



Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday 11 October 2012 at 7.00 pm
Council Chamber, Brent Town Hall, Forty Lane,
Wembley, HA9 9HD

Membership:

Members

Councillors:

Mashari (Chair)
Cheese (Vice-Chair)
Aden
Al-Ebadi
Kansagra
Matthews
Mitchell Murray
Pavey

First alternates

Councillors:

S Choudhary
CJ Patel
Oladapo
Denselow
Baker
Leaman
Daly
Krupa Sheth

Second alternates

Councillors:

Hector
Sneddon
Harrison
RS Patel
HM Patel
Lorber
Ogunro
Hossain

Statutory Co-optees

Mrs Shabna Abbasi
Alloysius Frederick
Dr Nanda Kumar
Elsie Points

Non-statutory Co-optees

Mrs Hawra Imame
Dr J Levison

Observers

Mr A Carter
Ms J Cooper
Mrs L Gouldbourne
Ms C Jolinon
Mr B Patel
Brent Youth Parliament
representatives

For further information contact: Bryony Gibbs, Democratic Services Officer
020 8937 1355, bryony.gibbs@brent.gov.uk

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The press and public are welcome to attend this meeting

Agenda

Introductions, if appropriate.

Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members

Item	Page
1 Declaration of personal and prejudicial interests	
Members are invited to declare at this stage of the meeting any relevant financial or other interest in the items on the agenda.	
2 Deputations (if any)	
3 Minutes of the last meeting held on 19 July 2012	1 - 8
4 Brent Youth Parliament update	
The committee will receive an oral update on the work of the Brent Youth Parliament.	
5 Safeguarding and Looked After Children Inspection Action Plan	9 - 56
This report identifies the level of progress made by the Brent Social Care against the action plan following the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children provision in Brent.	
6 Child Poverty Strategy 2011 - 2021	57 - 60
This report sets out a ten year strategy to address child poverty in the borough. The strategy identifies key priority areas to reduce child poverty through improved collaboration of existing service areas. The strategy has been developed by working closely with the council's partners.	
7 Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme	61 - 68
The work programme is attached. The committee will be presented with a list of items related to children and young people's services currently on the Executive's forward plan, to decide whether there are items on there they wish to scrutinise.	
8 Date of next meeting	
The next meeting of the Children and Young People Overview and	

Scrutiny meeting is scheduled for 11 December 2012.

9 Any other urgent business

Notice of items raised under this heading must be given in writing to the Democratic Services Manager or his representative before the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 64.



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MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday 19 July 2012 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Mashari (Chair), Cheese (Vice-Chair) , Al-Ebadi, Matthews, Pavey, Mr A Frederick, Ms E Points, Mrs L Gouldbourne, Brent Youth Parliament representatives and Oladapo.

Also present: Councillor Arnold

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillors Aden and Mitchell Murray and Dr Levison

1. Declaration of personal and prejudicial interests

Councillor Mashari advised that she was a governor for Wykeham Primary School. Councillor Cheese advised that he was the Chair of the Kilburn Locality Advisory Board. Councillor Pavey declared that he was Chair of the Wembley Locality Advisory Board and was Chair of governors for Wembley Primary School. Mr Alloysius Frederick advised that he was Chair of governors for St Gregory's Science College.

Councillor Arnold advised that she was a governor for Kilburn Park School.

2. Deputations (if any)

There were no deputations.

3. Minutes of the last meeting held on 13 June 2012

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct record subject to the following: -

- i. That the second paragraph under 'Declaration of personal and prejudicial interests' be amended to read that 'Councillor Pavey advised that he was a governor at Wembley Primary School'.
- ii. That the second bullet point under 'Work Programme' be amended to read 'Councillor Pavey also requested an update on the suite of One Council programmes delivering the early intervention initiatives'.

4. Brent Youth Parliament update

Thivya Jeyashanker, co-Chair of the Brent Youth Parliament (BYP) provided an overview of the recent activities of the BYP, including:

- An open event had been held by BYP on 23 June 2012. Young people had been encouraged to attend and share their opinions on politics. This event had proved very interesting and had provided an insight into why young people chose to engage with or disengage from politics.
- The members of the BYP executive had been perusing activities related to their areas of interest. One member had been working with Safer Neighbourhood Panels.
- BYP was seeking to engage with school councils with the aim of empowering them through the provision of support and advice.
- BYP members continued to provide forms to their constituents to garner opinion regarding the issues of importance to young people in Brent. The two issues which were prevalent in this feedback were bullying and youth provision. Thivya Jeyashanker advised that the Anti-Bullying Council did not appear to be effective enough. Bullying was also an issue highlighted in the results of the UK Youth Parliament survey, along with concerns regarding work experience. Thivya Jeyashanker advised that many young people did not understand the value of work experience and it was felt that the provision of better careers advice was needed. A further issue of concern was the lack of a sufficient number of activities for young people taking place in the school holidays.

Thivya Jeyashanker concluded by noting that BYP would next meet between 10.00 am and 2.00 pm on 4 August 2012 in the Council Chamber in Brent Town Hall. All members were invited to attend.

The Chair proposed that BYP be invited to contribute ideas for the committee's work programme.

RESOLVED: -

- i. That the update be noted
- ii. That Brent Youth Parliament be invited to contribute ideas for the committee's work programme.

5. **Background of Auditing Practices in Brent**

The Chair noted that this report had been requested as it was an issue of high public concern.

Simon Lane (Head of Audit and Investigations) and Mustafa Salih (Assistant Director, Strategic Finance) presented a report to the committee regarding financial management in Brent's Schools. The report highlighted some of the associated issues currently being addressed and detailed the framework in place to provide support and challenge to Brent's Schools. Financial management was a function delegated direct to governing bodies; however, the local authority retained a responsibility to ensure that public funds were spent lawfully and effectively and, as the Section 151 officer, the Director of Finance was required to ensure that sound financial systems and controls were in place across the council and Brent's schools.

Mustafa Salih explained that the mechanisms employed by the Director of Finance in meeting this responsibility included a robust internal audit regime, the provision of support, guidance and training, and regular meetings with head teachers and

bursars. Frequent updates were also provided to all schools via the school circular and this was deemed to be an effective tool of communication. Further examples of the provision of support and training were included at Appendix A, which evidenced the range of relevant information available on the schools intranet pages, and at Appendix B, which set out the Financial Management Training Brochure developed by the Schools Finance Team.

Turning to the issue of the audit process, Simon Lane advised that all maintained schools in Brent were audited on a regular basis and at present this amounted to approximately 80 establishments including PRU's and Children's centres. Audits typically took 10 days to complete and there had been 190 days dedicated to school audits in 2011/12 out of a total audit resource of 1,200 days. It was anticipated that 228 days would be dedicated to schools in 2012/13, which compared very favourably against other London authorities. Key issues arising from recent audits included compliance with the statutory requirements relating to Senior Leadership Pay and schools entering into unfavourable leases for the hire of photocopiers and other ICT equipment. A comprehensive action plan, included at Appendix C, had been developed to address this first issue and work was on-going. Multifaceted action had also been taken with regard to the issue of schools entering into leases and this had ranged from meeting directly with school officers and governors, to referring schools to solicitors and facilitating legal action. The council was of the view that these leases should be treated as void as the schools did not have the legal power to enter into these arrangements. Further details of specific issues currently being addressed were provided under the headings of governance, procurement, unofficial funds, budgeting and income and banking. As such issues were identified the council tailored the auditing programme accordingly and developed the comprehensive briefing document for those conducting the audits.

Councillor Mashari queried what arrangements were in place to prevent poor financial management within Academies and Free Schools. Simon Lane advised that the national audit office was currently studying the government's arrangements for this, which encompassed a yearly external audit to be procured by the school.

The committee raised several further issues and queries in the subsequent discussion. Councillor Al-Ebadi queried what power the council had to enforce compliance to the required procurement processes. Councillor Al-Ebadi also sought further details of the support offered to schools to enable them to gain understanding and experience of procurement activities. Councillor Matthews sought further details regarding the level of financial risk associated with poor procurement within schools. Councillor Cheese queried whether the council was responsible for meeting the cost from the unfavourable leasing arrangements.

In response to these queries, Simon Lane advised that the council's powers to enforce compliance with the required procurement processes were limited; however, it was expected that head teachers and governors should conduct the financial management of their schools appropriately. The council could remove the governing body but would require the approval of the Secretary of State to do so, or it could remove the delegated powers of financial management from the school. Both these powers were considered to be draconian and would only be used in particular cases. Mustafa Salih advised that the support offered to schools in relation to procurement included the provision of guidance and training. Simon Lane further advised that the council conducted much of the procurement relating to large

scale building work for schools. Fiona Ledden (Director of Legal and Procurement) added that a dedicated schools procurement manager had been in post for the last eight months. The financial impact of poor procurement was not considered to be material to the council but may be significant to the school in question. However, the implications of the leasing arrangements that had been entered into by a small number of schools were significant for the council.

Turning to the issue of senior leadership pay, Councillor Pavey noted that included amongst the reasons detailed for the omission of specific audit tests regarding this issue prior to 2009, was the assumption that head teachers were able to provide appropriate advice regarding the statutory requirements and that a degree of oversight was anticipated within the schools payroll team. Councillor Pavey commented that head teachers providing advice relating to their own pay conditions appeared to be a conflict of interest. He further expressed concern regarding the number of assumptions that had been made in this matter and queried why officers were confident that irregularities at Copland school would have been identified had the school been visited by A&I.

