

SHROPSHIRE CHILDREN'S SERVICES POST OFSTED ACTION PLAN

Our journey of continuous improvement



'All children and young people to be happy, healthy, and safe and reach their full potential, supported by their families, friends and the wider community'



Introduction

“Social workers in Shropshire are working hard to keep children safe. They work with other staff in health, education and the police services to make sure that children are listened to and, where children have concerns or are not being looked after properly, they try to make children’s lives better.” (Ofsted, November 2017)

“The recent inspection of Shropshire Children’s Services has recognized that services to children and their families are overall ‘Good’. We were pleased that the inspection recognized our improvement journey. But we are not complacent. The aim of this Post-Ofsted action plan is to further improve services and outcomes for children, young people and their families. In doing so, the action plan will address the findings made by Ofsted, clearly indicating how we will implement the 12 recommendations given following the Single Inspection Framework (SIF) in September 2017.

Alongside this plan, we have a clear vision for work with children and families, which is underpinned by our 5 Practice Priorities. In our drive towards excellent services, we follow a cycle of improvement, continuously reviewing and testing our practice and oversight to ensure that we are making progress and creating actions to address our priority areas.” **Karen Bradshaw, Director of Children’s Services**

““Ofsted determined in its Report last November that services to safeguard children in Shropshire are good. That was a considerable achievement putting Shropshire in the top 30% of Local Authorities in England. But more needs to be done to address those service areas where improvements are needed so that standards continue to rise. We cannot afford to be complacent. This Action Plan shows where we want to go and how we plan to get there.” **Councillor Nick Bardsley, Lead Member for Children’s Services**

Governance and Accountability

Together with my senior management team we will take responsibility for the delivery of our plan. We will monitor improvements in performance and practice, measuring progress of our plan quarterly at our DCS Quality and Performance Meetings with Service Managers and through quarterly Performance and Quality Meetings with Team Managers. The People Scrutiny Committee will lead on the challenge of the delivery of our plan, scrutinising progress of the plan by way of a quarterly update. The strategies and plans that sit underneath this are monitored at appropriate Boards or other governance structures.
Karen Bradshaw, Director of Children’s Services

Our Vision, Priorities and Principles

Our vision: 'All children and young people to be happy, healthy, and safe and reach their full potential, supported by their families, friends and the wider community'

Our 5 Priorities

What is important and what success will look like

- Plans and Planning
 - ✓ Every child will have an up to date plan
 - ✓ Plans will be under pinned by an assessment and will be outcome focused
 - ✓ Children, young people and families will be clear about what is expected of them
 - ✓ Clear contingency plans are in place
 - ✓ Plans will be at the heart of our work with children and their families
- Management Oversight
 - ✓ Managers will ensure evidence of regular management oversight and reflective supervision on all case files
 - ✓ Workers will be supported and have access to good quality reflective support
 - ✓ Workers will be able to access management support when needed
 - ✓ Key decisions taken outside supervision will be recorded on the case file
- Assessments
 - ✓ Social work assessments will be child focused and informed by the views of the child
 - ✓ Assessments will contain robust analysis of risks and protective factors which inform plans for each child
- Core Groups
 - ✓ Core Groups will take place regularly and will review and progress plans for children
 - ✓ Each core group will review the child's plans and will agree actions to be undertaken by parents and the core group
 - ✓ Where insufficient progress has been made, this will be recognized and appropriate action agreed and taken
 - ✓ Core Groups will use effective step down processes
 - ✓ Minutes will be sent out to all professionals and parents following each core group meeting
- Visits
 - ✓ Visits will be timely, purposeful and include work which creates change for families
 - ✓ Children will be seen alone
 - ✓ Children's wishes and feelings will be clearly recorded.

Shropshire Council Mission

To be an excellent organization working in partnership to protect the vulnerable, create economic growth and support communities to be resilient.

Senior Management Priorities:

- Reduce Caseloads
- Ensure all workers are supported and there is robust management oversight on all cases.
- Ensure that we are only working with and looking after those children that we need to.
- Provide workers with the right tools to do the job – IT system, processes and systems and training.

