern for the (lack of) pace of change and the debilitating impact of staff turnover which led to social workers having to 'fire fight' rather than use their skills to work intensively and constructively with children. Inspectors have again set out graphically the breadth and scale of the challenges facing the service, but they also noted that service leaders and politicians were committed to improvement and the workforce remained positive and motivated. This improvement plan will build upon these important and welcome attributes.

The circumstances for children and young people in Torbay which are reflected in the continuing deep rooted concerns set out by Ofsted need to be our 'call to arms' (not a reason for despondency or inaction) and this plan reflects the prioritised, focused and robust action that will be taken using the skills of our workforce and our partners, and supported by the Improvement Board and elected members of the council. There is no illusion about the complexity and intensity of what lies ahead but equally there is clarity that not all improvements can proceed within the same timescale. It will be noted that the timings for completion of individual elements of the Improvement Plan have been crafted to reflect the immediate and longer-term needs of children and the interdependencies of improvement priorities. The plan shows that areas where progress is required and changes need to be made are known, and its sub-text demonstrates a relentlessness in its desire to ensure that significantly improved compliance with statutory and policy requirements will continue to be supplemented by sustainable improvements in quality. The work to strengthen performance and quality assurance frameworks to ensure managers and practitioners have access to contemporary child level data, information and analysis will continue. The provision of qualitative and quantitative material will further enable the workforce to assume its responsibilities and accountabilities for achieving the high standards that are required.

The August 2018 Inspection report contains 16 detailed recommendations and the content of the reports of the two latest two monitoring visits give a clear steer to other areas of concern that need to be accommodated in any iteration of the improvement plan. Drawing upon the work already undertaken in the preparation of the current plan and additional advice provided by an LGA associate, the improvement priorities can be classified under the following four thematic 'pillars':

- leadership, management and governance
- a robust model of social work practice
- a sufficient and skilled workforce
- quality assurance and audit

The detailed improvement plan set out below uses these pillars as a framework, but for ease of reading cross references all improvement priorities to the relevant sections of the inspection report and monitoring visit letters. In addition, the plan incorporates other objectives and actions that are not related to a recommendation by inspectors, but which are considered by the council to require improvement.

THE IMPROVEMENT JOURNEY

Children, young people and their families rightly expect high quality services, particularly in times of need. Whilst we understand fully the size of the task ahead, we are ambitious for our service and aim to achieve a rating of 'good' by April 2021, within two years and six months from the publication of the Ofsted report. We acknowledge and accept that progress has not been good enough and has at times stalled. This iteration of the plan produced at a time of management change with new appointees in post at senior and middle management levels and the appointment of a new chair of the Improvement Board, offers an opportunity to use its content as a platform for accelerated and successful improvement endeavour. In doing so we will involve our managers and staff to shape what we do, and we will capture the views of our service users to help us understand how best we can help. The stages towards achieving the achievable vision of securing good or better services for children are set out in the diagram below.

Stage 1

Laying the foundations

By December 2019

Improvement governance established including revised independently chaired improvement board arrangements

Data requirements scoped

Training needs associated with the improvement objectives are identified for all staff

Recruitment campaign to fill vacant posts is planned

Revised programme of outcome focused case audit and dip sampling put in place to monitor the quality of work

Revised and robust performance management processes in place using child level data at service level feeding into strategic monitoring at the Improvement Board

Stage 2

Embedding sustained improvement

By April 2020

Workforce strategy agreed and in implementation

Management and practice changes identified and implementation under way

Work nearing completion on revised sufficiency strategy, to include commissioning processes for any new or re-provisioned services

Performance data, case audit and dip sampling used systematically to support managers to identify and report progress that can be evidenced and define areas for further improvement

Stage 3

Continuous improvement to a 'good' children's service

Between April 2020 and March 2021

Workforce has stabilised- permanent posts are filled, turnover reduced

Performance indicators, audit and dip sampling show continuous improvement in both quantitative and qualitative measures

Action is taken to respond to any areas of poor performance

Torbay is recognised as a 'good' children's services authority- By April 2021

OUR IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The table below details the action that we are taking in order to continue to progress on our improvement journey. The document will continue to be periodically updated to show progress. It is a 'live' document which continues to be updated as required and as progress is made. We will continue to learn continuously from the improvement actions that have been taken and their impacts as well as from the contributions of Ofsted.

We will continue to use Red/ Amber/ Green (RAG) ratings to indicate our view of progress:

- Green- the actions against this objective are proceeding as planned and there is clear evidence of improvement and impact
- Amber- actions are proceeding, but there has been some slippage and/ or limited evidence of improvement and impact
- Red- actions are not proceeding or there is major slippage and/ or no evidence of improvement and impact

The Director of Children's Services is the overall owner of this improvement plan and responsible for ensuring that its implementation is progressed and that updates are provided on a monthly basis.