In response, Simon Lane explained that head teachers were not expected to provide specific advice regarding their own remuneration but were expected to have a good understanding of the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) and to be able to advise a governing body where their actions would breach the regulations. It was considered that an internal audit would have identified the issues at Copland school because this process followed a different brief to external audits, which in contrast were focussed primarily on whether the overall income and expenditure positions tallied with the supporting records. The brief for internal audits would have included anomalies in staff pay.

Councillor Mashari queried whether current audits were of greater scale and depth than those conducted previously. Simon Lane confirmed that the process was more in depth than in previous years. In 2008/9 and 2009/10 the council had been required to conduct Financial Management Standards in Schools (FMSiS) assessments for Brent's primary schools. This process would have led to less robust checking that would usually occur within a usual internal audit. Councillor Mashari subsequently queried whether it was fair to conclude that it was within the period between 2008/9 and 2009/10 when there were no internal audits of schools conducted, that poor financial management practices became entrenched. She further queried whether the council was obliged to carry out internal audits of schools. Simon Lane clarified that the council was obliged to conduct internal audits but was not required to do so within any fixed period. Whilst the FMSiS assessment was not as robust as a full internal audit, it was not possible to say that it was this that led to any particular incidents. Councillor Mashari also questioned why, in view of the seriousness of some of the incidents which had occurred, more robust action had not been taken to address poor financial management in schools. Clive Heaphy added that he held ultimate responsibility for the financial management of the council and school and had to take measures to assure himself that the proper procedures and practices were being adhered to. Significant actions were being taken to strengthen these measures including increased depth of internal audits, the recruitment of a dedicated procurement officer for schools, changing of the council's financial regulations and the attendance the Director of Finance at the head teachers' conferences.

Councillor Pavey asked whether officers considered that there had been inadequacies in the council's processes which had allowed incidents relating to the financial management of schools to occur. Clive Heaphy advised that it was difficult to say as the measures put in place by the council were developed and amended to respond to issues as they were identified. Head teachers were responsible for the good financial management of their schools and had been since the 1980's. However, the council was now strengthening their mechanisms to ensure good financial management of Brent's schools.

With the permission of the Chair, Harbi Farah of the Help Somali Foundation sought further details regarding the training of school governors. Councillor Mashari queried whether the financial management training was mandatory for every governor. Councillor Pavey commented that the introductory training for school governors was elemental and a financial component could easily be added to this. Clive Heaphy advised that additional financial training could be provided for all Chairs of school governing bodies.

Mrs Gouldbourne congratulated the council on the proactive role that it had taken towards financial management of schools and commented that in view of the significant impact that poor financial management could have on schools, more resources should be targeted towards the actions taken by the council. In response, Councillor Arnold advised that the council was dedicating more resources to its audit programme than other London borough's over the next few years.

Councillor Mashari requested an update report be submitted to the committee setting out the outcome of the investigations currently underway.

RESOLVED: -

- i. That the report be noted
- ii. That an update report be submitted to the committee in six months' time.

6. **Brent Adoption Service**

Hillary Brooks (Head of Placements) delivered a presentation to the committee regarding the Brent Adoption Service and the outcome of a recent assessment conducted by the DfE. There had been considerable improvement in the adoption service since the identification in 2009 of several performance issues. Several measures had been implemented including the development of a performance culture which encompassed the introduction of tracking systems. In February 2012, the service had received a satisfactory Ofsted rating, which meant that the service was deemed to be sound. The government had since introduced a new 'score card' measure of adoption services in April 2012. This focussed on a child's entire journey through the care system and measured the time from when a child entered care to the time that child moved in with his/her adoptive family. The score card measured data on a rolling three year average and it had therefore been difficult to evidence the service improvement that had been made. Furthermore, the score card did not recognise other forms of permanence for a child such as that achieved under Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs), whereby a child was placed with a member of his/her extended family. As a result Brent Council was in the bottom quartile in the country and the improvements made, including the significant reduction in the average number of days that a child was in care before being

adopted, would not begin to be evident on the score card until 2013/14. The government commissioned an assessment of the service in response to Brent's poor performance and the outcome of this assessment had been very positive. Feedback had included that the service was very child focussed and was committed to embedding a culture of high performance across teams.

In the subsequent discussion, several queries were raised by the committee.. Councillor Mashari sought clarification regarding the 21 adoption assessments that were reported as being underway. Councillor Mashari further queried how many children were currently awaiting permanency. Councillor Oladapo sought an explanation of the early permanency planning that was now being conducted. Councillor Cheese queried whether the council remained responsible for children that it placed outside of the borough or whether the local authority where the child lived assumed responsibility. Councillor Mashari further queried whether there were increased risks involved in placing children under SGOs and if so, what actions the council took to mitigate these risks. Councillor Cheese also expressed concern regarding the lack of greater levels of monitoring of SGO placements. Councillor Pavey sought further details in relation to Brent's policy on transracial placements and sought information on the number of prospective adopters deemed unsuitable matches as a result of issues of ethnicity. Councillor Oladapo queried whether transracial adoptions in Brent tended to be successful. Councillor Pavey noted the disparity between receiving a 'satisfactory' Ofsted rating in February 2012 and the extremely positive outcome of the DfE assessment

In response to the committee's queries Hillary Brooks advised that there were currently 21 assessments of prospective adopters underway. As these assessments were progressed, possible matches were considered with children awaiting placement. It was not always possible to place children with Brent approved adopters and sometimes due to a child's level of need, children could be placed with externally approved adopters. At present, there were 5 children for whom family-finding was being conducted. It was not always possible to place children for adoption and the council had to consider whether adoption was the right choice for a child. Other forms of permanency such as long term fostering or SGOs might also be considered. The council now created parallel plans at the earliest possible stage to ensure that adoption or other suitable options could be pursued without delay should it be found that a child could not be returned to the care of his/her birthparents. If a child was placed for adoption outside of the borough, the council remained responsible for delivery of the agreed adoption support plan which could apply for up to 3 years; however, where this included access to support services, the council would liaise with other local authorities.

With regard to transracial placements, Hillary Brooks advised that Brent's policy stated the best match for a child should be made in relation to all of his or her needs, including those regarding ethnicity. Transracial placements had always been made in Brent and were very traditionally very successful. It was explored with all prospective adopters as part of the assessment process whether they felt able to support the needs of children of different ethnicities. In response to Councillor Pavey's request for the numbers of matches declined due to ethnicity, Hillary Brooks advised that rather than asking whether prospective adopters were not able to meet the various needs of a child, matches were pursued on the basis of which prospective adopters best met a child's needs.

Graham Genoni advised that SGO placements involved greater relative risk than adoption placements because a child was often placed with the extended birth family and particularly, issues around contact with birthparents might arise. However, an SGO placement would not be made if there were any safeguarding concerns. Hillary Brooks explained that once a child was placed under an SGO he or she was no longer a Looked After Child and the placement would therefore not be subject to the same level of scrutiny. The support plan for an SGO placement would be reviewed annually and the child's carers could access support and guidance direct from social workers if they needed to. Fiona Alderman (Principal Lawyer – Social Services and Education) advised that a supervision order could be put in place alongside an SGO; however this would only be used in very extreme circumstances. Hillary Brooks added that there had been approximately 5 breakdowns of SGO placements in Brent since SGOs were introduced, although only one of these had related to safeguarding concerns.

Turning to Councillor Pavey's query regarding the different outcomes of the Ofsted inspection and the DfE assessment, Hillary Brooks explained that there had only been three recommendations made by Ofsted following the February inspection. Since that time the council had developed and implemented an action plan to address the issues raised. However, due to the three-year focus of the inspection it would have been impossible to achieve greater than 'satisfactory' at this time. The DfE assessment had concentrated to a greater extent on the processes followed and it was easier therefore, for the council to evidence the improvements made.

RESOLVED

That the presentation be noted.

7. **Safeguarding and Looked After Children Inspection Action Plan**

RESOLVED

That consideration of this item be deferred to the following meeting of the committee.

8. **Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme and Items from the Forward Plan**

Priya Mistry (Policy and Performance Officer) advised that the reports requested at the previous meeting had been added to the work programme and noted that in response to a request made at that meeting, information regarding the Improving Outcomes task group had been tabled for the committee's information. Members were reminded that any further suggestions for the committee's work programme could be forwarded to the Chair or to Priya Mistry.

Councillor Mashari proposed that items addressing the issues of bullying, careers advice and work experience for young people in Brent which were raised via the Brent Youth Parliament should be added to the work programme:

RESOLVED: -

That items regarding the issues raised via the Brent Youth Parliament of bullying, and careers advice and work experience for young people in Brent be added to the committee's work programme.

9. **Date of next meeting**

The committee noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 11 October 2012.

10. **Any other urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 9.01 pm

CLLR MASHARI
Chair



Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

11 October 2012

Report from the Director of Children & Families

Wards Affected:
ALL

Safeguarding and Looked After Children Action Plan 2011/2012

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report shows the level of progress made by the Brent Social Care against the action plan following the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children provision in Brent.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are requested to note progress and consider areas for further improvement

3.0 Background

3.1 This report is produced by the Head of Safeguarding and outlines the themes from the improvement journey.

3.2 The SLAC inspection graded our services as adequate overall and awarded 'good' grading to four components.

3.3 Ofsted launched a new inspection framework in May 2012 and expressed an intention to re-inspect all authorities that were deemed inadequate or adequate within the next 12 months.