Safeguarding Board Priorities:

- Domestic Abuse
- CSE and Missing
- Neglect

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Ensure that a clear system is established to enhance management oversight of initial contacts, so as to avoid any delays and to monitor timeliness and effectiveness.

Summary from Ofsted Inspection:

- Thresholds are well established and applied consistently, resulting in proportionate action to protect children. An effective and mostly timely response is provided when concerns for children are raised with the Compass service, which is where all enquiries are received about concerns for the welfare or protection of children and young people.
- Consent to share information is understood well and appropriately sought in the majority of cases seen by inspectors.
- In a small number of cases, some delays occur when parental consent and/or more information is needed for lower-level concerns but has not been sought already by the referrer. The impact of this for children is that there is sometimes a delay in progressing a contact and in determining the threshold for a referral.
- Inspectors saw evidence of appropriate management oversight and decision-making within the Compass team.
- However, a clearer, more structured system would ensure tighter monitoring of any future delays for children and their families.

Ref	Actions	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
1.1	Guidance to be written and implemented for RAG/Traffic light system of initial decisions on contacts, which includes a 3 and 5 day review.	Reduction of contacts taking more than 5 days. This will result in timely decisions being made on concern forms where consent or further information is required from the family or referrer.	Audit Performance Information	Jeanette Hill 08/01/2018	Piloted in December 2017, Live on 08/01/2018		
1.2	Weekly audit of contacts by the service manager and review of Performance Information to monitor compliance with protocol and impact on timescales. Outcome of audits to feed into Quality Assurance Feedback for oversight and scrutiny.	Consistency of practice in relation to contacts within the service and no delay found in progressing contacts and determining threshold for referral.	Audit Performance Information	Jeanette Hill To commence from 08/01/18	Compass Service Manager weekly audits are already embedded within the Quality Assurance Framework.		

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Ensure that all children have information added to their electronic records regardless of the level of concern, particularly for domestic abuse level one notifications, and that records completed by the emergency duty team are immediate.

Summary from Ofsted Inspection:

- Domestic abuse notifications are received and considered daily by the multi-agency domestic abuse triage meeting in the Compass service, consistently attended by a wide range of key partners.
- Recent changes to commissioning arrangements for health colleagues are designed to enable them to attend on a regular basis from November 2017, giving a more robust contribution to the decision-making to protect children.
- However, there is no recording on children’s files of lower-level concerns, where the child is not known to the local authority. This affects the local authority’s ability to provide a comprehensive chronology from the earliest concern and to inform future decision-making.
- The emergency duty team provides an effective out of office hours response, but children’s records are not always immediately updated. This means that up-to-date information is not available for staff if they need to make urgent decisions.

Ref	Actions	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
2.1	All domestic abuse Level 1 incidents to be recorded as an observation on children's files and duplicated across siblings.	Strengthened decision making for individual children and incorporation of history in all children's assessments.	Audit	Jeanette Hill 01/02/2018			
2.2	Workflow to be developed in Liquid Logic, which allows all notifications to be recorded.	Comprehensive chronologies on children’s files identifying all incidents where children have experienced domestic abuse.	Audit	Jeanette Hill 05/11/2018			
2.3	All case file records to be updated by the emergency duty team on children's case files before the completion of the shift.	Case recording which is up-to-date and enables workers to make urgent decisions based on current information.	Audit	Fiona Adamson/Lindsey Huxtable 01/11/2017			

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Ensure that all brother and sister groups have a case record as a result of a contact received in the Compass service.

Summary from Ofsted Inspection:

- Thresholds are well established and applied consistently, resulting in proportionate action to protect children.
- An effective and mostly timely response is provided when concerns for children are raised with the Compass service, which is where all enquiries are received about concerns for the welfare or protection of children and young people.
- While case recording was up to date, only information for the eldest child in a sibling group is recorded on concerns forms, so information about any younger brothers and sisters is not separately recorded or available for future reference on the electronic system.