Theme 1 – Leadership Management and Governance

Objective 1.1:

- The Chief Executive should ensure that leadership, management and governance in Torbay are strong and sharply focused on improving and sustaining outcomes for children, and all recommendations from inspection activity are addressed (recommendation 8 and repeated)*

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/ Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress	RAG/DOT
1.1.1	Effective leaders and managers will determine the priorities of the service (reflecting Ofsted recommendations and the monitoring visits) the standards to be achieved and will lead, develop and motivate the workforce ensuring that all staff have a full understanding of what is expected. (Para 83, 85, 86)	Leaders and managers will demonstrate authority, vision and management skill to ensure that the service is fit for purpose and the workforce is sufficiently trained and motivated to deliver its objectives to time and within the legal framework. Senior leaders need to be effective in understanding the priorities to delivering services to children,	CEO and Senior Leaders	Immediate	Children will benefit from a service that knows itself well, is responsive to need and provides services that are good or better.	All work will be compliant with statute and local policies and procedures, when measured by audit, dip sampling, management oversight and child level performance data.		

		challenging those who are accountable and tasked with delivery to ensure services continually improve. Robust Service Plans to be in place articulating vision, priorities, and standards. All managers to ensure the workforce understand how their work impacts on service delivery and are active in systematically evaluating how interventions positively impact on children's outcomes. Implement our workforce strategy, to support retention and recruitment of frontline practitioners.							
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1.1.2	Elected members will be conversant with the priorities and the challenges of the service and its improvement plan and will be active in offering political challenge on behalf of their communities (Monitoring Visit April 2019 KIT).	Elected members to be offered a seminar to enable them to understand fully the revised data set and performance information. The Lead Member will have access to the monthly data and performance reports, including highlight reports that will specify progress and risks to progress and enable them to discharge their statutory duties effectively. The Service leads and Lead Member will make periodic visits to services to enable them to understand progress and best practice. Visits will include	DCS	31 st December 2019	The elected members will hold the service to account for the provision it makes to children and their families. Members will be able to offer assurance to their communities about the progress that is being made.	Children will benefit from members being able to properly scrutinise the volume and quality of services being provided to children in Torbay.		

		opportunities to extend their existing relationships with key partners and to strengthen further their contributions to services for children made through current arrangements such as the corporate parenting board.						
1.1.3	Relevant Political processes will offer robust challenge to the Chief Executive and senior managers on the effectiveness of services for the most vulnerable children in Torbay (Para 101).	Overview and scrutiny panel will understand and have access to relevant performance data and intelligence to enable them to carry out their function appropriately. Members will satisfy themselves that they are appropriately structured to enable them to fulfil their function, including understanding of relevant children's services data.	Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services	Immediate	Children will benefit from having the professionals who provide services being held to account for the provision of quality and timely services.	Impact upon the improvement journey will be assisted by the contribution of overview and scrutiny.		

		A new ICS system to be implemented to support frontline practitioners in recording their activity with children and families and improve data reporting to understand how this is actively ensuring the delivery of services to children is evidenced.						
1.1.4	Effective caseload management will support practitioners to achieve acceptable and achievable workloads (Para 18, 96 & October Monitoring Visit).	Operational Managers will use existing and revised performance management information, and supervision to understand the complexities of individual social workers workloads. Any slippage from required standards will be recognised, understood and managed to prevent	Operational Managers – HoS, Service Managers and Team Managers	31 st March 2020	Children will benefit from work with Social Workers that is planned regular and is focussed solely on what is required to improve the quality of their lives.	Plans will be implemented in full. Drift and delay will be avoided. Social Workers will report that workloads are mostly manageable and managers understand their pressures.		

		any risk to the safety of children or drift and delay.						
1.1.5	The pace of change will be increased as a result of the implementation of sustainable improvement priorities. (April & October Monitoring Visit) Leaders will be assured of progress through the mechanisms of the improvement board and regular performance and management reports.	The improvement priorities will be implemented on time and any variations will be agreed by the SLT. Regular reports on the progress of improvement priorities will be systematically presented to the improvement board and SLT.	Senior leaders and operational managers	Immediate	Children will experience services that are focussed upon their needs that will begin to impact upon their circumstances. Staff and partners will report increased focus upon actions designed to improve and sustain the quality of services to children.	The individual elements of the improvement plan will be implemented on time and reports on progress will identify impact for children and any actions that are required to secure sustainable improvement.		
1.1.6	Policies and procedures which incorporate statutory requirements are embedded in	All staff should be conversant with policies and procedures as a	Senior leaders and operational managers	Immediate	Children will benefit from Social Workers fully	Case records will demonstrate an understanding		

	practice, fully understood by all staff and are evaluated for effectiveness within the performance assessment framework. (Para 88 & 92)	routine requirement of their induction. Updates and new requirements need to be notified to all staff through bespoke staff briefings and cascading mechanisms.			understanding what is required of them and their ability to apply policies and procedures in timely ways to the benefit of children.	and appropriate application of policies and procedures. Staff will report effective dissemination of new and revised policies and procedures.		
1.1.7	The improvement plan will be owned by senior leaders who will take personal responsibility for sharing the improvement vision and subsequent actions with all staff (Monitoring visit April).	The DCS and members of SLT will actively engage with frontline managers, social care and support staff to ensure that they are conversant with, and have the opportunity to become involved with the implementation of the plan.	DCS and senior leaders	Immediate	Children will ultimately benefit from a service that fully understands its direction and priorities.	All staff will understand and own the improvement plan and vision. They report opportunities to become involved in the detail of improvement implementation.		

