

**Document Control**

Protective Marking [*✓ tick one below*]

Unclassified		Protected	
Restricted		Confidential	✓

**Children's Services Improvement Board  
Chair – Stuart Smith  
21 January 2021**

<b>Attendees:</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Job Title</b>
Adrian Farley	Cllr - Lead Portfolio Holder Children and Families
Ali-Jan Haider	Director of Keeping Well, Bradford District and Craven CCG
Amandip Johal	Head of Service - Safeguarding Reviewing and Quality Assurance
Ann Baxter	Local Government Associate
Chris Chapman	Director of Finance and IT
Claire Threapleton	HR Manager, Children's Services (sub Anne Lloyd)
Craig Tupling	Vice Principal, Bradford College
Darren Minton	Bradford Safeguarding Board Manager
Dominic Barnes-Browne	Head of Finance, IT & Procurement Service
Geoff Winnard	Councillor – Chair of Children's Overview and Scrutiny
Ginny Robinson	Acting Headteacher, Midland Road Nursery and Abbey Green Nursery School
Irfan Alam	Deputy Director Social Care CBMDC
Jane Booth	Chair and Independent Scrutineer – The Bradford Partnership
Jo Newman	Airedale ANHSFT (sub for Jill Asbury)
Joanne Hyde	Strategic Director Corporate Resources CBMDC
Kersten England	Chief Executive
Laura Copley	Senior Data Analytics & Intelligence Officer OCX
Marium Haque	Deputy Director, Education and Learning
Mark Douglas	Strategic Director Children's Services CBMDC
Michelle Holgate (nee Smith)	General Manager Community Services, Bradford District Care NHS Foundation Trust
Michelle Turner	Strategic Director of Quality and Nursing Bradford District and Craven CCG
Mustansir Butt	Scrutiny and Overview Lead Officer (Corporate Resources)
Phil Hayden	Director of Programmes Children's Services and Innovation and Improvement
Richard Fawcett	Interim AD Safeguarding & Reviewing, Commissioning and Provider Services
Richard Padwell	Superintendent West Yorkshire Police
Shanaz Akhter	Staff Reference Group representative
Stuart Smith	Chair of the Improvement Board
Susan Hinchcliffe	Leader of the Council
Traci Taylor	Principal Social Worker
Vicky Smith	Children's IT Programme Manager
<b>In attendance</b>	
Heidi Hardy	Programme Support Officer (Minutes)
<b>Apologies</b>	
Anne Lloyd	Head of HR – (sub Claire Threapleton)
Heather Lacey	Headteacher Shirley Manor Primary School
Heather Wilson	Commissioner (Youth Provision)

Jo Newman	Named Nurse for Safeguarding Children / Airedale NHS Foundation Trust (sub for Jill Asbury)
Maggie Smallridge	Head of Bradford & Calderdale National Probation Service
Patrick Scott	Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Chief Exec Bradford District Care NHS Foundation Trust. (Michelle Holgate sub)
Peter Horner	Young Lives Bradford Manager VCS representative
Phil Witcherley	Head of Performance
Philippa Hubbard	Interim Chief Operating Officer & Director of Nursing Professions and Care Standards / DIPC
Tehmina Hashmi	Executive Principal, Bradford Academy

Ref.	Notes / Action / Decision	Action Owner
1.	<p><b>Welcome and apologies</b></p> <p>Introductions were made. See above list of apologies.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Minutes of last meeting held 26 November 2020 and matters arising</b></p> <p>The minutes were agreed as an accurate record. There were no matters arising.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Action Tracker</b></p> <p>The action tracker was updated accordingly.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Staff Reference Group</b></p> <p>There has been significant progress made by the group since the last meeting including launch of dedicated email address for staff feedback for which the results will be published in the service newsletter. There is good representation at all levels and Directors and Heads of Service will attend on a bi monthly basis.</p> <p>The staff survey results were discussed and an action and improvement plan will look at anything outstanding. The group are looking to arrange a key celebration event to tie in with world Social Care day. The Improvement Board Chair Stuart Smith will attend the meeting in March.</p> <p>Irfan Alam attended the group recently and has also written to Practice Supervisors to thank them and outlining plans to reduce caseloads. Communication will be maintained through this group.</p>	
5.	<p><b>Directors update</b></p> <p>Mark Douglas gave an update on the recent Ofsted Assurance visit. He confirmed that the draft letter has been received which showed which areas the Council are focussing correctly on. Key groups of staff have been brought in to strengthen key processes. It is noted there are some challenges in the letter of which one is key practice remains too variable and there is still some churn in the system. The service must now challenge to lift quality of practice which will need to become consistent. A</p>	