	Actions	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
3.1	New concerns forms raised on cases which are not open, to be duplicated onto each child, and completed in Compass when authorising	All concerns forms available on relevant children for future reference, enabling appropriate decision making, assessment and action.	Audit Performance Information	Jeanette Hill 01/03/2018			
3.2	Concerns forms raised on open cases to be added by Compass who will duplicate the concerns forms and then assign to the relevant team for authorisation	All concerns forms available on relevant children for future reference, enabling appropriate decision making, assessment and action.	Audit Performance Information	Jeanette Hill/Steve Ladd/Elaine Storey 01/03/2018			
3.3	On all new or closed cases Compass Coordinator role to add all household relationships and Compass staff (SSW, EHSW, TYS, CSE lead) will complete and duplicate including EH consultations as appropriate	Connections between family members clearly visible and included in decision making for families.	Audit Performance Information	Jeanette Hill 01/03/2018			
3.4	Ensuring all relevant Shropshire Council procedures are updated to capture changes in operational practice	All workers will have a clear understanding of the processes, with clarity on role responsibilities.	Audit	Siobhan Hughes 01/06/2018			

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Ensure that assessments for children looked after and their families are comprehensive and analytical, to effectively inform timely care plans and decision-making.

Summary from Ofsted Inspection:

- Children become looked after when they need to be, in a planned and mostly timely way, and in response to escalating risks.
- Most assessments help to inform correct decision-making.
- A small number of assessments do not always contain enough detail so that plans for children to be looked after are sufficiently purposeful and clear enough, particularly for young babies.
- Most assessments (LAC), while undertaken regularly for reviews, are not sufficiently detailed in terms of considering all relevant information, critical evaluation and analysis, although a small number of excellent children's assessments were seen by inspectors.
- Management oversight does not systematically influence and improve the quality of assessments or care plans.

Ref	Actions	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
4.1	Looked After Child Assessment workshops to be delivered, consolidating learning from Martin Calder training in the context of LAC. To be attended by all social workers.	Analytical assessments which appropriately assess the needs of the individual looked after children and identify need.	Audit	Elaine Storey/Lisa Preston/Donna Chapman 01/05/2018			
4.2	Action learning set to take place with team managers focusing on the Quality Assurance of assessments.	Quality Assurance activity undertaken by managers to be evident on the case file and clearly improving the quality of assessments.	Audit	Donna Chapman / Siobhan Hughes 01/05/2018			
4.3	New assessment template for looked after children to be developed as part of Liquid Logic Implementation in consultation with social workers and	A LAC assessment template which enables robust assessment and analysis.	Audit	Siobhan Hughes 04/11/2018			

Ref	Actions	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
	team managers.						
4.4	All workers and managers to have access to Research in Practice to link theory and research to practice.	LAC assessments will contain more evidence of relevant research and theory.	Audit	Donna Chapman 01/07/2018			
4.5	Rag rating process to be revised to ensure that assessments for looked after children are comprehensive, timely and inform care plans and decisions for looked after children.	The scrutiny of assessments by the IROs will be evident on case files and improvements will be seen in critical evaluation and analysis contained in future assessments.	Audit Performance Information	Siobhan Hughes/Lisa Kelly 01/05/2018			
4.6	Child Journey Audit Tool to be amended to ensure that it reflects expectations in relation to assessment and planning for looked after children.	The ability to review progress in this area and to ensure that we are providing social workers and Team managers with the right tools/knowledge to undertake robust assessments in respect of looked after children.	Audit Review	Siobhan Hughes 01/03/2018			

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Ensure that all plans, including children in need plans, child protection plans, care plans and pathway plans, have clear overall objectives and timely specific actions.

Summary from Ofsted Inspection:

- In most cases, assessments lead to child-specific care plans. Children who are subject to child in need or child protection plans have their plans reviewed regularly. A robust and clear protocol for consideration of risks and concerns, or 'step up' or 'step down' arrangements, ensures that consideration is given at each review so that children are safe and receive the most appropriate intervention.
- A small number of plans are too long. They contain generic or unrealistic actions with unclear timescales. The use of the terms 'ongoing' and 'to be reviewed at core group' does not assist families or professionals to understand the timescales in which change must occur for the child.

