

What do we know about the quality and impact of social work practice in your local authority?	How do we know it?	What are our plans for the next 12 months to maintain or improve practice?
<p><u>EARLY HELP</u></p> <p>During 2018/19 a large scale review of Early Help services will see a reduction in budget of £1.5 million by 1st April 2019 as part of the Council’s medium term financial strategy (MTFS). The intention is to create a ‘family well-being service’ merging the Children Centre programme and family facing services. Additionally we will have a new youth/adolescent provision combining Youth Offending provision with a wider prevention function..</p> <p>In the last quarter (August 18) 2100 individuals had an Early Help Assessment and over 800 received targeted support. We have recently concluded an evaluation of our Early Help Services that found they are effective, highly valued and innovative. The multi-agency / Key Worker approach is working well; the services are highly valued by families and partners. The study found that staff have high levels of confidence in effecting change (93% + workers believed they could affect change in complex families, all or most of the time). Families make significant progress and that the majority (67%) of families sustain changes and do not re-access services. . The study also found that the impact on social care referrals is significant, notably 68% of families had involvement prior to early help support, this drops to 33% at the end of involvement</p>	<p>Early Help participated in the management review of the Front Door in December 2017 and the independent review of the Front Door in May 2018 and subsequently the Ofsted Focussed Visit October 2018. This has provided useful insight into the interface between Early Help and Social Care as has the new improved children’s panels.</p> <p> New panel process v0.6.pdf</p> <p>Child’s Journey</p> <p>The TOPS Meeting (Early Help Transition, Oversight and Planning Meeting) provides good opportunity for the consideration of threshold issues and is seen as integral to the interface between Early Help and Social Care</p>	<p> Acrobat Document.pdf</p> <p>Children and Families Departmental Plan 2017 – 2020 contains the strategic priorities.</p> <p> Partnership_plan.pdf</p> <p>Children’s Partnership Plan 2018 – 2021 contains strategic priorities</p>

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<p>Work has been undertaken across Strengthening Families and Early Help to provide targeted to support families in crisis (Feb 2018)</p>	<p>A recent inspection of early help cases in July 2018 highlighted improvements in practice from an audit undertaken in July 2017. Notably management oversight and supervision of cases was more consistent and undertaken more regularly. There was also increased evidence of greater application of the national neglect toolkit in cases involving potential neglect, and this has led to less delay and drift in cases being stepped up from early help to social care.</p> <p>Early Help has been working closely with the Disabled Children’s Team to develop a quality approach to the assessment and review of families for short breaks and domiciliary care. The Early Help SEND Family Support Team are working with the Leicestershire Parent Carer Forum to develop guidance and criteria for families to help ensure this is a transparent process.</p>	<p>Early Help continues to focus on a continuous improvement approach to developing practice standards. To support this Early Help have introduced an advanced practitioner post to develop practice standards within early help teams. The post-holder will be a part of a team reviewing the learning from early help audits and looking at ways of embedding this into practice, and the post-holder will work closely with Advanced Practitioners already employed to focus on developing social work standards.</p> <p>All parts of the service need to understand the new eligibility criteria for DCS and the enhanced EH and the Local Offer with regard to disability.</p>
<p>FRONT DOOR</p>		

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<p>First Response is responsible for the screening and response of all referrals to the department, ensuring that contacts and referrals are properly differentiated between, and aligned with statutory requirements. Assessment Teams sit within First Response and are responsible for SAF and formulation of a child's plan where needed</p>	<p>In December 2017 there was a Senior Management Team review of First Response which along with their own self-evaluation has identified a clear and ongoing plan to build upon improvements. Children in specific circumstances e.g. domestic abuse and CSE are more integrated. The department has developed a specialist resource to deal with domestic abuse notifications and the pilot has been in place since October 2017, including the delivery of Encompass. This enables a joint approach with the police as the screening occurs at the police station so strengthening partnership arrangements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Consolidate thresholds and consistency of decision making across the service. Achieve improved integration with locality teams •Simplify recording templates and influence Mosaic development – SOS development for recording 2019
<p>Since the SIF in 2016, the Front Door has been a key area for improvement and the identified issues below have been addressed through the Improvement Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Morale in the service is significantly improved with HR issues resolved and sickness reduced – staff retention improved and recruitment leading to staff stability being created •Communication with staff more direct and ambition clearer •Teams are in place with relationships developing with managers and improved supervision rates and support •ASYE group report improved support and successfully transitioned to main SW grade – Jan2018 – new cohort linked to programme from Sept 2018 •Volume of Assessments increased and timeliness of assessments improved •Strategy discussion process and quality improved to form basis of robust Section 47 planning – audits completed June 2018 feedback from partners confirms decision making and planning is strengthened •Incoming work has a more timely response with clear rationale for actions and outcomes •CP referrals have a robust response by SW rather than none qualified staff so that risk can be managed more effectively 	<p>In May 2018 there was an Independent Review of First Response which identified significant progress in relation to thresholds and screening, with a need to do further work in relation to assessment and planning; professional curiosity is a key area for development with staff.</p> <p>In October 2018 Ofsted undertook a Focussed Visit of the Front Door and the results have been published in</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Continue to Embed SOS as an approach to analysing children's needs and building safety in the child's network – in line with team SOS trajectory – build on the Practice Excellence team work during Autumn 2018 •Develop consistent template for recording Section 47 and SAF using SOS approach November 2018 •Align Business support to demand for uploading of inbox in live time so that target of 24 hour decision is met consistently and support to team managers •Review Support worker role to consolidate OOH offer to screening over weekends and evenings – pilot in place Summer 2018. •Continue to develop the learning cycle in line with FRCD QA and