Ref.	Notes / Action / Decision	Action Owner
	<p>detailed response to the draft letter has been sent. The final letter will be published after the 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021.</p> <p>Discussion took place around mental health support for looked after children and other children including SEND. Mark Douglas confirmed that a meeting would take place tomorrow with CCG and Health Providers regarding priorities and action plan to address issues over the coming months. The improvement in this area will be shown as a trajectory in the vital signs report. In addition to this meeting joint action planning meeting with Children's Improvement Board and Safeguarding Board will take place to look at the priorities and how these will be addressed into real tangible change.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Improvement Update and updated plan</b></p> <p>Irfan, Richard and Phil gave a presentation on the key highlights from this month's improvement work. Work is ongoing promoting consistency of practice and reducing agency staff through the new management structure to ensure a fit for purpose establishment. Adoption performance was found to be firmly in the middle ground for West Yorkshire. Fixed term teams will look at long term work and practice supervisors. Another 2 teams being recruited to provide additional capacity to reduce caseloads.</p> <p>Discussion took place around contracting with providers to provide suitable teams. Richard confirmed that a very clear contract specification is in place and there is no recruitment of people who have worked in Bradford for last 2 years. Recruitment is ongoing in the Safeguarding Team to specialist posts of IROs CP chairs and Fostering IRO's and a second LADO. Salary should not be a barrier to joining Bradford.</p> <p>Irfan also assured of processes to ensure minimised transfer points during the process proposing a model so social workers can work in either long or short term cases utilising their skill sets and each locality team with have same Head of Service and Service manager.</p> <p>Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy action plans to be completed in next two weeks.</p> <p>In terms of the ongoing Covid-19 related restrictions and lockdown arrangements there have been a number of actions in the Improvement Plan with revised timescales. It was also noted that some training needs could not take place face to face at this point in time.</p> <p>Cllr Farley welcomed the new Innovate contract to enhance the workforce however expressed concerns around the amount of experience of new staff coming in. Irfan Alam assured that the specification made clear that social workers require 4 years experience and outstanding references and commitment for longevity. This was echoed by Claire Threapleton. The chair explained this strategy is being put in place with other LAs. This will allow the time needed to focus on the Recruitment Strategy.</p> <p><i>Improvement plan</i></p> <p>Circulated update for information. There are a few significant items for which timescales will be revised.</p>	

Ref.	Notes / Action / Decision	Action Owner
7.	<p><b>Vital Signs</b></p> <p>Laura Copley presented the latest Vital Signs data report for November. Health data was not received on time but will be provided on time next time. Michelle Holgate gave an update on indicators from the full dashboard. Work is underway to improve the consent pathway which will address the number of health assessments requiring consent. Part of the delivery plan is to understand narrative behind this and cleansing is being done around this. It was noted the average waiting time is 145 days. Awaiting new model being implemented to ease pressure on paediatricians. It is hoped to see improvement in next couple of months.</p> <p>Ann Baxter queried whether virtual assessments can be undertaken. Michelle Holgate confirmed these did take place over summer and now all children have had a face to face assessment and physical assessment. Irfan explained that some pre-adoption medicals were done via video but face to face assessment is always carried out prior to adoption.</p> <p>Stuart queried whether capacity was there? Michelle felt it was unlikely between now and April that there would be any additional capacity however a piece of work underway to recruit to specialist roles and there is some GP interest in this work.</p> <p>Michelle Turner advised that paperwork and planning needs to take place around system quality.</p> <p>Other highlights from the report included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EH referrals increased</li> <li>• Rate of Children Subject to a Child Protection Plan – dropping, consistent thresholds applied</li> <li>• Second time on plan – higher at 16%</li> <li>• More children in care during Covid pandemic</li> <li>• Early Help Covid – need to embed the lead professional</li> <li>• Timeliness – stable across the board given current situation with Covid, staffing and increased caseloads service is doing very well</li> <li>• Caseloads have increased.</li> </ul> <p><i>Starters/Leavers</i></p> <p>Claire Threapleton gave an update on the current position. Clare explained there was not enough granularity around data – at moment can't see how successful we are on recruitment eg CSW's. will update data pictorially to show how successful areas of recruitment and other areas of pressure which will provide a better understanding of what is happening.</p> <p>Claire confirmed she was working with Comensura around agency-permanent-fixed term and discussing the new process with Director of Finance around governance and control of putting social workers into the system.</p> <p>Performance management has improved over time. Will report quarterly unless issues.</p>	