Ref	Actions	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
5.1	Outcome focused planning workshop to take place with all IROs and CP Chairs, Team Managers, Social Workers, PA's and Virtual School – delivered by Research In Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome focused LAC plans to be created by social workers and given additional quality assurance by IROs. • Concise and SMART CP plans initiated by CP Chairs. • SMART PEPS's to be in place for every school aged Looked after Child. • All children to have an up to date plan which is progressing in line with their needs, with clear timescales and which is outcome focused. 	Audit	Siobhan Hughes/Donna Chapman 01/04/2018			
5.2	The virtual school will be part of induction training for all social workers with a focus on quality of PEPS's.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Virtual Head will feedback data on PEP quality, to include number of social workers using PEP's, PEP's within timescales, student participation and SMART targets. 	Audit, use of ePEP Dashboard data and QA by Virtual Head	Rose Hooper 01/02/2018			
5.3	Develop practice guidance on how to write a SMART outcome focused plan	Social workers will have an easily accessible guide to writing an	Audit	Siobhan Hughes/Pippa			

	including Do's, Don'ts, hints and tips.	outcome focused plan, improving the quality of outcome focused plans.		Murphy 01/04/2018			
5.4	Revise plan templates as part of the Liquid Logic and consult children, young people and their families in this.	All children's plans will be written in an outcome focused style, which families are able to understand.	Review	Siobhan Hughes/Lisa Kelly 01/11/2018			
5.5	Importance of data recording workshops to be held with practitioners by legal services.	All workers will understand the importance of recording on children's files and recording will improve.	Audit	Donna Chapman 01/07/2018			
5.6	Principal Social Worker to undertake Pathway Plans with ASYEs, creating good examples of Pathway Plans.	Workers will understand expectations for good quality Pathway Plans and ASYEs will develop skills to consistently create good pathway plans.	Audit	Siobhan Hughes 01/10/2018			
5.7	Pathway Planning workshop to take place with all relevant teams	Workers will have the skills to create high quality pathway plans and improvement shown in auditing.	Audit	Siobhan Hughes/Elaine Storey 01/05/2018			
5.8	Bi-annual themed audit of 25 plans to take place across children's services as part of the Quality Assurance Framework to ensure that they are SMART and outcome focused.	Understanding of the quality of children's plans across children's services and individual feedback and support created for workers.	Audit	Siobhan Hughes 30/07/2018			

RECOMMENDATION 6:

Ensure that effective management oversight and case supervision influence and ensure the achievement of children's plans.

Summary from Ofsted Inspection:

- Management oversight is clearly evident through regular and effective formal supervision.

- Most supervision records contain reflection on practice, with clear actions for social workers to progress.
- However, the quality of these records in some of the case management teams is not as clear in terms of monitoring children's plans and progressing to achieve outcomes effectively.
- Management oversight does not systematically influence and improve the quality of assessments or care plans. This results in delays to achieve actions that would improve outcomes for children.

Ref	Action	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
6.1	Monthly supervision folder audits to take place as part of the Quality Assurance Framework	Quality of supervision recorded to improve, shown by quarterly QAF reporting.	Audit	Siobhan Hughes 01/02/2018			
6.2	Implement the revised supervision policy, including observations of supervision.	Quality of supervision recorded and observed to improve, shown by quarterly QAF reporting.	Audit	Siobhan Hughes 01/03/2018			
6.3	LAC planning checklist to be utilised as a tool for workers and managers in supervision.	Thorough LAC planning and completion of actions to take place for every LAC child and young person in a timely way.	Audit	Lisa Kelly/Pippa Murphy 30/03/2018			
6.4	Managers to undertake regular practice observations as part of the Quality Assurance Framework.	Manager have an accurate picture of practice and supporting the development of this is evident in supervision.	Audit	Siobhan Hughes 01/03/2018			
6.5	Decision making and supervision action learning sets to take place for team managers.	A consistent approach to decision-making and supervision across teams shown by the QAF auditing schedule.	Audit	Siobhan Hughes 01/04/2018			
6.6	Team Managers to ensure that copies of children's plans are discussed in supervision.	Plans for children clearly monitored and progressed by managers, shown by supervision recordings.	Audit	Siobhan Hughes/Steve Ladd/Elaine Storey 01/04/2018			