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Distinction between contacts and referrals clearer with actions more proportionate at each stage. Children directed to right service and offered proportionate responses •SOS starting to be reflected in analysis of referrals and assessments so that families are more involved in planning •Managers have better oversight to performance using live performance data on tableau so work can be tracked •OOH now delivering service with more dedicated and experienced staff – consistency of offer starting to embed – links to other agencies made including YOS, Police and Border Agency so response is more robust and consistent to children out of hours •Assessments are more focused on CIN and % outcomes increased where CIN plan is required. •Stronger response to DA in place information sharing improved with schools and timely screening with police of high risk cases means risk is better managed for children 	<p>November 2018; progress in practice and culture noted.</p> <p>There has been ongoing audit of Contact and Referrals and Re-referrals which show improved consistency and clearer management oversight over 2018 so that outcomes are clearer and proportionate</p> <p>Work has been undertaken to gain feedback families in relation to First Response and this is showing a much improved position in relation to the work of First Response</p> <p>A FRCD QA and Learning Framework is in place to embed a learning culture with all staff involved in the audit process.</p>	<p>Learning framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Consolidate quality of assessments including consistent application of SAF Standards via QA and reflective learning and use of PODs and consultation •Continue to embed use of performance data at Team Manager level and social work level to understand trends and work through put/ capacity and timescales •Continue refinement of DA model based on integrated response to domestic abuse referrals – explore how this could be extended to an integrated front door process with direct pathway to Early Help – Autumn 2018 •Continue to stabilise workforce and reduce reliance on agency staff •Continue to build confidence of new managers and SP group – link to training for aspiring managers •Ensure all staff have up to date PDR •Establish OOH model within permanent structure November 2018

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CHILDREN IN NEED OF HELP AND PROTECTION		
<p>Child's Journey Guidance and Panels implemented January 2018 to ensure earlier planning and permanence and the avoidance of drift</p> <p>Continued managerial focus to ensure child's voice is demonstrated at all interventions</p> <p>Practice Standards in place since February 2018 and includes the need for more regular visiting patterns to children subject to child protection plans and this is monitored through monthly performance data.</p> <p>Refreshed Quality Assurance Framework launched May 2018 with greater emphasis on learning All adults are 'warm' – done with workers to facilitate learning</p> <p>Feedback on themes promptly disseminated</p> <p>Some improvements being seen in consistency of work across localities.</p> <p>Feedback from Ofsted and Ombudsman raised concern about care planning and plans not being SMART. Work has been undertaken with all teams to drive improvement</p> <p>Chronologies – to ensure all cases had a chronology providing an overview/analysis of what had been happening for a child, with a focus on accumulative impact</p> <p>Clearer guidance and training provided for staff including update of a 'practice notebook' as a quick reference guide</p> <p>Senior managers actively promoting evidence informed</p>	<p>Evidence seen in service user feedback exercises as well as feedback from partners.</p> <p>Greater clarity amongst practitioners coming to CDM and other panels for a decision for PLO, Care Proceedings about the needs of the child</p> <p>Clear offer from the new Practice Excellence team - working to embed SOS methodology; providing training, coaching and modelling to ensure improved fidelity to practice model.</p> <p>Child care managers all have monthly protected learning time and expected to share learning by cascading this to teams thereby supporting improved consistency.</p> <p>Managers supporting use of tools such as RIP and Community Care Inform to encourage evidence based practice.</p> <p>Examples of impact seen to date include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good partnership work for the benefit of families (e.g. relationships with UAVA to improve and embed practice on the ground) 	<p>Children in Need and Children in Need of Protection will come together to work in locality 'PODS' with a strong skill mix to ensure improved assessment and care planning for children.</p> <p>Edge of Care Service to be implemented as part of the Care Placement Strategy 2018</p> <p>Review and implement new approach to assessments and Care Plans to reduce duplication</p> <p>•</p> <p>Continue to focus on SMART planning to drive change for families</p> <p>Continue to capture voice of child and is influencing decision making.</p> <p>•</p> <p>Targeted work with Schools and Health to improve relationships.</p> <p>Strengthen routine use of high quality group supervision</p> <p>Continue to build worker confidence in the use of research and evidence.</p>