Objective 1.2

- *Take immediate action to ensure that supervision and management oversight are strengthened. (recommendation 1. and repeated & October 2019 Monitoring Visit)*
- *Strengthen the quality, effectiveness and management oversight of the local authority designated officer. (recommendation 11 and repeated)*

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress	RAG/DOT
1.2.1	Supervision needs to be timely and the records comprehensive, identifying specific actions with clear timescales. Supervision needs to demonstrate reflection and challenge to social work practice and ensure it supports 'good' services to children. The requirement for periodic management oversight is explicit.	Records will show for example case direction, advice, decisions and endorsements of agreed actions. Supervision is regular, planned and at intervals reflective of the experience and capability of the worker. Management oversight is recorded on each child's file at prescribed intervals, or more frequently when necessary, and	Service Managers and Team Managers, and Assistant Team Managers	31 st December 2019	Children will benefit from skilled workers who have been afforded opportunity to refresh and reflect upon their approach to their work. Children will also benefit from managers being fully conversant with their needs and	Reduce drift and delay and ensure active and robust social work intervention Better, more structured approach to work. Clear management support and direction to ensure that actions		

	(Para 89, 92 & October Monitoring Visit)	demonstrates management 'grip' and understanding of the child's needs and how the plan will meet them. Supervision offers development and challenge opportunities and gives dedicated time for reflection Supervision is recorded according to policy and where action on cases is required a note is always made on the child's record and managers monitor for effectiveness. QA mechanisms and performance reports will ensure the robustness of supervision.			when necessary interjecting to ensure that the case is 'on track'.	required to safeguard and support children are in place and actively monitored.		
1.2.2	Ensure a consistent approach to the management and reporting of allegations against professionals and	Review the current arrangement of designated officers to establish whether it is the most efficient	Deputy DCS & LADOs	Immediate	Children will benefit from the knowledge that all allegations	Children will work with professionals and people in positions of		

	people in positions of trust working with children. (Para 34)	arrangement which leads to good outcomes for children. Ensure that all those working with, or providing services to children are aware of their responsibilities to report appropriately to the designated officer in specific circumstances. Introduce appropriate management systems and processes to ensure that allegations are managed in timely ways. Submit an annual report to the Safeguarding Board identifying key lessons and offering assurance that all allegations are managed expeditiously.			against professionals and people in positions of trust are taken seriously, managed effectively and responded to with rigor and in timely ways. Children and young people will receive improved services as a result of lessons being learned and disseminated to all staff.	trust who display the highest professional standards of behaviour and conduct.		
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Objective – 1.3:

- *Ensure that responses to children who go missing are effective in locating them and offering prioritised post episode support so that their needs can be fully understood and interventions, including disruption activity can be properly targeted. (Internal objective)*

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress	RAG/DOT
1.3.1	Ensure that responses to children who go missing are effective with well-coordinated plans and actions to reduce risk. Return home interviews to be completed within statutory timescales in order that children's voice can be heard at the earliest opportunity and effective responses can be made. (Para 41) .	Review policies and procedures updating where necessary data processes that capture missing episodes and subsequent return home interviews (RHIs) which need to be completed within prescribed timescales. Ensure that workers accountable for the missing work are located appropriately within the organisational structure.	Deputy DCS & HoS	31 st December 2019	Children will receive a return home interview within 72 hours of being found. For those children vulnerable to prolific missing episodes, disruption plans to be put in place. Children will experience agencies	There will be a reduction in the numbers of repeat missing episodes. The reasons for the missing episode are better understood and actions will be planned and implemented to support the child.		

		Introduce a system to track and monitor those children who are vulnerable to repeated missing episodes and ensure a comprehensive process is in place to oversee actions that are taken to afford the necessary safeguards. Introduce a contemporary tracking system overseen by a multi-disciplinary 'missing panel' to plan interventions and coordinate responses.			working together more effectively and consistently to understand the patterns and trends associated with their missing episodes. They will support prevention and disruptions activity that will reduce their vulnerabilities.			
1.3.2	Children who are vulnerable to sexual exploitation are appropriately assessed and supported, including for an association with gang related activity.	Strengthen the function of the CSE coordinator and align it to the statutory social work function. Ensure that members of MACSE are sufficiently experienced	Deputy DCS & HoS	31 st December 2019	Children who are vulnerable to being targeted or who are already involved in CSE will have a care plan	The numbers of identified children vulnerable to exploitation is likely to increase initially as improvements		