Ref	Action	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
6.7	Core Group guidance and frequency to be revised, to reduce number of core groups taking place and increase quality.	Managers having more opportunity for oversight of core groups and review of plans with reduced numbers.	Audit Performance Information	Siobhan Hughes/Colleen Male 26/02/2018			
6.8	Reflective practice cards to be utilised through supervision to support workers to carry out planned and purposeful work.	Clear reflection recorded in supervision.	Audit	Siobhan Hughes 30/03/2018			
6.9	All team managers without a management qualification to be offered this through the apprenticeship levy.	Team managers enrolled on a management training course which enables them to become skilled and effective managers, who have a clear impact on practice.	Review	Donna Chapman 01/12/2017			

RECOMMENDATION 7:

Ensure that arrangements for permanence planning are robust and that permanence plans progress within the child's timescale, to avoid children experiencing delays.

Summary from Ofsted Inspection:

- The local authority recognises that more needs to be done so that children who are long-term fostered have their care confirmed by formal decision making about permanence, and so that any uncertainty that they may experience while waiting for a decision is minimised.
- In a small number of cases, there was some drift and delay for children waiting to be found long term carers, and a greater focus on purposeful and targeted family finding is required.
- Services for children who need permanence, but for whom adoption is not appropriate, are not yet consistent enough.
- The service is developing a permanence tracker. This includes all children who have a permanence plan, with the aim of strengthening senior and team management oversight and the grip on permanence activity other than adoption
- Independent reviewing officers (IROs) regularly review care plans, and more robust and recent scrutiny is beginning to improve practice, particularly for permanence.
- The independent reviewing service has recently established a red, amber and green (RAG) rating escalation process to introduce more robust scrutiny and to address less effective care planning. In most cases where concerns are escalated, this results in a positive impact for children. This

escalation process is beginning to improve practice, particularly in relation to permanence planning for children who do not have an adoption care plan.

Ref	Actions	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
7.1	Permanence policy to be refreshed	Permanency Policy will enable social workers and managers to understand the principles of permanency planning and how these apply to individual cases and all permanency planning will be timely.	Audit	Lisa Preston 01/02/2018	Permanency Policy has been updated and shared with Team Managers 06/12/17		
7.2	All Looked After Children to have a Permanency Plan following their 2 nd Statutory Review	All Looked After Children to have a Permanency Plan following their 2 nd Statutory Review	Audit	Lisa Kelly/ Siobhan Hughes 02/03/2018			
7.3	All children moving into long term fostering to be formally matched with their long term foster carer.	All children moving into long term fostering will be in a placement suitable to their needs	Audit	Lisa Preston 01/02/2018			
7.4	Permanence Strategy to be embedded.	A clear vision and strategic approach across children's services to improve approach to permanency.	Review	Lisa Preston 01/02/2018	Permanency Strategy has been drafted and is out for consultation.		
7.5	Implementation of the permanency tracker.	Ensure that there is management oversight of all cases where permanency outside the birth family is required and to track and monitor the progression of the permanence plans, preventing delay.	Audit	Lisa Preston 01/02/2018			

Ref	Actions	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
7.6	Permanence Forum to go live	Clear evidence that plans for permanency are expedited post LAC review.	Audit	Lisa Preston 15/01/2018			
7.7	Lunchtime briefings 'matching to long term fostering' on CPR's and embedding the permanence agenda in the implementation of children's care plans.	All relevant staff to have an understanding of the fundamentals of Permanency and able to create good quality CPRs.	Audit	Lisa Preston 01/04/2018			
7.8	Review of the structure of CPS.	A clear focus on the permanency agenda and transference of good practice from adoption to long term fostering.	Audit	Lisa Preston 01/04/2018			
7.9	Plans for permanence to be included in the Quality Assurance Framework auditing schedule.	Understanding of the quality of children's plans for permanence and actions developed to continuously improve these. .	Audit	Siobhan Hughes / Lisa Preston 01/04/2018			

RECOMMENDATION 8:

Ensure that children who are looked after have assessed contact agreements with their families that are sufficiently detailed and ensure that contact supervisors are specifically trained in supervision.