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<p>practice and development of a learning culture.. Practice learning sessions support managers in cascading knowledge and skills to their teams. Examples of sessions delivered include; neglect and the Neglect Toolkit, understanding trauma CSE, County Lines, Lightbulb, smart planning. Practice summits provide additional forums for shared learning with differnet services coming together to explore issues in more depth – for example learning from serious case reviews/audit or permanency.</p> <p>Social work staff have access to a high quality learning offer which is explicitly linked to the Knowledge and Skills framework.</p> <p>The refreshed and strengthened ASYE programme is ensuring that newly qualified workers are developed and supported in their first year in practice.</p> <p>There is a positive relationship between Early Help and Social care staff in localities with Early Help 'TOPs' meetings and 'Peer Supervision' forums enabling a shared understanding of thresholds across teams and services.</p> <p>Partnership working is maturing with recent work helping to build productive working relationships. For example;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint CAFCASS and CSC workshops • , formal links established between Head Teacher and leaders within the locality fieldwork teams • Open days so staff can build their connections across partners • . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased confidence of practitioners reported by managers • Managers report discussion in teams informed by new learning being applied in case work and informing planning – e.g. adverse childhood trauma, County Lines (CSE) • Increased identification in cases where there are indicators suggesting possible 'county lines' /gang involvement • Improved co-working with specialist CSE Team and partner agencies • Systems of communication/education are developing with GPs Health and Education seeing improved collaboration on cases • Learning audit framework is in place (yearly timetable) - this has monthly audits that include learning audits by TM's, SW's and dip sampling/observations and Thematic Audits <p>Services have an 'impact board' displayed which reflects feedback from children/families and partners</p>	<p>Management oversight to be better evidenced at all parts of the child's journey; twin goal of reflection and direction to be enhanced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners to help them develop a more realistic understanding of thresholds and to continue to push for high quality of referrals and earlier identification of risk and joint safety planning. <p>Ensure there is clarity on the expected levels and range of QA activity and work to build skills on QA in managers</p> <p>Support workers to be better able to articulate what difference they are making.</p>

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<p><u>EXPERIENCE OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) AND CARE LEAVERS</u></p>		
<p>Child's Journey Guidance and Panels implemented January 2018 to ensure earlier planning and permanence and the avoidance of drift</p> <p>Permanency is a strand of the Growing Quality campaign for 2017/18 as well as within the Departmental Plan</p> <p>Permanence Planning Guidance updated January 2018</p> <p>Development of Mistle project as part of Care Placement Strategy to support most challenging young people in care to successfully experience family-based placements by summer 2018. This was awarded to Action for Children and is now in place</p>	<p>Practice Summits held with a focus on child permanence reports as well as the implementation of a pilot permanence team to focus on adopters/carers which recruitment has started.</p> <p>The Dedicated Placements Support Team (DPST) has been instrumental in ensuring that the therapeutic needs of children in care are met. This is evident in improved placement stability performance measure of 8% (top quartile).</p>	<p>The updating of the Adoption website updated with new material is in progress – the recruitment element is completed. Support information will be uploaded by January 2019.</p> <p>The Virtual School have also launched a new website which includes information for previously LAC. Action Plan focussing on vulnerable learners will be launched to include YOS, Teenage Parents and SEN</p>

