



Worcestershire County Council
Children's Social Care: Service Improvement Plan
(PRIORITY ACTION PLAN: JULY – SEPTEMBER 2017)



Introduction

1. Following an Ofsted monitoring visit undertaken on 23 and 24 May 2017 (focusing on the Family Front Door service) and proposed final recommendations presented by our DfE Children's Commissioner on 9 June 2017, the Council and partners, sponsored through the Service Improvement Board, have re-focused their improvement priorities to address the key concerns / feedback provided.
2. This document sets out the immediate priorities for our improvement journey for the period from June 2017, leading up to the next Ofsted monitoring visit on 12 and 13 September 2017.
3. The four priorities are :
 - Family Front Door – Management of Contacts, Referrals and Assessments
 - Remodel the Early Help Offer
 - Culture – Create a child-focused and accountable culture
 - Understand What 'Good' Looks Like

Our Vision for Children and Young People

4. Taking the lead from the Worcestershire Children and Young People Plan (2017-2021), our **vision** is for Worcestershire to be a wonderful place for all children and young people to grow up. We envision a supportive community where children and young people are safe, secure, and nurtured into successful independence.
5. Our **mission** as a Directorate is to deliver high quality services to children, young people and their families.
6. Our core **values** are:
 - We believe that all children and young people should be at the heart of everything we do
 - We will make a positive difference to every child we work with
 - We will we keep families together where it is in the best interests of the child
7. We will ensure children achieve the following **outcomes**:
 - Are safe from harm
 - Reach their full potential
 - Make a positive contribution in their communities
 - Live healthy, happy and fun-filled lives
8. The way we will work:
 - **Listen to, hear and understand** children, young people and families
 - Find strengths and build on positives to help **people help themselves**
 - Prioritise **partnerships** to improve outcomes - doing things with people, instead of to them, for them or doing nothing
 - Focus on **adding value** and keep asking 'is anyone better off / is anyone worse off'?
 - Be **brave** enough to always do the right thing for children and young people

PRIORITY 1			
Family Front Door – Management of Contacts, Referrals and Assessments			
Benefit for Children and Young People: High-quality decision-making on children's needs, through consistent application of LSCB revised levels of need, and without delay.			
Activity	Owner	By When	What will be different by September 2017
Develop and implement new multi-agency protocol and workflow arrangements for the management of Contacts, Referrals and Strategy discussions at the Family Front Door	TiRu	18 Aug 2017	Compliance with <i>Working Together</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timescales of referral decisions in 24 hours • Health, police and education contributions to strategy discussions at the FFD will be over 95% • All referral decisions will be made in line with the LSCB revised levels of need document
All staff, including partner agencies at FFD and Early Help understand revised levels of need guidance and revised workflow arrangements – reinforced through team meetings and supervision	ShMo	31 Aug 2017	All FFD and Early Help employees and commissioned staff will be applying thresholds appropriately and consistently
Establish daily MASH meetings to support multi-agency information sharing and joint decision making arrangements at the FFD	TiRu	31 Aug 2017	MASH will be an effective forum for identifying a multi-agency chronology of information on which to base sound decisions on the level of need and risk
Address backlog of open assessments through provision of additional social work and team manager capacity	TiRu	18 Aug 2017	All new assessments to be completed within 45 days maximum
Assessments Dashboard to be amended to include timeliness of visits to children during the social work assessment. This will be added to Safeguarding TM Performance Management Dashboards	EmBr	3 July 2017	Immediate access to live performance data and compliant with standards.

PRIORITY 2:			
Remodel the Early Help Offer			
Benefit for Children and Young People: Children and young people are able to access the right help early enough to prevent problems escalating and they are assisted to exit statutory services.			
Activity	Owner	By When	What will be different by September 2017
With LSCB partners, produce an Early Help strategy including procedures and practice standards.	ShMo	31 Aug 2017	Strategic partnership commitment and buy-in to delivery of Early Help in Worcestershire and strategy and associated documentation approved by the WSCB
Develop WSCB assurance framework for Early Help in preparation to submit regular reports to WSCB	ShMo	31 Aug 2017	WSCB receive assurance on the effectiveness of the Early Help Offer
Agree operating model for Early Help for internal and commissioned Level 2 and Level 3 early help services	HaNe	1 September 2017	Clarity of vision and implementation plan identified – ready for commencement in September
Revise the pathway between Targeted Early Help and Safeguarding services 'step up and step down'	TiRu	31 July 2017	Increase in numbers and better quality of step up / step down arrangements

PRIORITY 3			
Culture – create a child-focused and accountable culture			
Benefit for Children and Young People: Social care and targeted services staff understand their role and responsibilities and Worcestershire's way of working; and children and young people value their involvement.			
Activity	Owner	By When	What will be different by September 2017
Produce a communication strategy and plan to ensure staff and partners understand the vision, mission and values of the organisation and their role in driving improvement – e.g. SW Conference	ShMo	31 July 2017	Regular communication and events ensuring staff are informed of latest developments
Commence cultural diagnostic (24 July) programme over 12 weeks	BeWi	24 July 2017	Emerging understanding of what are the key drivers of existing culture of practice
Communicate our intention to implement the Signs of Safety model (without distracting staff from priority activity)	DaAd	July / August 2017	Staff have an awareness of the new model
Agree a revised social care operating model that puts the child's experience first	TiRu	31 July 2017	We will have commenced formal consultation on agreed organisational structure
Promote Worcestershire County Council as an employer of choice	RiTā	31 August 2017	We will have a clear revised employment offer that will have demonstrable recruitment improvements
Implement performance management strategy to include proactive identification and mitigation of poor performance	RiTā	31 August 2017	We will be able to identify key challenges in teams and individuals and will be able to take assertive action to improve services to children

PRIORITY 4			
Understand what 'Good' Looks Like			
Benefit for Children and Young People: Children and young people receive purposeful and outcome focussed interventions where their wishes and feelings are understood and acted upon.			
Activity	Owner	By When	What will be different by September 2017
Ensure practice standards are in place for key areas of the business and staff apply these consistently: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocations and transfers • Visits • Plans • Reviews 	TiRu	18 Aug 2017	Standards understood and applied by staff
Draw together a robust Quality Assurance and Performance Monitoring Framework for safeguarding and targeted services so we can measure our impact against improvement priorities	ShMo	18 Aug 2017	A simplified set of Key Performance Indicators and quality measures and learning communicated from analysis of these
Undertake key audit and observation activity against the priority KPIs to evidence our understanding of the impact of changes – and share key learning with staff and partners	TiRu	31 August 2017	Staff will have an increased understanding of what 'good' looks like and improving compliance with standards