Ref.	Notes / Action / Decision	Action Owner
	<p>Cllr Winnard asked if why staff are leaving and does this help stop others leaving? Claire explained that Traci Taylor – Principal Social Worker had done a significant number of exit interviews however these need to be done at the right moment in time to work with staff to address issues.</p> <p>Sickness – new style of data to be presented showing where and what the issues are. Managers felt they are now getting support from team HR business partners.</p> <p>Claire to bring back update on management of sickness triggers as part of next report.</p> <p>It was noted there had been a slight increase for care leavers in education, employment or training however Bradford remains 10% below it's target.</p> <p>Dental checks have reduced due to impact of Covid-19 which needs to improve.</p> <p>The percentage of Children in Care seeing a dentist has reduced further and is now the lowest it ever has been, this is attributed to the restrictions due to COVID, and is a national trend. There will be a focus on this area but Covid is still impacting on the numbers.</p> <p>Children Missing return home interviews stands at 55% which is below November 2019. Discussion on Philomena protocol being applied.</p>	
8.	<p><b>Audit – October data</b></p> <p>Amandip reported that 79% of audits were returned this period. Participation of Social Workers has dropped to 37% therefore work continues to reinforce the message of completing audits and the benefits. Grading - increasing to 17 in October and is more consistent and the new Audit tool had been introduced. Further key points included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response is timely and swift</li> <li>• Assessments quality is good</li> <li>• Need to ensure assessments are dynamic – this is being embedded in the training</li> <li>• Planning is good</li> <li>• CP plans being worked on to see core group meetings let minutes be QA'd led by Amandip Johal.</li> <li>• Supervision and oversight is positive.</li> <li>• Childhood experience - need to continue to focus on work in this area</li> <li>• Performance impact measure of making a difference to children's lives – looking at parental behaviour to reduce risk – need to build on this and measure the difference we are making about outcomes rather than compliance.</li> <li>• Good partnership working has been evidenced.</li> <li>• Monthly Integrated Front Door (IFD) audits – will continue to build on services</li> <li>• Audit children under age of 2 during pandemic – highlighted number of strengths and good practice across the board – did not identify anything not known</li> <li>• Uncompleted actions are all followed up.</li> <li>• Built into moderation process and escalated to relevant Heads of Service and Service Managers. May need to look at presenting corrective actions over time.</li> </ul>	

Ref.	Notes / Action / Decision	Action Owner
	<p>Joanne Hyde said would be useful to see cumulative actions. Some areas still not coming through for example investment into key posts will have impact on this team. Joanne asked for sharper timelines. Amandip assured that her team will be working with Practice Supervisors and compliance is now built and embedded including the new Practice Standards. Amandip felt over 6- 8 months caseloads will drop and changes around quality will improve.</p> <p><b>Action: Amandip to have conversation with PSW's to see where their challenges are and to have a conversation with Traci Taylor, Principal Social Worker.</b></p> <p>Amandip reported that audit training would be rolled out on Microsoft Teams in February as soon as that facility is available.</p>	<p><b>Amandip Johal</b></p>
<p><b>9.</b></p>	<p><b>The Bradford Partnership update</b></p> <p>Jane Booth went through key highlights from her report to the board which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covid 19 – the Partnership has reverted to weekly meetings since the national lock down.</li> <li>• Need data on school attendance.</li> <li>• Free School meals now back with schools. Mark Douglas assured that commitment remains with the Council to work with schools and free school meals agenda and will pay costs if required now and get back later.</li> <li>• Offer from DfE to look at engagement with schools.</li> <li>• Compliance and quality of responses – (report appended) reflected in the report</li> <li>• Performance dashboard to be shared at a future meeting.</li> <li>• Information on case reviews in the report.</li> <li>• In terms of stability – new police representative on the Bradford Partnership.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>10.</b></p>	<p><b>ICT updates</b></p> <p>Children's E2E programme update to date. All on track will give update on agenda next time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Device deployments and roll out of Microsoft Teams underway until end of February. Some staff drop off old one and pick up different one. Some come in and self-serve.</li> <li>• Tactical deployment completed including tablets for court teams.</li> <li>• This year supporting IT deployment from teams to agency to full time and in process of finalising 100 devices laptops for Children's for device roll out</li> <li>• Modern workplace – key element is Teams to enable Instant Messaging and to Teams and enable video conferencing. Timelines still in place which were reported in November to this board. As part of this process underlying tasks have started and Teams appearing on staff desktops in priority order. Looking at end of February to complete deployment.</li> <li>• Working on priority list with Heidi and Phil.</li> </ul> <p>It was stressed that Teams is required as soon as possible in order that Amandip's team can carry out delivery of the training plan at pace.</p>	

Ref.	Notes / Action / Decision	Action Owner
	.	
11.	<p><b>Foster Care Recruitment and Training update</b></p> <p>Richard Fawcett gave a presentation on the current position.</p> <p>It was noted the service will exceed number of approvals – 28 mainstream families resulting in 56 placements.</p> <p>Deregistered some fostering households which were on hold.</p> <p>Mockingbird – now able to deliver model and allowing the Council to promote the best foster carers which will result in greater impact in stability.</p> <p>Recruitment and advertising has been undertaken virtually.</p> <p>Despite the Covid impact it was noted that lots of training sessions have taken place and the service are in the process commissioning online training programme for which due diligence around data protection was taking place.</p>	
12.	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>None</p>	