

WORCESTERSHIRE
CHILDREN FIRST



Corporate Parenting Board

8 October 2019

Safeguarding Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services January 2016

There are widespread and serious failures in the services provided to children in Worcestershire who need help and protection and children looked after

Judgement : Overall Inadequate

Placed under direction by secretary of State to form an alternative delivery model for the delivery of children's services

Inspection Local Authority Children's Service Worcestershire July 2019

The local authority has made considerable progress in improving the quality of services to children and families since 2016.

Essential steps have been taken to meet the goals in the service improvement plan.

Senior Leaders and elected members are ambitious for and committed to, ensuring the well being, safety and outcomes for children in the county.

Senior Leaders have successfully created a strengthened workforce of stable and permanent workers who know their children well.

As a result, outcomes for many children and their families are better, the changes are embedded on core practice and there is evidence of a sustained trajectory of improvement.

Children in Care and Care Leavers

- Decisions made for children to come into care are appropriate and where necessary immediate action is taken to safeguard children
- Assessments for children in our care are timely, comprehensive and care plans are appropriate and Care plans for are comprehensive, up to date and reflect the needs of children well
- Effective parallel planning for young children ensure they achieve timely permanency
- Majority of children in care are settled, are in placements that meet their needs and are making progress

Children in Care and Care Leavers

- Looked After Child reviews are well chaired by IRO's, Records are written in a supportive meaningful way and in most cases IRO's are active in ensuring quality and timeliness is identified and addressed.
- Assessments of Foster Carers are timely, thorough and analytical.
- Supervising social workers understand the needs of the children and help foster carers to develop their skills necessary to meet those needs.
- Planning for children with a plan of Adoption is a strength. ACE and the local authority work effectively to identify where Adoption is an appropriate permanence plan early and then family find without delay

Children in Care and Care Leavers

- Personal Advisors build positive relationships with young people and they know them well. They are aspirational for their young people and consistently encourage them to achieve in education and employment
- All care leavers have a PA to the age of 21 and the LA ensure they offer services, and are in contact, with most up to the age of 25 years
- Pathway Plans are detailed, up to date and have clear actions and timescales. Good participation from young people in completing their own plans and our “plan on a page” provide a good straightforward overview
- Access to support across the districts is positive and helps maintain contact and reduce isolation for these young people
- Most Care Leavers live in suitable accommodation and our outreach services engage young people in independent skills course that is effective in increasing confidence and enables them to progress through stages to independent living

Children in Care and Care Leavers

- Care planning for siblings groups is done in the best interests of children. Siblings are placed together when it is in their interests
- Children in care “benefit” from supervised family time with parents, siblings and family
- Children and Young People in care are making good educational progress and this is effectively monitored by social workers and schools through Personal Education Plans
- Long term stability for most children has improved as a result of proactive management and service development to introduce “consolidation meetings”

Continuous Improvement Sustainability and Consistency

Sustaining improvement and building consistency in good practice

Team Managers and Independent Chairs to proactively and effectively identify and improve quality and timeliness in all cases

Ensure comprehensive assessments, effective use of chronologies and family friendly outcome focussed plans are in place all the time for all children

Ensure robust case management and timely reflective supervision in place for all social workers all of the time

Our commitment to continuous improvement

The engagement with partners to deliver early help to families and to ensure that this help is timely.

The quality of intervention with families where there is a risk that children may be received into care if the right support and guidance is not available AND The timely availability of family support when children have a plan to leave care and return home.

Assessments of need for 16- and 17-year-olds who present as homeless, including whether they should come into the care of the local authority. Young people should be told clearly about this option.

Learning from the breakdown of placements for children by the holding of timely disruption meetings.

Evidencing Early Help taking place by partners. Strategic conversation with partners about level of need, roles and responsibilities – how do we structure and deliver support to ensure the right families receive early help when they need it.

Implementation of our multi agency Supporting Families First (Edge of Care) that will enable us to support even more children and young people to stay or return safely to their family

Improvement of the quality of social work practice assessment and planning along with a review of the effectiveness of joint working with partners supporting this group of young people especially at times of crisis

Build on our “consolidation meetings” preventing breakdown and enhance our service learning through reviews post breakdown “disruption meeting”

Our commitment to continuous improvement

The provision of personal assistants for care leavers when they reach the age of 17.

The availability of suitable accommodation and timely interventions that ensure that care leavers, including those aged over 18 years, are not placed in bed and breakfast accommodation or become homeless.