	MACSE meetings to be effective in reducing risk to the most vulnerable children by planning effective interventions. (Para 42)	and knowledgeable to contribute fully to plans for children. Use the quality assurance framework to monitor this activity on a monthly basis.			that identifies how these vulnerabilities will be addressed and reduced. Children will benefit from better protection as social workers will understand the vulnerabilities relating to CSE and the associated risks to children.	are made to the processes to identify children most at risk.		
1.3.3	Practice in relation to child sexual exploitation (CSE) is consistently good and reflects managers and social workers subject knowledge. (Internal data)	Ensure the screening tool used for CSE is fit for purpose and deployed across the service. Deploy CSE mapping within the MASH and SATS/SAFS to identify	Deputy DCS & HoS	31 st December 2019	The CSE screening tool will ensure that children at risk of CSE and their networks are identified.	Children will benefit from being identified as being vulnerable to CSE. Multi-disciplinary services, including		

		at the earliest opportunity the links between victims, people of interest and locations. Work with partners, particularly police and CSP, to understand the patterns, themes and trends pertinent to the demographic of Torbay in respect of CSE. Ensure this information is understood and acted upon by all front-line practitioners			Children will experience purposeful activity that demonstrably ensures effective and timely focus on their vulnerability to CSE.	mapping, will enable professionals to properly plan interventions. They will understand the extent and nature of the CSE challenge.		
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Theme 2 – A robust model of social work practice

Objective 2.1:

- *Early Help services provide timely and appropriate help to children and their families which prevents escalation (or re-referral) to statutory services. (Internal objective)*

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress	RAG/DOT
2.1.1	The Council and its partners as a whole have an agreed understanding, vision and joined up approach to Early Help which supports the improvement priorities and prevents avoidable escalation to statutory services.	Complete review of Early Help to ensure it is fit for purpose and takes its place alongside statutory services in offering children and families the right help at the right time.	Senior Leaders (working in conjunction with PeopleToo)	End January 2020 for review outcome and implementation plan	Children will benefit from a rigorous approach to Early Help which will enable them to access appropriate services in a timely way and at a level which meets their needs.	We will collate and evaluate data relating to uptake of Early Help, successful completion of early help interventions, rates of escalations to statutory services and rates of step down to Early Help.	.	

						Improved satisfaction ratings from families.		
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Objective 2.2:

- *Ensure that when children disclose physical abuse, which leads to a Section 47 investigation, that a child protection medical is carried out (recommendation 9)*

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/ Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress	RAG/DOT
2.2.1	Where children disclose abuse it is important that we work as a partnership and child protection medicals are conducted in order that children have a voice and are being listened to. (Para 22 & 25)	Strengthen partnership working, where necessary involving paediatricians in discussing the necessity of a CP medical.	HoS, Service Managers and Team Managers	Immediate	Children will be safeguarded at the earliest opportunity. Joint working will lead to effective decision making to ensure that	Information will be shared by all relevant partners to ensure an appropriate and immediate response to the need to safeguard children. They will not be left		

					the needs of children are prioritised and responded to. Children and families will not have to experience unnecessary Sect 47 enquiries.	in situations where they will be subject to significant harm. Children will only be subject to invasive section 47 investigations when the threshold is reached and evidenced.		
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Objective 2.3:

- Improve the quality and assessments and plans for children to ensure that purposeful work takes place to prevent drift. Children in Need, child protection reviews and core group meetings should specifically evaluate and record children progress, in addition to sharing and updating information (recommendation 7 and repeated.)*

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress	RAG/DOT
2.3.1	All assessments demonstrate that historical factors and all relevant information, including ethnic and cultural issues, are considered and analysed. The child's voice is evident and the child's lived experience is understood (Monitoring visits January, April and October, Para 24)	Improve the quality of all assessments for children and young people which will incorporate their 'voice'. Improve the quality of direct work so that it is purposeful and meaningful and incorporated into assessments and plans. Improve assessments to include a better understanding of the diverse nature of families and ensure this is assessed as part of a holistic assessment that	HoS, Service Managers and Team Managers to oversee, social workers to deliver	Immediate	Children will benefit from an assessment and subsequent plan that is based on an understanding of their cultural needs and how services will respond to the diverse natures of families. Children will contribute through direct work with their	Children's journeys and their lived experience and childhood will be better understood, captured and articulated. More assessments will be judged to be good by QA and audit processes. The timescales for assessment		

		translates into a robust care plan for the child. Audit will establish improvement in assessments being undertaken in children social care.			social worker. Records of this work will be identified on files and evidenced in assessments and plans Children will know that their voices have been heard	completion will be set according to the child's needs The quality of assessments will lead to improvement in care plans.		
2.3.2	All assessments are updated whenever significant events occur in a child's life (Monitoring visit January/April, Para 24, 39)	Ensure that decisions and actions for children are based on an updated assessment of need taking into consideration significant events that occur in children's lives that directly impact on their lives.	HoS, Service Managers and Team Managers	Immediate	Children's assessments and ongoing plans will be formulated to take account of the significant changes They will ensure that services provided mitigate the impact of negative events and support	Children's needs will be better understood and articulated more coherently and holistically. Children's long-term emotional wellbeing will be improved.		

