



Report to Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee

Report of	Jill McGregor, Corporate Director – Children’s Services
Title	Continuous Improvement – Trafford ‘Ambitions for Children Board’
Purpose	To provide Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the Continuous Improvement Journey in respect of Children’s Social Care
Date of Meeting	25 th July 2023

1. Background

In 2019 the Ofsted ILACS inspection, judged Trafford Children’s Services to be inadequate overall and for Leadership and Management. The Local Authority was formally issued with an Improvement Notice on 23rd May following the publication of the Ofsted findings on 8th May.

The requirements of the Improvement Notice included:

- The appointment of an adviser to provide advice to the Department (of Education) and/or the council and for the Council to work with the adviser until some such time that the Secretary of State is satisfied this is no longer required.
- For the Council to produce an Improvement plan that would deliver “appropriate and sustainable improvement” as well as address the areas identified in the Ofsted report of 8 May 2019.
- A requirement for the establishment of an Improvement Board with an independent chair in place to oversee implementation of the improvement plan and for the Council to report to the Improvement Board on progress against the objectives in the plan.
- For the views of frontline staff and of children and young people will be taken into consideration in the development of practice and standards

2. Approach to Improvement

Our approach to improvement was about doing the right thing for children and young people in Trafford.

We used the ISOS research Enablers in Improvement in Children's Services:

The seven enablers at each stage of the improvement journey



The Improvement Board consistently had due regard to this approach, and it has underpinned and supported our transition from a process driven improvement plan (needed to help us put the scaffolding and supporting apparatus in place) to having an Ambitions Plan that outlines our intent and aims to deliver high quality interventions that make a difference. The development of the Ambitions plan has been much more than a re-writing of the plan/different way of presenting our improvement actions; it has been a tangible move to collective ownership, honest reflection of what needed to change, why and how we intended to achieve these. In this regard it has been a strategic approach that has engendered putting "doing the right things for children and families 'at the heart'".

We are starting to see this approach embed and much of our improvement activity has a relentless focus on children. In this way we have successfully seen the partnership engage in the Ambition workstreams and play a critical role in driving forward changes. A key foundational aspect for our improvement journey has been to stabilise and grow our workforce – our Investing in Our People approach has been a key enabler in this

area. The Practitioner Forum which has and will continue to feed into the strategic board has been crucial in terms of ensuring that our workforce has a voice.

Following the Ofsted ILAC inspection which took place over 3 weeks in November and December 2022 services were judged to have improved from Inadequate overall to Requiring Improvement. The inspection team concluded that our self assessment was accurate, positively there were no areas of improvement that they identified which we were not already aware of.

Following the publication of the inspection results The Improvement Notice was subsequently lifted in February 2023. A presentation was delivered to CYS Scrutiny in February 2023 detailing the findings from the inspection.

From the work to date and as reflected in the Ofsted report the commitment from partners is a huge strength and that partners holding Children's Social Care to account as well as providing support has been critical to reaching this stage of our journey. We know that we genuinely have a shared vision and commitment and the delivery on the Ambitions Plan, and this is reflected in operational practitioners being engaged in the Ambition workstreams.

There were 6 identified areas for improvement which were detailed in the inspection outcome letter. These relate to out of hours emergency service, youth homelessness, understanding of rights and entitlements for cared 4 children, life story work, improving the outcomes for care leavers and supervision.

Although there is a separate plan which we were required to submit to OFSTED we have ensured that these areas are also covered in our Ambitions for Children plan.



Trafford Action Plan
Ofsted ILACS Recs Me

Work is underway in all 6 areas to ensure that we continue to make Progress. In respect of our out of hours service there is a more detailed action plan which sits beneath this overarching plan – there is monthly assurance meeting in place between Adults and Children's to oversee progress of the plan. Similarly in terms of Youth Homelessness there is a detailed action plan between Childrens Services and Housing Support colleagues to take forward the findings of the independent review from the Department of Levelling Up Housing & Communities visit which had taken place prior to the inspection.

In respect of our cared 4 and care experienced service there is a significant improvement piece underway covering recruitment, retention and which includes a 6 weekly assurance meeting which is chaired by the Corporate Director. We have recently agreed a whole service approach to Life Story work utilizing Life Story work trained practitioners. We have a continued focus on ensuring practitioners are support through reflective supervision through service performance monitoring and quality assurance which included speaking with practitioners.