3.4 This action plan represents the progress Brent Social Care has made against inspection findings and recommendations. The Director of Children's Services monitors progress against the plan at a dedicated monthly meeting with Heads of Service and partners from Health. Brent LSCB also monitors the progress of the plan.

4.0 Performance Alerts

Safeguarding

- 4.1 Areas for improvement in Brent Social Care safeguarding arrangements were identified as: reflective supervision and audit of supervision records, strengthened qualitative performance management, quality of child protection and child in need plans, step down from child protection plans and the relationship of strategic plans to front line services.
- 4.2 A programme of mentoring for all front line managers (Localities and Care Planning) has been put in place to boost their skills in reflective supervision. There was not a concern from Ofsted that supervision was not taking place but that there was not enough evidence of the quality of reflective discussion within supervision. A recent comparison with neighbouring London Authorities shows that Brent social workers carry significantly higher caseloads than peers in other London boroughs. This has an effect on the amount of time managers can spend supervising each case in the monthly supervision slot and the amount of time managers have for recording supervision against each case record and on the employee's record. In the Locality Social Work Service the advanced practitioners will be leading group supervision to enhance access to reflective supervision. An audit of supervision records and a survey of the worker experience of supervision are planned for the autumn and this will inform future improvements.
- 4.3 Brent Social Care has developed a Quality Management Framework and robust audit programme to benchmark services and direct future improvements. There are 2 qualitative audits per month whereby managers spend a whole day auditing cases on a particular theme (outcome of s.47, missing children, care plans). The learning from individual cases is fed back to workers direct and the aggregate learning is disseminated through teams. In addition to this there are a number of generic casework audits (2 per manager per month) and data integrity audits carried out by admin. A quarterly report is taken to the Social Care Management Team and findings disseminated to inform service development.
- 4.4 The Brent child protection conference service has been working with the child abuse command at the Met Police to improve the focus of child protection plans across London. Locally we have had an acute focus on preventing drift in child protection plans and this has led to a reduction in the duration of child protection plans and the overall number of subjects of child protection plans in Brent. The step down from child protection plan has been supported by a re-launch of a multi-agency child in need policy and supporting workshops via the LSCB. The reduction in the number and duration of child protection plans is currently being independently audited and the report will be complete in September 2012.
- 4.5 The Head of Localities has established a task group to improve the quality of child in need planning and review. A training programme has been developed and is being rolled out across Brent Social Care. This programme is to improve the quality and focus of child in need plans.
- 4.6 Brent Social Care is currently addressing the Munro recommendations to improve the quality of front line practice. To this end we are adopting the Signs of Safety methodology and, along with a number of English authorities, are embarking on an extensive whole service training and implementation.
- 4.7 A strategy for service user consultation has been developed and there has been an extensive programme of service user consultation in the child protection and

child protection population. These views will be used to inform service improvements and will be disseminated to front line staff.

- 4.8 The relationship of strategic plans to outcomes for children has been developed in a number of ways. The Children and Young People's plan has been re-drawn, the objectives of which are carried through to individual service plans. The Children in Care/Care Planning Service has a Looked After Children Strategy and the Localities services is in the process of developing a Safeguarding Children Strategy. Brent LSCB appointed a new chair who took up post in May 2012. The LSCB will take an active role to ensure its strategy is adopted by all partners and reflects the ambitions of the CYPP.

Looked After Children (LAC)

- 4.9 The Inspection made recommendations for improvements in the following areas: health arrangements for LAC, pathway and transition planning to prepare LAC for adulthood, reflective supervision, focussed SMART plans, improved school attendance, stable placements with sound plans for permanency and an improved process for monitoring educational progress of individual children.
- 4.10 The Care Quality Commission found the health support to Looked After Children (LAC) to be inadequate. NHS Brent and Brent Community Service (Ealing ICO) has launched an action plan and audit programme to address the deficits. A number of areas have been successfully addressed through this action plan although there is some outstanding work on improving the quality of the health reports.
- 4.11 The Care Planning staff has been engaged in the reflective supervision programme referenced in 4.2.
- 4.12 The Care Planning managers have attended training in making SMART child focussed child protection, child in need and supervision order plans. This training has been developed by the child protection conference service and is now being taken direct to social worker teams.
- 4.13 There has been a significant improvement in the timeliness of pathway planning with 94% of plans being appropriately in place. The initiative to improve timeliness has been supported by development of a specific training programme for staff and this is included in the current training calendar. Transition planning pertains to disabled children and young people. The quality and timelines of transition planning has been boosted by the formation of a transitions team that contains both adult and child specialist workers. This is a new team, the benefits for young people can be reported at a later date when the service has had an opportunity to bed in.
- 4.14 The virtual Head of School for Brent LAC has written an attendance policy and this will be implemented in July 2012. There has been a considerable effort on the part of health colleagues to arrange Saturday clinics for regular LAC health reviews to avoid children being absent from school. All professionals working with LAC have been required to review how and when children are offered appointments to avoid disruption to schooling.
- 4.15 Placement stability and permanency are high on the Government agenda and Brent Social Care has a number of processes in place to achieve the best outcomes for our children. The role of the independent reviewing officer (IRO) has been boosted to provide additional checks and balances in the system and

placement moves are reviewed both in supervision and in placement panel. A recent diagnostic assessment of adoption and permanency arrangements by the DfE has been extremely positive although the result has yet to be published.

5.0 Challenges going forward

- 5.1 The high caseloads in Care Planning and Localities presents a number of challenges to improvement specifically in respect of staff retention and the quality of service social workers are able to offer. There is a plan in place to put in additional resources into the Locality Service in the short term to close cases down and step them down to emerging services as part of the Troubled Families agenda.
- 5.2 There is a paucity of early help services in Brent. This is being addressed corporately through the one council projects and the Troubled Families agenda. Until there is a health early help offer then the Brent Social Care services will continue to struggle with thresholds and the quality of intervention and supervision.
- 5.3 The Learning and Development service has been brought back to Social Care from the corporate centre. This has enabled us to focus on driving improvements in Social Care as we are better able to control the budget and agenda.
- 5.4 Social Care has benefitted from a stable and largely permanent workforce until recent months. It is imperative that caseloads are brought under control and staff are afforded high quality learning and supervision so that we can retain and develop good workers.
- 5.5 Managers in the service are highly committed to improving the service and have risen to the challenge afforded us through the inspection process and the Munro review of child protection.

6.0 Financial Implications

- 6.1 None

7.0 Legal Implications

- 7.1 None

8.0 Diversity Implications

- 8.1 The report is concerned with diversity and differential performance of minority ethnic groups in Brent.

Contact Officer:

Graham Genoni, Assistant Director, Children and Families

Brent Children and Families Department

Action Plan in response to the Ofsted/Care Quality Commission Safeguarding and Looked after Children Inspection

This action plan has been produced as a response to the recommendations made as a result of the safeguarding and looked after children inspection, which took place 3-14 October 2011 and resulted in the report of 18 November 2011. It covers recommendations which are the responsibility of the local authority, as well as those which need to be followed up by the local authority together with its partners. In order to make a comprehensive response to the inspection and further improve outcomes for children and young people, this plan additionally picks up comments made by Ofsted within the text of the final report, which were not highlighted as recommendations. These additional areas for development follow the recommendations for Safeguarding, or for Looked after Children, respectively. As the plan follows the format of the Ofsted inspections, the recommendations and actions required cover all aspects of the work, from management and leadership to front-line practice.

This plan has been prepared in conjunction with the Health Action Plan which has been developed by Brent Primary Care Trust and is reported (and monitored) on a monthly basis by the Care Quality Commission. The Children and Families Plan complements the actions within that plan.

The plan has benefitted from input and quality assurance from London Safeguarding Advisors and the Local Government Improvement and Development Agency.

This action plan will be implemented alongside individual service improvement plans already in development, representing the ambition of the council and its partners to make a positive difference for children in need of safeguarding or who are in the care of Brent Council.

Monitoring, Accountability and Scrutiny arrangements:

This inspection action plan and the wider service improvement plan contain SMART objectives, with detailed actions to be carried out.

The monitoring arrangements for the plan are as follows:

1. Monthly monitoring of the action plan involving Health and Social Care colleagues chaired by the Director of Children's Services.
2. Local Safeguarding Board on a bi-monthly basis.
3. Brent Children's Partnership on a quarterly basis
4. Multi- agency child protection meeting on a quarterly basis

5. Children and Families Departmental Management team on a monthly basis.
6. Children and Families Scrutiny Committee and Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding group.
7. The Lead Member for Children and Families will have a key role in the monitoring of progress.

There are two key mechanisms for monitoring progress:

1. The Action Plan will be updated on a monthly basis and provide evidence of progress against identified actions and compliance with timescales. This will form the basis of the regular monitoring.
2. A quarterly data set and report will be prepared by the Assistant Director, Children's Social Care, which will summarise progress and evidence how the identified actions are improving services and the difference they are making to children and their families in Brent. This will be submitted to groups identified above and form the basis of the quarterly programme of review.
3. Any concerns arising from the monitoring programmes will be conveyed directly to the Director of Children and Families.

Finally, the Department will seek external challenge of the progress against the plan in June 2012 through the Local Government Improvement and Development Agency and the intention is to arrange a process of peer challenge or review in December 2012 to assess progress against the findings of the SLAC Inspection report. NB: A glossary of all acronyms used within this plan is included at the end of the document.