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<p>Monthly Operational Group in place with Health and LLR; Business Support to ensure improved performance is paying dividends and making a difference</p> <p>The Leaving Care Team has been established, staff recruited and cases transferred to that team. This will enable focused, strategic work to improve outcomes for care leavers and will improve accountability.</p> <p>Apprenticeship Offer was submitted to the People's Strategy Board May 2018 and was agreed. There are now 2 Care Leavers who have successfully secured apprenticeships.</p>	<p>Published Adoption Scorecard shows significant improvement A1 457 and A2 170 September 18</p> <p>Revised CAMHS offer is in place completed</p> <p>In addition an improved offer for post Adoption and SGO support has been implemented and the qualitative data on feedback from SGO and Adoptive carers is very positive</p> <p>Corporate Parenting with a strong focus on engaging with children in care to influence and drive change</p>	<p>Care offer developed work with District Councils to exempt Care Leavers from Council Tax. The Care Leaver Team has started a 3 month program of consultation with staff, partners and young people to map the priority areas of the offer that require development. The mapping will cover 4 areas including economic stability, health, emotional wellbeing and suitable accommodation. The first mappings will be available in Dec 18.</p>
<p>The review of the NEET Strategy has been completed and now includes a focus on care leavers. Underpinning actions like the restructuring of the Children in Care Service, access to Information, Advice and Guidance and collaborative work between the Virtual School (Fox Academy) and Leaving Care Team has progressed. The latest Care Leavers in Education, Employment and Training data shows an improving position and higher than statistical neighbours on the back of 3 years of continuously improving rates.</p> <p>The Leaving Care Team with additional Personal Adviser support is embedded and demonstrates improved pathway planning with young people</p>	<p>Data in relation to placement stability, EET, and suitable accommodation is showing an improving picture and rag rated green</p>	<p>Application of social networking and other technological platforms available to increase the 'in contact' figure. The use of WhatsApp is being implemented imminently to enable to 'in contact' and has required approval by ICT and risk assessment</p>
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT		

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<p>There is a clear focus on Children’s Services in Leicestershire with political leaders, the Chief Executive, Senior Managers and partner agencies prioritising Children’s Services and sharing an ambition to improve outcomes for children. Leadership is one of the four behaviours that underpins everything and is evidenced at all levels. The committed and experienced Lead Member has a relentless focus on improving outcomes for children and young people and is highly visible in a range of forums to maintain a good line of sight with the front line</p> <p>Key strategic plans (CFS Departmental Plan, Children and Families Partnership Plan and CSC Improvement Plan (The Road to Excellence) have been completed. Each sets out clear areas for focus and expected milestones to drive improvement in Children’s Services.</p> <p>Keeping in touch with frontline practice includes some practice observation.</p> <p>There are constructive working relationships between the judiciary, CAFCASS and the local authority. Regular meetings between senior managers and the Judge as well as active participation in local Family Justice Board and the LSCB help to ensure practice issues are well understood across the partnership arena.</p>	<p>There is evidence that leadership is having impact and driving cultural change and this is noted in the most recent Ofsted visit.</p> <p>Lead Member and members of DMT have clear line of sight to front line practice via practice observations, annual conversations and support to maintain pace.</p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny receive regular reports including performance report, as well as the updated CIP and provide appropriate challenge</p> <p>A recent survey undertaken by Frontline indicated that socialwork staff are reporting opportunities for learning (92%) and 96% reporting encouragement to focus on outcomes for vulnerable children and their families.</p> <p>Consistently positive staff feedback from the 3 annual conferences delivered for staff.</p> <p>To support clear communication and transparency, a weekly SMT</p>	<p>In addition to the Children’s and Families Departmental Plan 2017 – 2020 referenced above there is a plan on the page</p> <p> Plan on a page 2018.doc</p> <p>Leicestershire are committed to continuing to work on the road to excellence under the following headings in the next 12 months Being a Learning Organisation Embedding Excellent Practice Taking the Right Action at the Right Time Developing Policy and Performance</p> <p> RAG RATING.Planonapage</p> <p>in the next 12 months the focus on practice will extend beyond the improvement plan – say in what way/what areas</p>

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	Action/Information Log is disseminated to all staff with summary details of key issues raised in SMT that week.	
WORKFORCE		
<p>Clear departmental vision sets out behaviours and values expected by the workforce</p> <p>An explicit Practice Framework sets out the expectations for staff about how they will work with children and families across the continuum of need. .</p> <p>New routes into social work developed during 2017/18 with 6 social work apprenticeships beginning in March 2019. 4 Participants in the Front-Line scheme will qualify in August 2019</p> <p>Clear career progression pathway for social workers launched in July 2018 and is now live with social workers being supported to evidence their fitness to practice and readiness to progress. A market premia for level 3 social workers alongside a comprehensive employment offer should realise benefits and support greater stability in the social worker</p>	<p>Three annual conferences are helping to create a learning culture and to showcase and celebrate good practice</p> <p>Well established partnership with Frontline and more recently with Warwick university (apprenticeships)</p> <p>Pathway developed and available with guidance to all level 2 staff – learning hub. First panel Nov 2018.</p> <p>Market premia approved.</p> <p>Management oversight of practice and</p>	<p>Pride in Practice event to showcase the framework and place emphasis on workforce relationships</p> <p>Plan to include bringing together Practice Excellence and QAIF in order to co-ordinate improvements to practice and drive improvements</p> <p>Need to further strengthen the quality and consistency of management skills. For example, launch of refreshed supervision policy from January 2019 to include input from RIP in December 2018.</p>