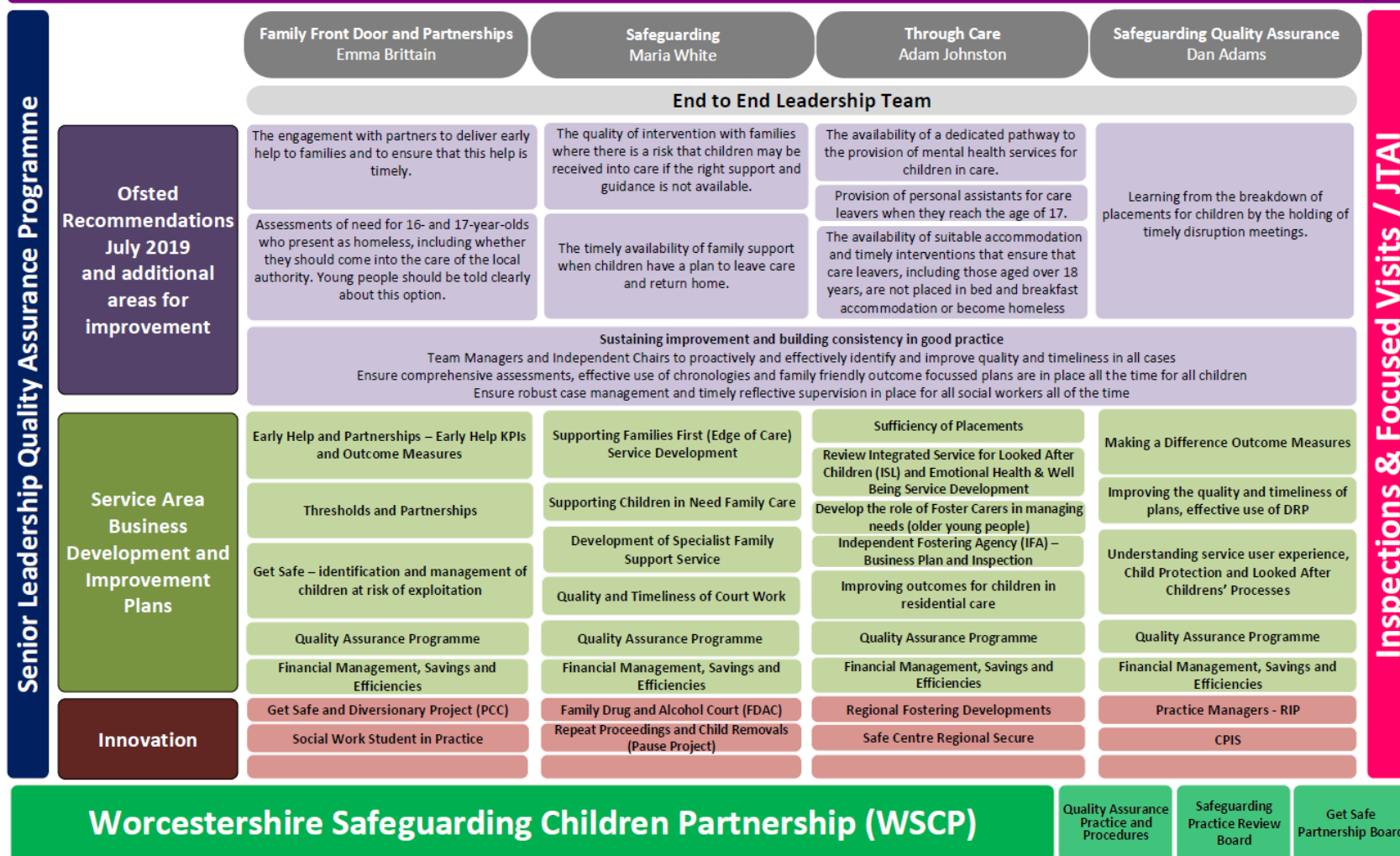
The availability of a dedicated pathway to the provision of mental health services for children in care.

In our Through Care services review how we can provide support and guidance to promote a young persons independence and transition to adulthood at the earliest opportunity.

Work with our Districts, Housing Providers and Partners to increase the availability of suitable accommodation for young people leaving care.

Engage with partners in health to improve the way in which we assess needs of our most vulnerable children and young people and prioritise them to ensure we provide timely direct work to promote their emotional health and wellbeing

Workforce and Culture



Inspections & Focused Visits / JTAI