Nb. Where there are multiple leads identified, the responsible lead officer is underlined.

Safeguarding Recommendations:

Recommendations: Safeguarding					RAG
1. Ofsted Recommendation	Ensure that timely, supportive and reflective supervision is provided for social care staff by managers and that this is recorded promptly and to a high standard.				
Timescale: Immediate					
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/Accountable to	Evidence of progress January 2012	
<p>Staff at all levels receive regular, high quality supervision, which encompasses both performance management and reflective supervision.</p> <p>Supervision enables reflective, child focussed practice, in line with the Munroe Review of Child Protection</p> <p>All social workers will have a fully completed personal supervision file to capture casework as well as</p>	<p>1. Review of all supervision materials to be conducted by external consultant working together with managers, to ensure supervision is delivered in line with best practice elsewhere and that this can be evidenced.</p>	<p>Head of Localities and Disabled Children/Head of Care Planning</p>	<p>Policy to be completed by end August 2012.</p>	<p>External consultant engaged. Focus group with managers 19.1.12.</p> <p>5 sessions for each supervisor in group sessions focusing on every aspect of supervision commencing May 12.. Sessions for TM's across the service confirmed and relevant HOS to ensure attendance. Dates for DTM's, AP's and supervising SW's will be confirmed in next 7 working days.</p>	A
	<p>2. Intensive coaching workshops for managers across children's social care, to deliver improved expertise in supervision, including reflective supervision, and in doing so enable managers to lift the quality of practice across the</p>		<p>February – March 2012</p>	<p>Funding secured through Local Government Improvement and Development Agency and work programme submitted.</p> <p>Programme of supervision support started May 2012.</p>	G



personal and professional development Supervision notes to demonstrate timely plans and impact	service.				
2. Ofsted Recommendation Timescale: Immediate	Ensure that supervision files are subject to a regular system of audit and review by senior managers				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/Accountable to	Evidence of progress January 2012	
Managers are confident that supervision is being delivered in line with departmental policy; audit feedback demonstrates significant improvements in frequency and quality.	1. Evidence of both compliance with and impact of improved approach to supervision to be evidenced through regular audit.	Head of Localities and Disabled Children/Head of Care Planning	March 12. Audit outcome will be included in post-inspection action plan quarterly report to Departmental Management Team and Local Safeguarding Children Board	Summary report has been completed	G
	2. Conduct staff survey to gain feedback on impact of new supervision system		September 2012	On track and in line with current programme of supervision skills	G

3. Ofsted Recommendation: Timescale: Within 3 months (end February 2012)	Fully implement a system of qualitative as well as quantitative performance management which links to the auditing processes				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/Accountable to	Evidence of progress January 2012	
Service improvements are informed by learning from qualitative and quantitative measurements.	1. Develop a quality management framework aimed at delivering continuous improvement, which captures quantitative and qualitative data.	Head of Safeguarding	March 2012 – sign-off by DMT and LSCB	QMF agreed. A monthly themed audit schedule has been implemented. QMF launched 1 March 2012. 1 st report has been booked into SCMT 17 th July.	G
	2. Provide quarterly QMF reports which evidence how service improvements are informed by the qualitative and quantitative information collected.	Head of Safeguarding / Head of Policy and Performance	June 2012 to be included within quarterly post-inspection action plan report to DMT and LSCB	QMF Report booked into SCMT 17 July 2012	G

<p>4. Ofsted Recommendation:</p> <p>Timescale: Within 3 months (end February 2012)</p>	<p>Develop effective systems for obtaining and aggregating service user views, to include key themes from complaints and advocacy services, with the purpose of informing service improvement and development.</p>				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/Accountable to	Evidence of progress January 2012	
<p>An overarching framework for consulting with service users is in place and having a positive impact on service delivery.</p> <p>There is documentary evidence of meaningful consultation.</p>	<p>1. Develop range of methods for consultation with service users throughout the service, including qualitative and quantitative methods through the use of questionnaires, e-mail and text messaging, surveys, telephone interviews and focus groups. Methods to be informed through consultation with Brent Consultation Team and Complaints Team; and from best practice elsewhere.</p>	<p>Head of Localities and Disabled Children</p>	<p>Overarching system to be signed off by DMT, and in place and fully operational by June 2012.</p>	<p>Social work students complete a minimum of 5 focused interviews with Children/Parents in Child protection.</p> <p>Structured interviews have taken place with 64 parents whose children were subjects of CIN plans. The report is in draft and will be ratified at SCMT and taken direct to front line teams for learning by August 2012.</p> <p>Structured interviews have taken place with parents whose children have been subject of child protection plans. There have been 12 interviews to date. The findings will be taken to SCMT and to the child protection service and front line teams by August 2012.</p>	<p>G</p>

The views of children, young people, parents and carers inform service improvement.	2. Further strengthen systems so that feedback from the views of children and young people, and parents and carers, including the outcomes of complaints, inform service improvement and this can be evidenced.	DMT, SCMT , Complaints Manager	Review by Complaints Manager and SCMT – April 2012.	Quarterly children social care analysis received. Service user views strategy has been drafted and will be agreed by SCMT by August 2012..	A
	3. DMT and LSCB to scrutinise outcomes of feedback and complaints, and ensure actions are taken to improve services accordingly.	DMT, LSCB	Annual report to DMT and LSCB-July 12		A
5. Ofsted Recommendation: Timescale: Within 3 months (end February 2012)	Ensure that the quality of child in need and child protection plans is improved so that timely, measurable and achievable outcomes for safeguarding are clear and effective.				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/Accountable to	Evidence of progress January 2012	
Social work reports to child protection conference are of a high standard, and will reflect the individual needs and diversity of children and their families within the primary	1. Improve the quality of child protection and child in need plans through the following actions: a. Training on analysis of risk for social workers b. Multi-agency training to improve contribution of all agencies to child protection planning	Head of safeguarding Head of Localities and Disabled Children	Progress report on all actions below to LSCB for scrutiny July 2012.	a. Signs of Safety training held Nov/Dec 11 75 social workers and their managers took part in the training. A proposal to endorse multi-agency training in SoS is going to LSCB in July 2012. Plans to implement throughout Brent Social Care are in development. CPAs have set up conference clinics in-house to provide support to workers for report writing, presenting to child protection conference and	A

<p>objectives of the plan.</p> <p>Child protection plans will be SMART</p> <p>Child protection concerns will be addressed in a timely manner through the child protection conference system.</p> <p>Children in need receive a high quality service, and SMART plans with clear objectives and timescales are in place</p>	<p>c. Together with London Councils, developing more focused set of child protection documentation templates</p> <p>d. Strengthening the quality assurance role of Child Protection Advisers through use of the Alert system, and through audit</p> <p>e. Multi-agency training on new Child In Need policy, including strengthening the role of the Team Around a Child (TAC)</p> <p>f. Improving management overview of child in need cases to ensure timely progress to meeting agreed objectives.</p>			<p>preparing families for conference.</p> <p>An independent audit of child protection plans has been commissioned. This will take into account fwi records, service user views and stakeholder views. The report will be finalised by September 2012.</p>	
				<p>b. The Child Protection Advisers employed by Brent Council will provide workshops via the LSCB. Dates will be incorporated into the 2012/13 plan.</p>	A
				<p>C. JB contributes to developing and facilitating an event at London Councils with CAIT Superintendent and London Safeguarding Advisors. The event was for child protection leads across London authorities to improve the outcome focus of child protection plans, to ensure they addressed risk and were not generic plans. The Brent template for child protection plans was demonstrated as a good model of practice.</p>	G
				<p>d. The child protection advisors have held 2 training sessions for manager on CIN planning and review. The training is now being rolled out to teams.</p> <p>The CPAs cross audit child protection plans and use them for peer challenge and improvement. There has been an improvement in the child focus and specificity of outcomes in child protection plans.</p>	A

				 <p>CP Plan Audit template.docx</p> <p>Principal CPA monitors child protection plans from CPAs</p> <p>System for ongoing audit of cases with CP plan for more than 18 months now embedded. There are currently only 12 child protection plans of 18 months duration and 7 of more than 24 months</p>  <p>CP Plans greater than 18 months 09.0:</p> <p>Alert system usage reinforced.</p>	
				<p>e. 3 multi-agency workshops have taken place to explain the CIN policy. The CPAs are going to offer practical training in CIN and CP planning and review via the LSCB.</p>	G
				<p>F . audit of CIN plans 28th February</p> <p>Audit completed, report will be available to insert W/C 26.03.12</p> <p>An additional audit of CIN plans was done by London Councils In March 2012.</p> <p>A review of child protection plans that have ceased is being undertaken June/July 2012. This will specifically address the CIN working when a</p>	G

				child protection plan has ceased.	
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6. Ofsted Recommendation: Timescale: Within 3 months (end February 2012)	The LSCB to ensure that thresholds and 'step up, step down' processes are fully understood and effectively shared across agencies in relation to children who no longer require a child protection plan.				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/ Accountable to	Evidence of progress January 2012	
<p>Managers and staff are able to focus their work on children who meet Brent's levels of need.</p> <p>Child protection plans are appropriately stepped down when indication that risk of significant harm has diminished</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All families will receive the appropriate level of intervention, through the following actions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Assessment of whether cases receiving appropriate level through audit b. Benchmarking of thresholds across London c. Ensure thresholds are understood across partnership d. Pilot multi-agency consultation system by Child Protection Advisers e. Strengthen screening of new work through Locality Duty systems f. Strengthen links with early help services to improve signposting <p>Strengthen overview of child in need cases to ensure timely progress to meeting agreed objectives.</p>	LSCB/Head of Safeguarding	<p>Multi-agency progress report on all actions below to be scrutinised by DCS on monthly basis, and through High-Level Child Protection meeting. Report to LSCB June 2012.</p>	<p>A &C. LSCB thresholds group to sample audit 6 cases on multi-agency basis at 6-monthly intervals – starting end January 2012.</p> <p>Meeting took place 30.01.12</p> <p>A further thresholds review has been set for July 2012.</p> <p>a. Benchmarking across 5 localities is carried out by the PO for QA.</p>	G