3. Way Forward

The proposal which Improvement Board members considered between January – April 2023 was to continue an Improvement Board approach but to reconfigure as an Ambitions for Children Board and that the Board would be charged with overseeing progress of Ambitions Plan Discussions were held at the Board meetings and also separately with the chair meeting separately with partner agencies. The summary overview was presented to assist with the decision making regarding the way forward. The Leader of the Council has commenced chairing the Ambitions for Children Board signifying the importance of continuing the improvement journey.



DfE Advisor Analysis
of Feedback on Next 5

In addition, we undertook consultation with the Steering Group which has been used as a Local Authority Forum with managers and Hos to ensure that actions with regards to the Ambitions plan have been progressed. This meeting has not included all Practice Managers but representatives from all service areas as well the Chair of the Practitioner Board. Inevitably, during the later stages of the year, the focus of the Group also included ensuring we were able to respond and manage to logistic of the ILACS inspection.

Key considerations which were factored into decision making included:

- Governance arrangements & existing meetings and how they feed into one another.
- Purpose of the meeting – What is the remit of the meeting and the expectation of members.
- Membership of the Steering Group – The group considered who needed to be around the table to ensure the Steering Group functioned as it needs to.
- The importance of partners in helping us achieving our shared ambitions for children

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It was proposed and agreed that, to continue our improvement journey post intervention and the lifting of the formal improvement notice the Board be re-shaped to develop a partnership Board that oversees the delivery of the Ambitions plan (Trafford Ambitions for Children Board)

The remit of the Ambitions for Children Board is set out within the below Terms of Reference document. The Governance Structure of the Board, Steering Group and Ambition Workstreams is also included at the end of the report. There is a detailed Ambitions for Children Plan which highlights across the 8 agreed thematic areas (two of which also operate as Trafford Strategic Safeguarding Partnership subgroups) which is also attached.



Ambitions for
Children Steering Gro



Ambitions for
Children Plan June 20

A summary of key areas of work currently underway taken forward in each of the 8 ambition strands is detailed below:

Ambition 1 – Leadership – coaching and mentoring offer for all leaders, strengthening the role of Safeguarding Children Unit.

Ambition 2 – Right Help – Reviewing and establish Family Help offer – Family Hub development, Trafford Team Together roll out and review of Intensive Family Support. Strengthening multi-agency decision making at the front door.

Ambition 3 – Quality of Practice – embedding Child Impact Chronology's & child centered case recording and conversational audits. Improving services to in the additional need's services (bespoke plan in place, Designated Social Care Officer driving forward this work)

Ambition 4 – Permanence (Corporate Parenting Virtual Team) – roll out of care planning framework, implementation of Placement Sufficiency Strategy & Fostering Modernisation plan and improving the engagement and participation of our cared 4 and care experienced young people, alongside delivery of a Life Story work programme for the workforce.

Ambition 5 – Neglect (joint with TSSP) – embedding work across the partnership to ensure early identification, preventions of escalation and an effective evidence based model of intervention

Ambition 6 – Domestic Abuse (joint with TSSP), implement a shared model of risk assessment and intervention, review, and development of Operation Encompass

Ambition 7 – Exploitation – commissioning a parent support offer, enhancing mentoring for young people,

Ambition 8 – Partnerships – improving quality of out of hours service and response to youth homelessness, delivering a strengths based approach to Child Protection conference and review

4. Recommendations

Members of the CYP Scrutiny Committee are asked to:

- i. To note the formal reconfiguration of the Ambitions for Children Board and the continued to drive to improve the quality of services delivered to children and families
- ii. To note the detail of how our improvement activity will be progressed through the Ambitions for Children Plan noting the enhanced role for Ambitions Leads and the OFSTED Action Plan
- iii. To Receive updates with regards to progress against all key areas of activity and to provide challenge with regards to the difference it is making to outcomes for children and young people.



Trafford Ambitions for Children Board

Ambitions Steering Group

1
Leaders and managers at every level understand and influence practice to be consistently good

2
Children and families receive the **right help at the right time from the right professional**

3
Quality of Practice is consistently good across the service so that it makes a difference to our children and families

4
Our children **will live safely and permanently** with a family wherever it is safe to do so

5
To narrow the gap through working collaboratively to reduce the number of children that are living and experiencing **neglect**

6
To work together to strengthen our practice & approach when working with families where **domestic abuse** is a feature

7
To take action & collectively safeguard our children and young people from all forms of **exploitation & going missing**

8
To have **'partnerships with purpose'** that impact positively upon the lives of children young people and families