					positive long term changes for children.			
2.3.3	Management oversight of assessments is consistently good and ensures that guidance is given to ensure that children receive timely help and protection. (Monitoring visit January/April, Para 24)	Reinforce the requirement that management oversight is evident on all open files. Ensure management oversight is recorded and always comprises case direction, advice, decisions and endorsements of agreed actions. Introduce audit activity to evidence compliance with managerial oversight.	HoS, Service Managers and Team Managers	Immediate	Children will experience work that is more structured and focused.	Children will benefit from social workers who have a clear understanding of the purpose of their interventions and the actions they are taking to achieve their outcome goals. Management oversight will ensure that work with the child is supported, appropriately challenged and when necessary directed to ensure a good quality service.		

2.3.4	Child in need plans and child protection plans will be consistently evaluated for progress, including the contributions made by the child. (Monitoring Visit April, Para 24) Core group meetings include relevant professionals and are purposeful in ensuring that plans are implemented and effective. (Para 24) Management oversight is effective and assures timely practice which affords the necessary levels of protection.	The requirements for the quality of assessments and plans will be reviewed and restated to all staff. Ensure that all managers understand their accountabilities in relation to assessments and monitor for compliance and quality. CP chairs and managers will monitor attendance at core group meetings and take action when necessary to ensure that plans are effective in protecting children and implemented. Ensure that the capacity of the children's social care service is deployed effectively to enable effective casework and management oversight.	Team Managers and Social Workers – HoS and Service Managers when necessary	Immediate	Children will recognize that they are able to contribute directly to assessments and plans. Children will receive consistently good services as a result of having high quality assessments and plans which set out the requirements and timescales. Managers will make sure that all plans are implemented and take action when required.	Dip sampling and when necessary audit to check for compliance with requirements (including management oversight) and quality. Performance management reports will detail compliance with timescales.		
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Objective 2.4:

- *Ensure the effectiveness of Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Chairpersons. Their work is recorded appropriately and actions are evaluated for impact, reviewed routinely and cases are escalated when necessary (recommendation 1 and repeated)*
- *Take immediate action to ensure that children on child protection plans, children in need and children in private fostering arrangements are visited within prescribed timescales and seen alone (recommendation 2)*
- *Urgently improve work with partners to ensure good quality, effective information sharing between all agencies involved in MARAC (recommendation 6)*

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress	RAG/DOT
2.4.1	Child Protection Chairs have effective oversight of cases, challenge and escalate where necessary. They monitor agreed actions to ensure implementation.(Monitoring Visit April)	Child protection chairs will become fully conversant with the details of the case and its plan, always record concerns and the actions that are required. Actions are monitored according to required timescales. Child protection chairs will be expected to use	Child Protection Chairs	31 st December 2019	Children will benefit from the regular oversight and knowledge of Child Protection Chairs which will reduce the likelihood of them remaining in circumstances	Children will be subject to child protection plans for as short a period as possible. Plans will demonstrably be fully implemented.		

		the 'dispute resolution' process whenever they find poor practice or failure to implement the plan in full. Chairs and senior managers to actively review children who are subject to CP plans and ensure that the plan is effective and relevant to the circumstances of the child. Periodic dip samples are scheduled in the quality assurance timetable to ensure compliance with the actions set out above. Monthly reports to be reviewed by the Head of Service for QA & safeguarding.			where they were likely to suffer significant harm. Where practice is of not good enough standard for children, improvements will be made using the dispute resolution process.	There will be a reduction in the numbers of children with second or further plans.		
2.4.2	Plans will set out the visiting frequency and provide sufficient focus to enable the progress of	Specific requirements for visiting frequency and the need to incorporate the voice of	Child Protection Chairs and Operational Managers	31 st December 2019	Children will benefit from prescribed visits that will	Visiting frequencies will be within		

	children to be measured and drift and delay to be avoided. (Para 21 & October Monitoring Visit)	the child in each assessment and plan will be made explicit. Recommendations of plans will be timed and measurable with accountability defined.			deliver their plan and ensure that their voices are heard and acted upon.	prescribed timescales. Records will demonstrably reflect the child's contributions and there will be clear evidence that their plans are implemented.		
2.4.3	Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) contribute to improved practice through their challenges and escalations particularly to reduce drift and delay and achieve permanence in a timely way. (Para 54 & October Monitoring Visit)	IRO to be required to use the formal 'dispute resolution' process to challenge poor decision making or drift and delay in developing or implementing children's care plans. IRO's to consistently track actions and oversee progress between reviews to ensure care planning is timely, focussed and	IRO's	Immediate	Children will benefit from focused social work intervention and robust care planning decisions to support their long-term needs. Children will experience better quality services as a result of IROs	There will be an increase in alerts and more timely responses to these alerts		

		achieves permanence for children. IRO's to alert the Deputy DCS about any placements in 'inadequate' provision or where the provider is failing to meet the agreed needs of the child.			challenging poor practice and supporting good standards. Decisions for children in relation to permanency planning will be timely.			
2.4.4	To re-establish the importance of MARAC arrangements in the management of children living in households in which domestic abuse is present. (October Monitoring Visit)	All staff attending MARAC meetings will be fully cognisant of the contemporary and historical circumstances of the child so that the meeting can properly understand the risks to which he/she is exposed.	Operational Managers and Social Workers	Immediate	Children will benefit from a process which will properly explore the impact of domestic abuse on their family, and assess whether and how it is effecting their daily lives and prospects for their futures.	Children will be better protected from the impact of domestic abuse and victims will be helped and supported to make the necessary changes in their lives.		