				<p>b. data to be compiled comparing conversion rates from contact to referral across London.</p> <p>Heads of safeguarding across London have been contacted to see if they collect data on referrals that have been closed down following IA.</p>	A
				<p>c. A&c. First 6-monthly LSCB thresholds meeting, led by Head of Safeguarding, January 2012. Thresholds reinforced through locality practitioner forums, CIN workshops, joint operational CP meetings Thresholds also reinforced via the 3 LSCB CIN policy workshops.</p>	G
				<p>d. On hold</p>	A
				<p>e. locality managers have been screening referrals for appropriate courses of action and reporting on any issues. Principal CAP is still sick thus capacity continues to be an issue.</p>	G
				<p>f. Early support and CAF co-ordinator in post and review of step-up/step-down in process. Audit of CIN cases by regional safeguarding manager complete and recommendations to be implemented. The early help offer is subject of a one council review. This review intends to</p>	A

				enhance the offer to Brent families. The current resource is not sufficient to meet demand. Early help one council projects to be raised via children's partnership and LSCB. Head of Service for Early Help is a member of both fora.	
				g. New, robust CIN policy launched December 2011 through multi-agency workshops. Further workshop planned 12 June 2012 h. Audit of CIN 28th Feb 2012	G
7. Area for Development:	The management board overseeing children missing, including those missing from care, needs to undertake further work in order to effectively analyse any patterns or trends that are emerging, and the board has yet to submit a report to the LSCB for scrutiny and challenge				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/Accountable to:	Evidence of progress January 2012	
Children Missing from Care are managed effectively and the Board is able to analyse patterns and trends	1. The Missing Children Risks and Needs group collate and analyse data from Frameworki about Children missing from Care on a quarterly basis.	Chair of Missing Children Risks and Needs group	Report to LSCB February 2012 then on quarterly basis.	The report of the Missing Children: Risks and Needs group was presented to the Board on the 7 th February.	A
	2. Police data and data from other agencies concerning missing children to be analysed			The remit of the RAN group is to be reviewed to ensure missing children at risk of sexual exploitation is captured. A new chair for the RAN group will be sourced as a result of the promotion of the current chair and membership reviewed with the new group meeting in April. An audit is currently underway to try to quantify numbers and risk with a view of developing a	A

				<p>targeted action plan.</p> <p>The management information presented to the Board will be revised to ensure information presented includes children missing from home as well as care. This will be analysed by the Monitoring and Evaluation group to provide a more holistic oversight on an ongoing basis commencing in May.</p> <p>The next report to the Board will be in June and thereafter, September, December and March</p>	
<p>8. Ofsted Recommendation:</p> <p>Timescale: Within 3 months (end February 2012).</p>	<p>Brent children's social care services, NHS Brent and Ealing Hospital NHS Trust to put in place consistent and effective arrangements to ensure the prompt sharing of information about children subject to child protection plans and children who are looked after.</p> <p><i>NB: Recommendation also covered within Health Action Plan. The actions below are to be carried out in partnership, and complement the actions within the Health Action Plan.</i></p>				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/Accountability	Evidence of progress January 2012	
Health partners in child protection have ready access to list of children who are subjects of child protection plans, Supervision Orders, Interim/Care Orders and placed with parents.	1. Establish of joint ICO/LA 'task and finish' group to review information exchange issues and improve process	Assistant Director Social Care; Community Services Director, Brent	Task and finish group to report February 2012. Report to DMT and to LSCB to confirm all arrangements have been put in place – April 12.	<p>Immediate check showed that key providers receive updated information about child protection plans. Designated health staff identifying whether spread of information should be expanded.</p> <p>Brent Council has volunteered to work with the DfE Child Protection Information Sharing Project to develop a business case proposal for the Department of Health to share alert information between social care and unscheduled healthcare on children subject to a Child Protection Plan and/or Looked</p>	G


				after Children as well as Child Protection Plan alerts for unborn children.	
9. Ofsted Recommendation:	Brent's children's social care services, NHS Brent and Ealing Hospital NHS Trust to ensure that disabled children and young people and their parents/carers are actively engaged in the quality assurance and development of services.				
Timescale: Within 3 months (end February 2012)	<i>NB: Recommendation also covered within Health Action Plan. The actions below are to be carried out in partnership, and complement the actions within the Health Action Plan.</i>				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/Accountable to:	Evidence of progress January 2012	
Disabled children, young people and their parents and carers are able to comment on service quality and to contribute to service development.	1. Ensure children, young people and their parents/carers are kept informed of any proposed changes to services which may affect them, and that their views are taken into consideration.	Head of Localities and Disabled Children/Head of Transitions Team, Adult Social Care	Immediate and ongoing. Communication will take place as part of the 2 One Council projects: Transitions into Adult Life, and Children with Disabilities 0-13 project – outcome to be reported to Programme Board April 2012.	CIN survey has been completed and report is in draft. Consultation on 0-13 disabled children team planned with One Voice week took place 23 rd April 2012 and regular liaison meetings will be. CIST survey agreed during meeting planned for September 2012	G
10. Ofsted Recommendation:	Brent children and families' directorate and Brent children's partnership to strengthen the coordination and integration of strategic plans, underpinning them by appropriate performance management arrangements to monitor and drive improvement				
Timescale: Within 6 months (end May 2012)					
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when	Evidence of progress January 2012	

<p>A 'golden thread' will link partnership and corporate strategic priorities with all service improvement plans.</p> <p>All plans will be SMART and will establish challenging targets which can be tracked and evidenced.</p> <p>Qualitative measures will be integrated into plans to ensure that service development leads to improved outcomes for children, young people and their families.</p>	<p>1. Consultation processes in the development of strategic plans will be strengthened to ensure that strategic priorities reflect practice and service-user priorities.</p>	<p>Director of Children and Families</p> <p>Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Improvement</p> <p>LSCB Independent chair</p>	<p>To feed in to consultation prior to review of Children and Young People's Plan 2012</p> <p>To feed in to LSCB Annual Review 2011 and Business Plan 2012</p> <p>Scrutiny of actions within this recommendation will be undertaken through the Chief Executive's quarterly multi-agency child protection meetings; and by the members' Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding Bd.</p>	<p>Links made between this plan and update of CYPP, which will be finalised April 2012. LSCB business planning day has been held and the business plan will be agreed at the LSCB 27 June 2012.</p>	<p>A</p>
	<p>2. Linkages between Brent Children's Partnership, Brent LSCB, and operational managers will be strengthened, to ensure more effective scrutiny and accountability; qualitative performance information; and information-sharing which enables key priorities for the range of children and young people in Brent to be identified, prioritised within plans, and taken forward.</p>	<p>DCS</p> <p>LSCB Independent chair</p>	<p>May 2012</p>	<p>LSCB business plan will address these links</p>	<p>A</p>

	<p>3. Children's social care improvement plans will be produced which will cover all key priorities, identifying their source, with clear targets which will be scrutinised by the Social Care Management Team on a quarterly basis.</p>	SCMT	January 2012	<p>Actions are in the SLAC action plan and Brent Social Care Safeguarding Action Plan</p>	A
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Safeguarding: Additional Areas for Development

Safeguarding: Additional Areas for Development					RAG
1. Area for Development:	There are insufficient monitoring and evaluation processes in place in relation to work addressing concerns about the conduct of adults working with children. This role is the responsibility of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/Accountable to	Evidence of progress January 2012	
Lessons from referrals to LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer dealing with concerns about adults working with children) will be learned.	1. LADO will regularly review outcomes of investigations and highlight lessons to be learned and acted upon.	Head of Safeguarding	Quarterly report to be included with management information to the LSCB on outcomes of referrals about adults who may pose a risk to children, from December 11	Report provided December 11 Report provided March 2012 LADO report is being prepared June 2012.	G
LADO role will be understood across the partnership	2. The Safeguarding in Employment sub group of the LSCB will promote the role of the LADO across the voluntary, private and statutory providers in Brent.	Chair of sub-group	LSCB	The safeguarding in Employment sub-group is subject of review. The LADO role across the partnership is being incorporated in this review. LSCB faith and community reference group is meeting July 2012. The LADO will be part of the reference group. The LADO is promoting the role through the designated teacher forum. Report of evaluation of safeguarding training provided to Education partners is being prepared	G

