



Update on Improvement Activity within Children's Social Care & New Improvement Plan

**Jill McGregor – Corporate Director for Children's
Services**





Introduction – A reminder of what Ofsted told us we needed to improve (March 2019 – ILACS)

- Senior leaders' understanding of the quality of social work practice, through accurate evaluation of performance information, and implementation of an effective quality assurance framework.
- Management oversight at all levels of social work practice.
- The response to all children referred to MARAT (Front Door) to ensure timely review and effective decision-making
- The quality of social work assessment and plans
- The response to children who go missing
- The way in which all staff and managers listen to the voice of children to inform individual work and wider service development.





How we responded initially

- Launched initial Improvement Plan in August 2019.
- Established an Improvement Board with an Independent Chair.
- Established a series of work-streams, task & finish Groups and a Practitioner Forum.
- Recruited a new *interim* DCS.
- Created a new Strategic Leader post for Quality and Improvement
- Commissioned an agency auditing team to help us improve quality assurance and then appointed our own.
- Appointed 6 new Team Leaders & recruited more permanent social workers and agency social workers.
- Carried out a ‘health check’ on our electronic recording system and found ways to improve it.
- Improved Governance – Quality Assurance (QA) and audit up established.
- Good Corporate support
- Made immediate changes at the Front Door.
- Launched the new Front Door ‘Children’s First Response’ and our new Levels of Need (October 2019).





Our Approach: The Plan for delivering on our Ambitions

- **Responding:** In the first instance we needed to take immediate & urgent actions to ensure that we were meeting our children's needs in the most effective way.
- **Strengthening:** Then we started to focus on shifting our culture to supporting families at the earliest stages of issues arising and ensuring we consistently deliver strong standards
- **Embedding:** We are now at the stage of trying to make our early help approach and the new quality and pace of work the consistently applied approach.





Ofsted's view of progress (March 2020)

Positives:

- Improved Governance – Acknowledged the Quality Assurance (QA) and audit up and running but there was more to do
- Evidence of good Corporate support
- Acknowledged improvements at the Front Door (First Response)
- Caseloads improved significantly

Key areas for improvement:

- Restorative / relational model not always clear and evident in practice
- Issue of “pace” – year after the inspection but still seeing variability
- Little evidence of a cultural shift towards being more child focussed
- Capacity at Senior Leadership level is still a challenge
- Leadership knowledge and understanding about quality of practice
- Understanding the impact that changes have made to children in Trafford



What we have done more recently

- Recruited Jill McGregor as permanent Corporate Director for Children's Services
- Recruited Pamela Wharton as Permanent Director for Early Help & Children's Social Care
- Recruited Jude Brown as Strategic Lead for Practice, Improvement & Learning.
- Co-designed a refreshed Improvement Plan; Our 8 Ambitions.
- Ensured each Ambition has a Service Lead & agreed a set of performance measures assigned to each ambition
- Established a new Children's Programme Management Office & strengthened our programme governance to provide greater programme scrutiny, accountability, and risk management





What we have done more recently

- Commissioned an independent external consultant to carry out a targeted and detailed piece of work to ensure our managers had the practical skills and techniques to undertake case file audits effectively and competently and utilise learning to drive improvement.
- Continued the focus on “what managers understand and know about the quality of practice and how they are improving front line practice.”
- Undertaken detailed pieces of work to help us understand the underlying issues with regards to recruitment and retention and this has clearly identified number of themes that are currently being considered by the service.
- Taken part in a DfE Progress Review that was largely positive of our progress.
- Responded to the Covid-19 Pandemic - Revised practice guidance and maintained essential service delivery throughout this period. Ensured we continued to have management oversight of every contact & referral, & made significant improvements with our re-referral rates.





What we have done more recently- Our Response to Covid 19 Pandemic :

- Revised practice guidance and maintained essential service delivery throughout this period.
- Ensured we continued to have management oversight of every contact & referral, & made significant improvements with our re-referral rates.
- Forensic focus on ensuring are children have been seen.
- Maintaining multi-agency processes – Strategy Meetings , Child Protection Conferences and Reviews
- Daily ‘sit reps’ so we understand our day to day capacity
- Focus on support for placements .





What more we need to do

- Stabilise staffing
- Strengthen our approach to support for to the front line
- Embed our QA systems and processes as routine across all parts of the service
- Have a phased and staged approach to improvement – systematic and using coaching and mentoring
- Organise the service in way that is helpful to children and families and our staff
- Deliver against our 8 ambitions