Objective 2.5

- *Fostering arrangements are visited within prescribed timescales and seen alone (recommendation 2)*

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/ Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress	RAG/D OT
2.5.1	Law and policy governing private fostering arrangements are understood and effective. Oversight is maintained to ensure that children receive timely visits and the assessments are concluded which evidence the impact upon the child in living in a private fostering arrangement. (Para 31)	Provide training for all front line staff on the legal framework about what constitutes a private fostered child. Review all privately fostered children who are known to children's social care and take immediate action to safeguard them. Review and revise the process of decision making in relation to privately fostered children and ensure that it is robust.	HoS	31 st December 2019	Children who are privately fostered are safeguarded. A robust oversight of the private fostering process will ensure that it is fit for purpose and meets the needs of this cohort of children.	Privately fostered children will be identified and appropriately safeguarded. Children will benefit from compliance with law and regulations.		

Objective 2.6:

- *Ensure that all looked after children need the care of the Local Authority and if so they are helped to achieve permanence, as appropriate to their needs, through long term foster care, special guardianship or reunification within their timescales, to ensure that children have certainty about their future placement stability. (recommendation13 & October 2019 monitoring visit)*
- *Ensure that family members who may be potential carers for children who cannot remain with their birth parents are identified as soon as possible to prevent delays in achieving permanence. (recommendation12)*
- *Ensure that children looked after with a plan for adoption, understand their life story and the reasons why they cannot live with their birth families prior to preparation for a move onto adopters. (recommendation14)*
- *Take action to ensure that foster care reviews, health assessments and mandatory training are completed in order that carers are equipped to meet children's needs. (recommendation 3)*

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/ Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress	RAG/DOT
2.6.1	For children who need to be in care, decisions should be timely and only exercised once all other options, such as placement with wider family members have been exhausted.	Improve social workers' and managers' awareness of the need to identify children at the edge of care at the earliest opportunity following referral or through the children in	Deputy DCS & HoS	Immediate	Children will feel safe, and their voice will be heard in decision making forums. Children will experience	Children will only be admitted to care when all other options have been considered. Placements will be available to		

	Whenever possible emergency placements are avoided (Para 35 & 36)	need and child protection processes. Ensure that edge of care workers are clear when children are insufficiently safe to remain at home. Ensure that children's plans are updated and initial health assessments are completed on time and management oversight prevents drift and delay. Edge of care services to be integrated and made available in planned and timely ways to all children vulnerable to breakdown in their living arrangements.			concerted efforts to enable them to continue living with their families wherever possible. Children will be helped to understand that admission to care will only occur when necessary and whenever possible it will be carried out in a planned way. Children will benefit from increased placement stability as a consequence of good matching.	children at the point of admission and unnecessary moves or prolonged stays in police stations will be avoided. This is evidenced in LAC reviews and as part of the IRO oversight. Quarterly reporting from the edge of care panel on activity will evidence best value for money.		
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2.6.2	The sufficiency strategy means there are choices of placement to meet the needs of children who need care, including those with challenging behaviours, those requiring emergency admission and those requiring placements outside of Torbay. (Para 52, 57)	Create a revised sufficiency strategy that ensures that all children who need care are placed at the earliest opportunity in resources that meet their needs and avoid unnecessary further moves. The sufficiency statement will be based upon a detailed analysis of need of all children likely to be in the looked after system and will accommodate emerging trends of demand.	Senior Leaders (in conjunction with the sufficiency task group)	31 st March 2020	Children will benefit from choice of placement which will meet their needs and will avoid unnecessary changes of placement. The likelihood of placement disruption will be reduced. Where it is in the children's best interests, placements will be geographically located so as to support contact with their families and friends.	There will be a choice of accommodation which is accessible at the point of need for children who have to live away from their parents. At the point of entry into care, unnecessary moves will be avoided.		
2.6.3	Children returning home from care receive sufficient support to enable them to live successfully in their	Audit all cases where children have returned home from care successfully and those who have re-entered	Senior Leaders (in conjunction with the sufficiency task group)	31 st March 2020	Children will not return home unless it is demonstrably in their best	All children who return home will have a reunification plan that		