LADO will be adequately resourced to ensure the statutory requirements of the role are fulfilled	3. Review the LADO role against the role and capacity of CPAs and prepare a business case proposing sufficient resource.	Head of Safeguarding	February 2012	Business case for extending the number of CPAs has been prepared. The LADO operational role will transfer to the CPAs thus freeing the current post holder to do more awareness raising in the community.	A
2. Area for Development	Procedures and data retention in relation to safe recruitment are in place and usually applied appropriately, but systems need to be more robust and consistently followed.				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when	Evidence of progress January 2012	
Decisions in relation to Criminal Record Bureau disclosures will be managed well and appropriately recorded, to ensure safe recruitment processes are robust and consistently applied.	1. Finalise planned work in relation to strengthening procedures and data retention.	Head of People Services/HR Services manager/Operational HOS	January 2012. Report to DMT February 12.	Completed; updated procedure enclosed  CRB policy update March 12.doc.docx	G
3. Area for Development:	There is no formal evaluation of the impact of CAF on children, young people and their families.				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when	Evidence of progress January 2012	
Families have access to bespoke and coordinated multi-agency support that addresses need early	1. Review CAF processes to determine outcomes and quality. This will include an evaluation of the impact of CAF.	Head of Early Years and Integrated Services	February 2012	Evaluation report completed end of February and action plan being deployed.	G

	2. Recruit a full time CAF coordinator to manage the SPA process and the CAF team.		December 2011	postholder in place January 2012.	G
4. Area for Development	The process of cloning records between siblings in the same family who are children in need is not appropriate and can lead to the individual needs of each sibling not being accurately or fully identified.				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when	Evidence of progress January 2012	
Recording will reflect the individual needs of each child within the family as well as needs which apply to the whole family	1. Reinforce requirements re ensuring individual needs of children within a family are recorded by practitioners.	Head of Localities & Disabled Children	January 2012 Compliance to be tested through planned audit cycle.	2 day audit of CIN cases planned for 19 and 20 April 2012 by Locality Managers, Review of CIN plans undertaken and planned workshops led by AP's planned for July 2012	A
5. Area for Development	Assessments for disabled children brought to the multi-agency resources panel are not always fully comprehensive or multi-disciplinary				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/Accountable to	Evidence of progress January 2012	
Assessments for disabled children are comprehensive and multi-disciplinary, maximising the potential for ensuring best outcomes.	1. Incorporate improvements to assessments into current One Council 0-13 children with disabilities team project.	Head of Localities & Disabled Children	April 2012/0-13 Project Board	0-13 consultation completed, 0-13 disabled children's team will be operational from 30 April 2012, assessment process refined to maximise efficiency and deliver improved assessments proportionate to need, team will be located in Chesterfield House.	G
Early Support Panel Coordinator in place	2. Early Support Coordinator appointed; attends six weekly CWD panel (led by paediatricians at Brent and Harrow PCT)	Head of Early Years and Integrated Services	Take up post December 2011. Then ongoing	Coordinator took up post Dec 2011. Attending appropriate panels, re-negotiated further 1 year contract and PCT funding. Good progress made with action plan. Embedding in role before carrying out this action.	G

and supporting multi-agency key workers support to families with additional needs aged 0-5 years.	3. Early Support Coordinator to identify additional funding for families with early support needs.	Head of Early Years and Integrated Services	Ongoing, as key part of role.		G
6. Area for Development	The LSCB's 26 wide-ranging priorities for this year do not link clearly to the priorities of Brent Children's Partnership or Brent's Child Poverty Strategy				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/Accountable to	Evidence of progress January 2012	
The LSCB Business plan demonstrates linked priorities for 2012-13 to Brent Children's Partnership strategies The annual report demonstrates how the LSCB BCP priorities were addressed on 2011-12	LSCB planning business planning day references, scrutinises, monitors and evaluates all key safeguarding elements of partnership strategies. Brent Children's Partnership to be consulted on the LSCB plan.	LSCB Independent Chair	Takes place May 2012 Accountable to Director of Children's Services who will ensure appropriate linkages are in place.	The LSCB Business Planning Day was held May 2012 key priorities for the year were agreed. The business plan goes to the board 27 June 2012. The annual report is complete. The Business Plan and Annual Report will be going to the BCP Executive in June. The CYPP (Currently out for consultation with the BCP) will be going to the LSCB when complete.	A

7. Area for Development	The LSCB to engage more effectively with the community and to recruit lay members.				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/Accountable to	Evidence of progress January 2012	
Lay members will be in place and fully contributing to the work of the LSCB.	1. Reference group for community groups is in development, with first meeting planned.	LSCB Development Manager	Meeting planned July 2012 Accountable to LSCB Independent Chair, then to DCS	The reference group will meet July 2012 and the Lay member will be part of this. Lay member appointment has been made.	A
	2. Advertisement to be placed for lay members of LSCB		May 2012		G
8. Area for Development	Within children's social care services the statutory guidance on the timescale for holding an initial child protection conference following the undertaking of child protection enquiries is not consistently followed, leading at times to unacceptable delay.				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/Accountable to	Evidence of progress January 2012	
There is clear understanding of timescales required within child protection processes.	1. Clarification about timescales within child protection processes to be sent to team managers and practitioners.	Head of Safeguarding	December 2011	Achieved  timescales to cp. conference.msg	G

Current appropriate level of performance of 70% within timescale is maintained, ensuring those that exceed the timescale are complex cases, receiving fuller assessment, with risks managed.	2. Periodic audit to identify whether cases which go beyond 15-day timescale do so in the interests of getting a fuller assessment and risks are managed, as opposed to drift.		Next audit: April 2012 Outcome of audit to be reported to LSCB.	A further reminder was sent to managers May 2012 To be audited April 2012. Audit completed and further reminder of responsibilities of the manager to comply with statutory timescales was sent. CP admin team are tasked to remind workers that their manager must evidence on fwi rationale for late booking and an interim a risk management plan.	G
	3. Multi-agency strategy meetings or discussions will be held for complex cases where detailed multi-agency planning and management of risk is required from the beginning.	Head of Localities and Disabled Children	LSCB	Subject of a LSCB audit at present. Service audits suggest that still to high a proportion of strategy discussions are between SC and police, Topic for discussion with Locality Managers 3 rd May 2012. LSCB audit is in final draft.	A

4. Looked After Children Recommendations:

Recommendations: Looked After Children					RAG
1. Ofsted /CQC Recommendation: Timescale: Immediate	NHS Brent to provide an effective health service to looked after children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure the timely completion of all health assessments and reviews To develop a robust approach to monitoring actions identified in health plans To improve information exchange between health and social care professionals To provide age appropriate and comprehensive health information for looked after children Where appropriate, to ensure that health professionals are invited to or able to contribute effectively to looked after children reviews <p><i>NB: Recommendation directed at NHS Brent and covered within Health Action Plan. The actions below are either to be carried out in partnership or apply to social care, and complement the actions within the Health Action Plan. As the Health of Looked After Children received a judgement of Inadequate, this recommendation is receiving the highest priority for action and improvement, and compliance and improvement will be reported on a monthly basis to the DCS. Actions under this recommendation and in the CQC Health Action Plan will also be scrutinised through quarterly reports to the LSCB and to the Multi-Agency Child Protection Meetings, as well as to the Health and Well-Being Board. A revised set of Performance Indicators (PIs) to capture key performance areas has been agreed.</i></p>				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/Accountable to	Evidence of progress January 2012	
Health assessments are timely and comprehensive	1. A system is being devised to ensure that all young people to have a Health Assessment within 3 months prior to their 18 th birthday.	Head of CPCIC/ Deputy Director, Nursing and Clinical Standards, Brent ICO	1 February 2012	Ursula Johnson identify YP and notify SW's Focus has been on health assessments Awaiting outcome of public needs analysis to inform future work; consultation has just been completed on draft report This is strongly linked to action 6.	A

				In exploring this further, the focus has shifted to having health material available for care leavers, not so much having a HA before their 18 th birthday. Consultation with YP has been identified as a crucial part of this and it is envisaged that between Social Care and health this will be actioned within the next 6 weeks.	
Children's health plans will be implemented in a timely and comprehensive way, ensuring their health needs are met	2. Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQs) to be identified as needing completion at first LAC Review, and monitored at 2 nd LAC Review.	Head of Commissioning and Resources	1 February 2012	Currently being implemented by IROs. Fully in place by April 12. Implementation to be checked at 2 nd LAC review. System now in place – to be audited end July 12	A
	3. IROs to review health recommendations at each LAC review and implement escalation policy where necessary.	Head of Commissioning and Resources	Immediate and ongoing	In place and will be audited through the revised IRO performance monitoring framework.	G
Through the revised service specification, to ensure robust quality assurance of the health services being delivered to LAC, both in terms of timeliness and quality	4. Improving outcomes on health assessments through: a. Quarterly performance monitoring meetings to ensure robust monitoring of health assessments as part of SLA b. Bi-monthly liaison meeting between social care and health to develop good practice working.	Head of Care Planning/ Deputy Director, Nursing & clinical Standards /Head of Commissioning and Resources/Deputy Director, Strategy & Planning, NHS Brent Regular review of SLA will ensure all actions	1 February 2012	A Fully scheduled for 12/13 Consultation on draft performance framework almost complete and first meeting is scheduled for July 12, which will monitor the 1 st quarter's performance. This is in place & 3 mtgs have taken place already. This is in place.	A

		are implemented.			
LAC Reviews will be fully informed about children's health issues, in order to best meet their needs Information exchange between health and social care will be consistently good, and enable children's health needs to be met in a timely way	5. Establish joint ICO/LA 'task and finish' group to review information exchange issues and improve process.	Head of Care Planning/ Head of Commissioning and Resources /Community Services Director, NHS Brent	1 February 2012	In place and will continue for an additional 3 months. However, immediate work has been undertaken in respect of information exchange and processes. The LAC Health team have full access to FWi and have received training. There is also now a shared spread sheet data base which monitors the progress of the health assessments. All actions on track and revised process system in place which should demonstrate considerable improvement in the timeliness of HA's.	G
Children and young people will be fully informed about health issues, in an age-appropriate way.	6. Review current health information and develop or source appropriate health information materials in liaison with public health department.	Deputy Director, Nursing & Clinical Standards , Head of Health Improvement Brent, Ealing and Harrow ICO (see CQC plan)	December 2011	Underway as part of task and finish group	A