Summary from Ofsted Inspection:

- While family contact for children is promoted and most children see their families, assessments do not evidence careful enough consideration of children's contact needs.
- Most contact agreements seen by inspectors did not sufficiently set out the details of practical arrangements, the focus for the contact or its outcomes.
- Contact supervisors are not specifically trained in supervision.
- The local authority already had plans to review this service, but this had not happened by the time of the inspection.

Ref	Action	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
8.1	Contact policy and procedures to be revised and embedded across children's services.	Clear expectations and guidelines, which creates good practice in looked after children's contact.	Audit	Elaine Storey 01/04/2018			
8.2	Templates for contact including assessment contact agreement to be revised and embedded.	Contact agreements that are sufficiently detailed to enable good practice in supervised contact.	Audit	Elaine Storey 01/04/2018			
8.3	Contact agreement to be reviewed at second LAC review as part of permanence planning.	The levels of contact provided to each individual child will reflect the child's needs and care plan at that time.	Audit	Elaine Storey/Steve Ladd 01/03/2018			
8.4	Children, young people and their families to be included in contact agreements and invited to initial and review meetings.	Contact agreements, which include families and set out details of contact and expectations on all parties.	Audit	Elaine Storey 01/04/2018			
8.5	Contact workers and all workers who regularly undertake contact to be trained in supervising and assessing contact.	All workers undertaking contact to be able to carry out high quality contact and assessment and analysis of contact.	Audit	Siobhan Hughes/Elaine Storey 01/06/2018			

RECOMMENDATION 9:

Improve children's engagement and participation and ensure that information shared and numbers of children participating in their child protection conferences are collated for future learning and service delivery.

Summary from Ofsted Inspection:

- Child protection conferences are timely. They are sensitively and effectively chaired and well attended, and they facilitate effective information sharing and engagement by partner agencies. Conference chairs use a red, amber and green (RAG) rating of practice following case conferences. This provides additional management oversight and feedback to social workers, and leads to improvements in practice.
- Arrangements for children to participate in their child protection case conferences are weak.
- Some children are supported to contribute to their plans, or to attend their meetings, and a commissioned advocacy service is available. However,

the local authority does not capture specific data or information around children's participation in case conferences to inform future service delivery or learning.

Ref	Action	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
9.1	Children and young people's participation in case conferences to be monitored on a monthly basis and broken down by team and worker to identify any barriers.	More children and young people to participate in their Child Protection Conferences and their views to be collated and incorporated in Service User Feedback Reports.	Performance Information Audit	Lisa Kelly 01/03/2018			
9.2	The Service User impact project to ensure the prioritisation of young people's participation and consultation.	Greater focus by all services on service user participation, ensuring that children's voices are collated and heard and utilised to improve service delivery and practice improvement.	Performance Information Review	Fran Doyle 27/07/2017			
9.3	Child Protection Conference style to be reviewed and revised to embed relationship based practice.	A conference style which will encourage children and parent's engagement in child protection conferences.	Performance Information Review Service User Feedback	Lisa Kelly/Siobhan Hughes 01/05/2018			
9.4	Hold conferences in schools (more community based venues that are child friendly)	Increased participation in case conferences by young people.	Performance Information Service User Feedback	Lisa Kelly 01/04/2018			
9.5	Review all tools for gathering the views of service users prior to child protection conferences and utilisation of these to be reported at a team level.	Increased understanding of service users views for conferences.	Performance Information Review Service User Feedback	Lisa Kelly 01/04/2018			
9.6	Discussions between chair and social	Increased participation in case	Performance	Lisa Kelly/			