	communities with few returning to the care of the local authority. (Para 38, 39)	care in the last 18 months. The emerging knowledge, themes and trends to be used to inform sufficiency strategy, social work development and the assessments and planning processes. Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) to ensure that the statutory requirement to review all children's care plans prior to reunification is implemented in every case. Reinforce to all front line practitioners and team managers the requirement that any children returning home from care must have an up to date assessment and support plan.			interests and they will be protected and safeguarded. Children will be supported to remain at home avoiding further episodes of care. IRO to have a better oversight of those children who are returning home and raise challenge to CSC if the support plan is not appropriate or implemented.	supports them to live within their families. The percentage of children re-entering care will reduce.		
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2.6.4	Matching for those children already living in long-term fostering placements will be timely so that they benefit from the stability and emotional security that this will offer them. (Para 59)	Take action to ensure that where long term fostering is the child's final plan, arrangements to secure the plan will be prioritised.	HoS Specialist Services.	Immediate	Children and young people will benefit from early decisions to secure matched long term plans.	More children will benefit from matched long-term placements with foster carers. Increased security and stability will reduce placement disruption.		
2.6.5	Foster carers in Torbay to benefit from annual reviews, health assessments and any training and development requirements.	NMS will be complied with in full.	HoS Specialist Services.	Immediate	Children and young people will be assured that foster carers' capabilities and capacities are understood and, where necessary, shortcomings are addressed.	Improved range of foster care provision as a result of carers' capabilities being fully understood.		
2.6.6	Children who are permanently placed away from their birth family are helped to understand what has happened to	Permanence planning will always include timed requirements for life story and direct work.	Team Managers and Social Workers – HoS and Service	Immediate	Children will have a comprehensive understanding (commensurate	Better bonding with their permanent carers.		

	them by effective life story and direct work being undertaken by workers. Life story work for children needs to start at the earliest opportunity so that children understand why they cannot live with their birth family.		Managers when necessary		with age) about the reasons for them living away from their birth families and why they need to live in permanent arrangements.	Fewer placement disruptions. Children with better attachment capabilities and greater confidence.		
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Objective 2.7:

- *Ensure that all 16 and 17 year olds who present as homeless are assessed by social workers and that they are aware of the option to become looked after. (recommendation 10 and repeated)*

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress	RAG/DOT
2.7.1	All young people who become homeless are assessed and are made fully aware of their right to be cared for by the Local Authority. (Para 28)	All 16/17 year olds who are homeless will be fully assessed and advised about their rights (including those relating to admissions to care) and their progress will be monitored and evaluated.	HoS, Team Managers and Social Workers	Immediate	All homeless 16/17 year olds will be aware of their statutory right to be accommodated. Homeless young people will have a personalised plan which will be monitored to ensure that they are properly safeguarded.	Young people will be aware of their rights and will continue to be offered safeguarding services should they become homeless, or care if they wish to take up this option.		

Objective 2.8:

- *Ensure that children benefit from effective and timely processes under the Public Law Outline (PLO) that address all risks for children, and are thorough and well managed. (internal objective & October 2019 Monitoring Visit)*

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress	RAG/DOT
2.8.1	Public Law Outline (PLO) and pre-proceedings work is effective and timely. Thresholds are understood, case decisions are tracked and reviewed and unnecessary delays are avoided. Good practice and effective management oversight means that proceedings are issued when necessary and without delay. (Para 19 & October Monitoring Visit)	Review all children who are presently being monitored within pre-proceedings and make the most appropriate and relevant decisions in respect of their care plans. Review the tracking and monitoring of all children's cases that meet the threshold for PLO process (including the pre-proceedings process) and produce on a monthly basis team level data.	Deputy DCS & HoS	Immediate	Children who are subject to PLO pre proceedings are some of our most vulnerable children. The intervention to these children needs to be focussed and targeted to ensure that the plans safeguard them and consider their permanent	All children in the pre-proceedings process will demonstrably meet the threshold and will be subject to a clear plan. The rate of progression through PLO and the pre-proceedings process is commensurate with the		

		Review and ensure robust implementation of the legal framework that underpins the PLO process. Ensure the swift initiation of the legal process, for children that need it and which are supported by good assessments and effective managerial oversight and support. Integrate and align the pre-proceedings process into the formal children social care delivery model. Ensure front line managers in children social care are accountable for the pre-proceedings process and review as part of the statutory care planning process.			long term options. Children will not spend prolonged period of times in the pre-proceedings process and there will be robust responses to their needs. Applications to courts or step down to child protection will occur within the agreed timescales set out in the protocol.	statutory requirements. Compliance with the 12 week maximum timescale is achieved (16 weeks if there are complexities) An increased proportion of children step down successfully to CP reflecting effective pre-proceedings intervention.		
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Theme 3 – A Sufficient and Skilled Workforce

Objective 3.1:

- Ensure that strategic arrangements regarding workforce development maximise staff recruitment and retention. (recommendation 16)
- Senior managers and leaders must take action to create an environment in which their staff have the capacity and support to carry out effective social work with children in need of help and protection. (recommendation 4 & October 2019 Monitoring Visit)