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<p>workforce in the future.</p> <p>A dedicated recruitment and retention strategy for social workers has been developed and is helping to develop a strong employment offer for workers in Leicestershire.</p> <p>The learning offer for social workers was refreshed in April 2018 with all training being explicitly linked to the Knowledge and Skills framework. The offer has differentiated between core and developmental learning so that workers can pace their approach to training over a 3 year period.</p> <p>The Practice Development Group draws together a cross section of practice leaders to ensure the workforce is helping shape the development and improvement of provision. The group have delivered on some major developments for practice including streamlining paperwork and refreshing the supervision policy and developing tools and guidance for managers.</p> <p>A central repository to hold examples of good practice has been developed and this is available through the Learning Hub as a resource for all staff.</p> <p>Learning from complaints and compliments about the workforce is used to inform practice improvements and feeds into the training offer as well as forums such as practice summits or learning sets.</p>	<p>supervision has been a key priority within the department with explicit quality statements set out in Growing Quality. Close oversight of supervision frequency has seen good levels of supervision and staff have continued to feedback that managers are supportive.</p> <p>However, case file audits still show some inconsistency in the quality of management oversight, indicating that development plans are yet to demonstrate their full impact. Growth in management capacity has had positive impacts across the service, particularly in First Response; where all levels of staff including AYSE report more support. Direct work, children being seen and the voice of the child heard are key elements of good practice culturally embedded across services from strategy through to practice.</p> <p>The vast majority of cases audited demonstrate children being seen and their voices heard at assessment, reviews and through timely visits. Assessment, planning and interventions draw on Signs of Safety practice and work is being undertaken to ensure</p>	<p>Develop plans to 'professionalise' early help practitioners with a training programme and competency framework.</p> <p>Develop and deliver a new workshop based programme for aspiring and new in post managers will commence January 2019 in response to staff feedback.</p> <p>Review of ASYE programme following completion of first year of refreshed programme.</p> <p>Evaluate impact of recruitment and retention strategy Review success of additional routes into social work</p>

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<p>The Assistant Director and Lead Member attend the CIC Council Meetings and other officers attend for set topics.</p>	<p>that it is consistently applied, supports direct work with children and enables many children to benefit from strong relationships with their social workers who know them well.</p> <p>More recently warm auditing has been developed to include feedback from children and families.</p> <p>Older children are supported by a children’s rights officer to attend and contribute to their child protection conferences and increasing numbers appear to be doing so. As a result, children are empowered and have their voices heard within the child protection process</p> <p>The children in care council (CiCC) is strong with approximately 28 young people regularly participating in work to ensure their voice is heard and they are represented in key service developments. Examples include their involvement in Foster Care recruitment and training, Family Justice Board event and the recruitment to key posts across the service.</p>	
<p>PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND LEARNING</p>		

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<p>Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework (QAIF) – Briefing Paper September 2018 updated and re-launched to support managers at all levels in understanding their responsibilities to continuously improve practice.</p> <p>Development of 'growing quality' documents describe expectations to drive continuous improvement</p>	<p>Performance and audits are being used more widely to improve practice. Improvements noted in FR, repeat child protection plans, placement stability, EET, suitable accommodation.</p>  <p>Children and Family Service - Growing Quality</p>	<p>QA not yet seen as part of business as usual everywhere. Actions for next year include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> engage with the regional work to simplify and streamline QA activity to be more manageable and smarter. More focus on closing the 'learning loop' Consider benefits of a 'practice week' – to 'create time for workers and managers to focus on QA.
<p>Children's Services Analysis Tool (ChAT)</p>  <p>02.10.18 CHAT.pdf</p> <p>Attached is the CHAT tool with the inspection data 02.10.2018; this tool has not been implemented or used across Leicestershire and therefore some elements of the report are not working correctly.</p>	<p>Clear evidence of managers use of Tableau - coupled with a growing confidence in how data can be used to drive service improvement or point to the need for exploration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work to ensure all reports are pulling through data accurately Re-instate formal KLOE with managers to support improved analysis