<p>LAC health colleagues are notified of all statutory reviews to enable their participation and attendance where appropriate</p>	<p>7. Health to be routinely informed about every LAC review, in order that up-to-date health information can be provided. Personal attendance where required to be identified by social worker.</p>	<p>Head of Care Planning/ Community Services Director Brent NHS/ Head of Commissioning & Resources</p>	<p>1 February 2012</p>	<p>a) LAC review service notifies via spreadsheet b) SW identifies when nurse needs to be invited</p> <p>This is now fully in place and is being monitored through the IRO process that health attendance occurs where required.</p>	<p>G</p>
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2. Ofsted Recommendation: Timescale: Immediate	The council to ensure timely notifications of all newly looked after children to partner agencies, and to inform them of other significant changes to placement arrangements.				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/Accountable to	Evidence of progress January 2012	
Health, schools and other partner agencies as appropriate are informed promptly when children come into care, or when their placements change.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthen systems for notifying partner agencies when children come into care or change placements, through identifying problems and rectifying. 2. Follow-up audit to ensure system working well. 	Head of Children & Families Policy and Performance/Head of Care Planning/Head of Localities/Head of Commissioning and Resources	Immediate. Audit September 2012. Outcome of audits to be presented to DMT and to LSCB as part of quarterly monitoring.	Requirements reinforced.	G

3. Ofsted Recommendation: Timescale: Within 3 months (end February 2012)					
The council to draw up robust pathway and transition plans in conjunction with all those young people leaving care or who have left care.					
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/Accountable to:	Evidence of progress January 2012	
All care leavers will have a relevant , meaningful and up to date Pathway Plan	1. Pathway planning to be made more robust through: a. Increased management involvement with Pathway Planning arrangements b. Training workshops to improve expertise of practitioners, ensuring each Pathway Plan is young-person centred c. Quality assurance of Pathway Planning arrangements, through the IRO role; management information; and audit.	Head of Care Planning	1 February 2012 Management information to be presented to DMT and to LSCB as part of quarterly monitoring.	a. Increased management oversight has led to 94% of Pathway Plans being in place There has been a reduction in the completion of PP (94.9%) due to staff vacancies and workload. Recruitment in process as well as permanent recruitment to the vacancies. Positive feedback received from IRO re improved quality of PP's. Awaiting outcome of the themed May PP audit.	A
A Pathway Plan is drawn up in conjunction with all care leavers and a copy				b. PP training day is in L & D calendar for 12/13. Expectations presented at staff forum, management meeting and team meetings	G

is given to them				c. IRO's are quality assuring PP for the LAC's. This will also be a key area in the revised performance monitoring framework, quantitative audit of PP scheduled for April 2012. This is work in progress.	G
				d. Management information provided by Data Officer on monthly basis. System has been devised and to be implemented from 1st May 2012.	G
All care-leavers with disabilities will have a comprehensive transition plan in place prior to leaving care.	2. Team manager of Transitions team to ensure transition plans are comprehensively updated prior to the young person leaving care.	Head of Transitions Service from 1.4.2012	Immediate and ongoing	To be discussed at the meeting scheduled for Monday, 18 th June 2012.	G
	3. This requirement will be integrated within current plans for a 14-25 Transitions Team.	Head of Transitions Service	April 2012		

4. Ofsted Recommendation: Timescale: Within 3 months (end February 2012)	The council to ensure that all social workers benefit from regular, good quality formal supervision that provides appropriate management oversight of case work planning. <i>NB: All actions are the same as in Safeguarding Recommendations 1 and 2 to ensure consistent improvements across the service.</i>				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/Accountable to	Evidence of progress January 2012	
Staff at all levels receive regular, high quality supervision, which encompasses both performance management and reflective supervision. Supervision enables reflective, child focussed practice, in line with the Munroe Review of Child Protection All social workers will have a fully completed personal supervision file to capture casework as well as personal and professional development.	1. Review of all supervision materials to be conducted by external consultant working together with managers, to ensure supervision is delivered in line with best practice elsewhere and that this can be evidenced.	Head of Localities and Disabled Children/ Head of Care Planning	Policy to be completed by end February 2012	External consultant engaged. Focus group with managers 19.1.12. 5 sessions for each supervisor in group sessions focusing on every aspect of supervision commencing April 12.. Policy to be completed following training programme All TM's in service have and are attending the supervision training workshops Audit of supervision files scheduled for July 2012	A
	2. Intensive coaching workshops for managers across children's social care, funded through the Local Government Improvement and Development agency, to be provided to deliver improved expertise in supervision, including reflective supervision, and in doing so	Head of Localities and Disabled Children/ Head of Care Planning	February – March 2012	Funding secured through Local Government Improvement and Development Agency and work programme submitted. Programme of supervision support starting April 2012. As above	G

Supervision notes to demonstrate timely plans and impact	enable managers to lift the quality of practice across the service.				
	3. Evidence of both compliance with and impact of improved approach to supervision to be evidenced through regular audit.	Head of Localities and Disabled Children/ Head of Care Planning	March 12. Audit outcome will be included in post-inspection action plan quarterly report to Departmental Management Team and Local Safeguarding Children Board	Audit to ensure cases had been supervised undertaken December 2011 Summary report due April 2012 Audit was completed, Report outstanding. The report has been completed and recommendations incorporated in the supervision training. Also discussed in MM and supervision.	A
	4. Conduct staff questionnaire re experience of new supervision system	Head of Localities and Disabled Children/ Head of Care Planning	September 2012		A
5. Ofsted Recommendation: Timescale: Within 3 months (end February 2012)	The council to ensure that care plans and assessments for looked after children are focused, specific and include the consideration of all relevant background information.				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when	Evidence of progress January 2012	

<p>Care plans for children and young people are focused, specific and include the consideration of all relevant background information</p> <p>Supervision to reflect active care planning</p> <p>Care plans implemented to ensure timely outcomes</p> <p>Joint working arrangements between Care Planning and Legal Services ensure a comprehensive approach which avoids delay.</p> <p>Parallel and contingency planning in place from the start to avoid delays, and evidenced</p>	<p>1. Care Planning systems to be strengthened through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review of current care planning policies and processes to ensure that the care planning process is robust, timely and of a high standard. This to include workflow processes on FWI. b. Strengthen joint planning arrangements with Legal Services, to ensure timely and effective planning in care proceedings c. Managers to ensure that parallel and contingency planning is considered at each stage. d. Permanency Planning Meeting processes to be strengthened to ensure plans progress in a timely way. e. Audit of care plans to be undertaken by end February 2012 	<p>Head of Care Planning, Head of Legal Services</p>	<p>All actions to be implemented by March 2012</p> <p>Progress to be reported to DMT March 2012.</p>	<p>This is now incorporated into the L&D plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Completed. FWI workflow processes updated to include tracking of PPM's. b. Completed. Six-weekly meetings between HoS, PO's and TM's to review all court cases & planning. c. Completed- it is checked in the legal meeting. d. This supported by updated FWI process, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PO re-books at IPPM if complex issues - Panels to be set up for April & May to review all cases where permanent placements not made <p>Permanency Panels set up chaired by HoS CPCIC and FPU. Have reviewed all children under the age of 5, reviewing 5 – 12 year olds on 20/06. This Panel scheduled to take place on 6 weekly basis, following the Legal Overview Meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. Sample audit undertaken in January. Themed audit scheduled for March 2012 <p>All of the above completed, further actions identified from audit completed in April. Report to be shared with managers next week.</p>	<p>G</p>
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Improved practitioner expertise in care planning	2. Training and workshop sessions with the objective of improving the care planning process to be set up for staff in Care Planning, Localities, Disabled Children's Team, and Placements.	HOS –Care Planning, Locality, C&R; Head of Legal	February – March 2012	Part of L & D programme for 12/13 This is now incorporated into the L&D plan. Several members of staff involved in WLA training programme.	G
6. Ofsted Recommendation: Timescale: Within 3 months (end February 2012)	The council to ensure that action is taken to improve school attendance for looked after children and reduce the numbers that are subject to fixed-term and multiple school exclusions.				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/Accountable to:	Evidence of progress January 2012	
School attendance for looked after children is improved The number of fixed-term and multiple school exclusions for looked after children is	1. Virtual Head to draft revised procedure in respect of school attendance for consultation with Brent head teachers and designated staff, and ensure implementation.	Head of Commissioning & Resources/ Head of Care Planning	February 2012	Procedure drafted and relevant consultation is underway and will be completed by end May. Procedure will then be finalised and implemented by June 12. This date has been changed to July 2012. Consultation completed and procedure in process of being signed off.	A