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress	RAG/DOT
3.1.1	An effective workforce strategy ensures a qualified and skilled permanent workforce that reduces reliance on agency staff (Para 94, October Monitoring Visit)	Recruitment strategy and practices to be strengthened to secure a well-qualified, permanent workforce. Reliance on agency staff to be reduced. All staff to be supported to remain in Torbay whilst a wider recruitment drive takes place using where possible dedicated	Senior Leaders (in conjunction with Strategic Workforce Development Manager)	Immediate	Children will have fewer changes of social worker. Children will experience social workers who are knowledgeable and skilled. Children will be able to build	Improvements to the quality of service provided to children. Stable long-term relationships with social workers.		

		recruitment fayres to full effect.			meaningful and consistent relationships with social workers and not have to re-tell' their story.			
3.1.2	The training and development strategy reflects the needs of the service and workforce and is based on an analysis of developmental needs. The training and development strategy should be flexible to accommodate learning from trends and new national and local initiatives, for example, the requirement to address the needs of children vulnerable to all forms of exploitation.	A workforce training and development plan to be developed reflecting an analysis of developmental need across the service that consists of core training and opportunities for bespoke events for managers and staff. Workforce policies to be updated and developed and set out the expectation of staff attendance at training events. Social Workers personnel records will reflect training and	Deputy DCS in conjunction with Strategic Workforce Development Manager	Immediate	Children will experience improved services delivered by a stable, skilled and motivated workforce. The impact of training is understood.	Children will benefit from work that is better planned and delivered. Their social workers will develop a greater range of skills and techniques that can be used according to need.		

	(Para 95, 90 & October Monitoring Visit) development opportunities that have been taken up. Learning objectives from training will be set out in event prospectuses and made clear to supervisors and line managers who will give their staff opportunities to practice and develop their new skills. A review of the overreliance of e-learning for delivering essential training to be undertaken. Learning from national research and local intelligence informs social workers knowledge and practices to protect children who are vulnerable to child sexual exploitation (CSE), youth violence, gangs and radicalisation.							
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Theme 4 – Quality Assurance and Audit

Objective 4.1:

- Ensure that performance and quality assurance information is collated for all service areas and, where weaknesses are identified, they are addressed urgently by managers at all levels. Identified learning should be evaluated and disseminated to staff. (recommendation 5 and repeated)
- Improve the effectiveness of learning from complaints and ensure that this scrutiny contributes to improved social work practice and better outcomes for children (recommendation 15)

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/D ate	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress	RAG/DOT
4.1.1	The outcome focused quality assurance framework will provide a programme of robust, child centred case file audits that will evaluate impact of work to support performance management. Follow up systems will be in place to ensure that actions required following audit are completed. (Monitoring Visit January, April and October. Para 92, 93, 91)	An annual programme of outcome focused audit activity, including deep dive and thematic audits and dip sampling to be introduced to measure the effectiveness and impact of the improvement journey and the benefits to, and outcomes for children of the improvement actions. Train and develop a pool of auditors and	HoS for QA and Safeguarding	An agreed audit programme to be in place by 1st November 2019	Children will benefit from having a systematic effectiveness, impact and compliance check on services that are provided to them. Children will benefit from the knowledge that audit and dip sample	Improved compliance with requirements, a greater focus on outcomes and improved quality assessment, planning and intervention which reflects the needs and views of children.		

		moderators to include senior managers. Formalise the tracking of audit outcomes and recommendations to ensure that individual cases are improved and learning from audits is captured and supports policy and practice development.			recommendations will be followed up to ensure that the required action has been taken.	Improved performance data across the range of measures.		
4.1.2	Ensure a consistent approach to the use of performance data which captures qualitative and quantitative material so that it supports evaluation of outcomes for children. (Para 91, 92)	A review of the performance management and data reporting will be undertaken to ensure that the relevant reports relate directly to the child's journey through the system. This will support more effective monitoring and identification of performance pressure points and emerging trends.	Deputy DCS	31 st December 2019	Children will benefit from the ability of managers and staff to be able to monitor their work. This will enable individual, team and service performance to be identified and action taken to respond to pressures and concerns.	Child level data enables a focus on case related performance that will improve. Team and service performance will also improve in response to scrutiny and support with performance pressures and		

		The data will be at child level.				emerging demands.		
4.1.3	There is an established and understood process to ensure that all complaints are dealt with satisfactorily and in timely ways and responses are overseen by managers. (Para 97)	Weekly updates to be provided at the HoS meeting, Any timescales that are not adhered to will be escalated to the HoS/Deputy Director. There is an annual complaints report to identify lessons learned and which states how these will inform practice and improve outcomes for children.	Complaints Manager & HoS	31 st December 2019	Learning from complaints supports us in understanding how well we are delivering services to children and families. Children need to know that the learning is aggregated to support improved service delivery.	All complaints will be dealt with within timescale. We will aggregate the learning which will be cascaded to front line practitioners and team leaders to improve how we deliver services to children and families in our community.		