Ref	Action	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
	worker ahead of the meeting to determine the level of the child or young person's participation in the conference to be recorded on the case files.	conferences of young people and demonstrable consideration of their needs in being heard on case files.	Information Audit Service User Feedback	Siobhan Hughes 01/03/2018			
9.7	Explore potential for use of different multi-media to capture children's feelings in this process (discuss feedback of use on CDT)	Increased capturing of children and young people's views.	Performance Information Service User Feedback	Fran Doyle 01/03/2018			
9.8	Increased drive on advocacy services/inclusion to support children (send advocacy, leaflets out with minutes) (have conversations with child on advocacy).	Increased numbers of young people utilising advocacy.	Performance Information	Lisa Kelly 01/04/2018			
9.9	Track the use of advocacy and ensure that reasons why young people do not want an advocate are recorded on the young person's case file.	Increased numbers of young people utilising advocacy and reasons why young people do not want advocacy clearly understood.	Performance Information Audit	Lisa Kelly/Siobhan Hughes 01/03/2018			

RECOMMENDATION 10:

Ensure that care leavers have the opportunity to access apprenticeships to increase their opportunities for education, employment and training.

Summary from Ofsted Inspection:

- More care leavers are staying in education, employment or training immediately after they reach 18, but the proportion declines for older care leavers.
- The local authority has been slow to roll out an apprenticeship offer for care leavers, despite being a participant in the 'New Beginnings' initiative. At the time of the inspection, only one care leaver (now a graduate) was registered for an apprenticeship. The leaving care team has identified 14 care leavers who have the potential to be candidates for an apprenticeship. This is now being progressed at corporate parenting board level to ensure that the offer of apprenticeships is not subject to further drift.

Ref	Actions	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
10.1	Establish a corporate commitment to providing Care Leavers with the opportunity to access apprenticeships across Shropshire Council.	Suitable opportunities for Care Leavers across Shropshire Council.	Review	Clive Wright 01/02/2018			
10.2	Establish a cross Directorate apprenticeship group, chaired by the DCS to agree a clear process for the identification across the council of LAC apprenticeships.	Increased numbers of LAC apprenticeships being offered to young people	Review	Karen Bradshaw/Michelle Leith 01/02/2018			
10.3	Representative of children's services to attend the monthly apprenticeship levy board meetings.	Increased opportunities for LAC young people to access apprenticeships.	Review	Donna Chapman 01/02/2018			

RECOMMENDATION 11:

Improve the arrangements for preparing care leavers for independent living, ensuring that they have appropriate opportunities for participation and that they know what support they can expect under the Shropshire pledge.

Summary from Ofsted Inspection:

- The support provided to care leavers when they consider that they are ready to move into independent accommodation is not always effective enough to ensure that these moves are successful. The local authority has recognised the need to provide more advice and guidance to its care leavers, and recently opened a drop-in facility in early September 2017 in Shrewsbury. As this is so new, it is too early to see any impact or its effectiveness. Supported accommodation providers offer training whenever a young person is ready or expresses a wish to move on. In order to offer more support, a training flat to help to ensure that young people are as ready as they can be for full independence is being developed by the local authority, although it is not yet in place.
- Care leavers do not have an active forum in which to celebrate their achievements or share their experiences with one another. They are aware of such opportunities for younger children in care, but do not consider these to be appropriate for them.
- Despite the efforts by the local authority to circulate relevant information to them, care leavers met by inspectors had little awareness of their entitlements. The Shropshire local offer, or the 'Pledge', was approved by the corporate parenting panel in September 2017. However, the information provided to young people does not make clear the level of financial support that they can expect, for example to set up home, contribute to transport costs, use gym or sports facilities, or for related expenses if they are accepted for a place at university.

--

Ref	Actions	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
11.1	Develop Independence and life skills programme with all care providers that will deliver a consistent programme of independence for our care leavers.	Young people who are prepared for independence and are tenant ready.	Audit	Elaine Storey 01/06/2018			
11.2	Create a marketplace for providers of temporary accommodation to buy into the independence programme to ensure that they tenancy ready.	Young people who are prepared for independence and able to access accommodation.	Audit	Elaine Storey 01/06/2018			
11.3	Recruit and induct 2 new Care Leaving Ambassadors	Two Care Leaving Ambassadors to work alongside LA staff in improving services to Looked After Children and Care Leavers.	Audit Service User Feedback	Fran Doyle/ Elaine Storey 01/06/2018			
11.4	Care Leavers pledge to be revised to ensure that it is compliant with guidance and sets out clearly what Care Leavers can expect when they leave local authority care.	Care Leavers are aware of their entitlements and what support is available to them.	Review Service User Feedback	Elaine Storey 01/06/2018			

RECOMMENDATION 12:

Ensure that all homeless young people aged 16 and 17 years are offered appropriate accommodation.

Summary from Ofsted Inspection:

- Social workers undertake appropriate assessments for homeless 16- and 17-year-olds.
- However, they are not always timely enough, meaning that, when suitable alternative accommodation is necessary, any decision that a young person should become looked after is not always considered as quickly as possible.

- A small number of young people in the last year have been placed inappropriately in bed and breakfast accommodation until more permanent arrangements could be made.

Ref	Actions	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
12.1	Continue to work closely with Housing Options to ensure that joint assessments are immediate and appropriate efforts are made to gain suitable accommodation	16 and 17 year old homeless young people are assessed in a timely way and are consistently placed in suitable accommodation.	Audit Performance Information	Jeanette Hill 01/11/2017			
12.2	Housing to employ a Children and Young Person's Coordinator post on a two years fixed term contract.	To work alongside Children's Services and offer immediate support to homeless 16 & 17 year olds to enable them to return home, or to support young people who refuse Local Authority accommodation under S20 or who do not meet the threshold under the Southwark judgement with an overall aim of ensuring that all homeless 16/17 years either return to their family or are offered suitable accommodation. No young person being placed with B&B accommodation.	Data and audit information	Laura Fisher 01/06/2018			
12.3	CPS to include available supported board and lodgings placements in placement information given to EDT.	16 and 17 year old homeless young people are assessed in a timely way and are consistently placed in suitable accommodation.	Audit Performance Information	Lisa Preston 01/03/2018			
12.4	Permission for any young person to	Increased availability of	Performance	Lisa			

	be placed in B&B to be sought from the Director of Children's Services or the on call manager out of hours.	appropriate beds for 16 & 17 year olds Reduced use of B&B provision.	Information	Preston/Fiona Adamson 15/01/2018			
12.5	All options of accommodation offered to be clearly evidenced in observations, including if the young person has declined section 20 accommodation and the reasons for this.	Clearer evidence on case files that options have been considered for housing 16&17 year olds.	Audit	Lisa Preston/Jeanette Hill 01/04/2018			
12.6	Development of a leaflet with options available for homeless 16/17 year old, produced jointly with housing services. This will include a form for young for young people to sign, showing that they have understood options given to them.	Evidence that young people have been given options and understand these clear on case files.		Jeanette Hill/Laura Fisher 01/04/2018			
12.7	Strategic Working Group to be established to look at the availability of crash pads in the event of a crisis whilst assessments are undertaken.	The right accommodation available to young people at point of crisis which will prevent them going into B&B accommodation.	Audit	Laura Fisher 01/04/2018			

Closing the Loop on Improvement Actions

Shropshire Children's services are committed to the continuous improvement of practice within the service and utilise the Quality Assurance Framework to review practice on a regular basis, creating actions for improvement. As part of this we have an auditing framework which includes monthly child journey audits, regular thematic audits and an IRO/ICC dispute resolution process, looking at the whole picture of practice, the learning from which is shared with workers and managers, including learning from the service users whom we contact as part of the audit.

In addition to the Quality Assurance Framework, the IMPACT service user feedback project aims to change the culture and approach to gathering service user's views within children's services. One of the activities of this project is a service user feedback and practice observation week twice a year, the findings of which we will utilise alongside that from child journey audits, to measure the impact of our action plan.

DRAFT