reduced All aspects of education for looked after children, including attendance and exclusions, will be improved, in line with the objectives within Brent's LAC Strategy 2011-2014	2. To monitor on termly basis		Monitoring to be reported to DMT so that DCS can ensure that this is implemented and improves educational outcomes for looked after children. As a central improvement area within the LAC Strategy, improvements in attendance and exclusions will be taken forward and monitored by the LAC Strategy group.	Plans are progressing for the implementation of Welfare Call; the contract has been signed and agreed. The system is now operational. A briefing notes has been provided to social care staff and schools. The first monitoring report will then be available at the end of July for the summer term.	G
7. Ofsted Recommendation: Timescale: Within 6 months (end May 2012)	The council to ensure progress is made in providing stable placements for children on admission to care, and the timely provision of permanent homes for children with a plan for adoption.				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/Accountable to:	Evidence of progress January 2012	
Children will not be subjected to unnecessary placement moves	1. Placement stability will be improved through: a. Strengthening systems for matching, including	Head of Care Planning/ Head of Commissioning and Resources	Will be included within quarterly data set to be scrutinised by LSCB and DMT.	a) Support plans are being continuously reviewed. This area will also form a part of the audit of the disruption of placements (h) below.	G

following admission to care	<p>support plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Ensuring Brent foster-carers are available to the Emergency Duty Team c. Consider referral to LAC CAMHS for each child/placement d. Hold annual professionals meetings are held to ensure team around the child actively reviewing child, needs and placement e. Expand pool of foster-carers to meet more complex needs f. Review Adoption Panel processes to strip out delay 		Improvements will also be made and monitored through the Social Care Transformation Project and Board. Report on progress to go to Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding Board September 2012.	b) Brent F/C's are available to EDT. This is being reviewed by HOS Placements and C&R. Meeting took place on 3/5/12 and agreement reached to scope possible EDT model with IFA agencies given ongoing challenges of achieving with BFCs.	A
Children will experience much improved placement stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> g. Clarify respite arrangements h. Analyse disruptions of placements to inform improved arrangements 			c) This is in place and monitored at LAC reviews and CPP. Referrals to CAMHS have increased.	G
				d) Managers are reviewing all cases in supervision to identify where this will be appropriate. Additionally, IROs are also considering the need for professionals meeting at LAC reviews. Ongoing.	G
				e) Meeting held 3/5/12 and targets identified for 12/13 in line with staffing resources. Agreed further in house development needs to be in line with outcome of WLA Commissioning Strategy data analysis will be report end July 12.	G
				f) completed	G
				g) Revised arrangements drafted and to be implemented with staff.	G
				h) Current scoping underway and will progress from July due to capacity issues. Management information to be reviewed.	A
8. Ofsted Recommendation:	The council to improve monitoring arrangements for individual children to measure educational progress relative to their starting points.				

Timescale: Within 6 months (end May 2012)					
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/Accountable to:	Evidence of progress January 2012	
<p>Children's individual educational progress will be identified and tracked so that they can better achieve their full educational potential.</p> <p>To have greater impact in respect of new LAC adolescents and KS4</p> <p>To continue to develop work on respect of 16+ and those in EET</p>	<p>1. Systems to be established to track and monitor LAC from their starting points</p>	<p>Head of Care Planning/Head of Commissioning and Resources</p>	<p>Monitoring to be reported to DMT so that DCS can ensure that this is implemented and improves educational outcomes for looked after children.</p> <p>It will also be monitored by the LAC Strategy group.</p> <p>Report to go to Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding Board September 12</p>	<p>1. System established. On-going data inputting underway. A full progress report of LAC will be provided for Sept 12.</p>	G
	<p>2. NEET/EET strategy to include the identification of young people with potential to benefit from higher education so that they can be supported in accessing relevant courses.</p>		<p>February 2012</p>	<p>2 Completed</p>	G

	3. Identify actions to support new LAC adolescents and KS4 to achieve their educational potential		February 2012	3 Attendance by LAC Ed at monthly res panel is in place. Immediate LAC notifications now go to the LAC Ed team, with early prioritisation of PEPs for new LAC adolescents. Current Peps performance is 88% This has increased to 94%	G
	4. To continue to develop work in respect of 16+ and those in EET		Ongoing.	4 Actively addressed through F4F. Apprenticeship scheme. This key stage is now focussed on by a dedicated LAC case worker in the LAC Ed Team with monitoring and support where needed to 70 young people. This will be reviewed for impact in Aug 12 – post exam results.	G

5. Looked After Children: Additional Areas for Development

Looked After Children: Additional Areas for Development					RAG
11.Area for Development	The LAC Strategy Review Group has yet to meet so it is not possible to evaluate the impact of the LAC Strategy... present arrangements for accountability, monitoring and challenge of the looked after children strategy are not sufficiently robust as there is no line of report or accountable to the Brent Children's Partnership or other strategic forum.				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/Accountable to:	Evidence of progress January 2012	
Progress on the LAC Strategy is regularly reviewed to ensure objectives are being met in accordance with the action plan, and outcomes for children in care and care-leavers are improving.	1. LAC Strategy Review Group to implement and monitor strategy on multi-agency basis; with 6-monthly scrutiny meeting to be chaired by AD Social Care	Head of Care Planning/AD Social Care	Meeting of LAC Strategy Review group February 2012, then on quarterly basis	1. Meetings scheduled. Review meeting scheduled for 02/05 2012. Provisional new objectives drafted Membership extended to include other stakeholders	G
	2. Set up systems for scrutiny of the progress on the LAC Strategy with Brent Children's Partnership			2. BCP review date set. Dates set for June 2012 Date confirmed for 20/06/2012	G

12.Area for Development	Commissioned advocacy services are accessible for those who wish it but no detailed evaluation of the service's impact has been undertaken as yet.				RAG
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/Accountable to:	Evidence of progress January 2012	
Performance monitoring & management in respect of all SLAs will be tighter, with a particular focus on outcomes for children and young people.	1. To ensure that appropriate performance monitoring arrangements are in place for all relevant commissioned services and that they focus on outcomes.	Head of Commissioning and Resources	February 2012 Report to DMT covering all commissioned services.	1. Completed via quarterly monitoring meetings. Outcomes are incorporated into the performance monitoring reports.	G
	2. The provision of a complaints-related advocacy service will be considered within the Aidhour SLA (service provider for LAC Reviews).			2. This is still under development given the restructuring within the complaints dept and also needs to explore work being undertaken in respect of advocacy both within adults and across WLA.	A

13.Area for Development	The targeted use of the Crisis Intervention and Support Team.....is successful at maintaining children on the edge of care at home...However, there is no longitudinal review to evaluate effectiveness.				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/Accountable to:	Evidence of progress January 2012	
The CIST will successfully divert young people from the care system, and enable them to continue to remain with, or return to their families, whenever it is safe to do so.	1. Following an external review in Summer 2011, the CIST has been operating with a tighter focus, and clearer performance monitoring.	Head of Localities and Disabled Children	September 2012 Evaluation report to go to DMT and to Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding Board.	Performance monitoring demonstrates positive diversion from care rate Evaluation of service to take place as part of Early Help One Council project.	G
	2. The impact of the CIST, including the lasting impact of diverting young people from care, will be evaluated one year from the implementation of the changes.				G

14.Area for Development	While an appropriate escalation policy is in place (for use by IROs), this has not been used in the last 12 months and not all reviewing officers are familiar with it.				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/Accountable to:	Evidence of progress January 2012	
The escalation policy is fully and meaningfully implemented, its effectiveness monitored and themes identified in order to contribute to continuing service improvement.	1. Ensure all IROs are clear about the use of the escalation policy, and to use this instead of emailing or otherwise communicating concerns.	Head of Commissioning and Resources	February 2012	The escalation policy is currently being revised and is to be re-implemented by 30/04/12. There is currently a delayed timescale and revision is currently underway for completion by end May 12. This will be undertaken in conjunction with the revised performance monitoring framework and analysed for the Annual Report.	G
	2. The effectiveness of the escalation policy will be analysed prior to the IRO Annual Report, and issues identified will be communicated through the report.		October 2012 IRO report will be presented to the Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding Board		

15.Area for Development	Locality teams have benefitted from Advanced Practitioner posts, but the role has not been included within care planning teams and so practitioners do not have the same opportunities to develop expertise in such a focused manner.				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/Accountable to:	Evidence of progress January 2012	
Care Planning teams are assisted to develop expertise.	1. In view of current resource constraints, consideration will need to be given about how this can be achieved.	AD Social Care/Head of CPCIC	April 2012 Any proposals to be considered by DMT in first instance.	To be considered This is under consideration. Recent management review concluded that caseloads are main challenge and that with more manageable caseloads, there will be more time to develop expertise.	A
16.Area for Development:	The management board overseeing children missing, including those missing from care, needs to undertake further work in order to effectively analyse any patterns or trends that are emerging, and the board has yet to submit a report to the LSCB for scrutiny and challenge				
Required Outcome	Actions	Lead	By when/Accountable to:	Evidence of progress January 2012	
Children Missing from Care are managed effectively and the Board is able to analyse patterns and trends	3. The Missing Children Risks and Needs group collate and analyse data from Frameworki about Children missing from Care on a quarterly basis.	Chair of Missing Children Risks and Needs group	Report to LSCB February 2012 then on quarterly basis.	The report of the Missing Children: Risks and Needs group was presented to the Board on the 7 th February.	A
	4. Police data and data from other agencies concerning missing children to be analysed			The remit of the RAN group is to be reviewed to ensure missing children at risk of sexual exploitation is captured. A new chair for the RAN group will be sourced as a result of the promotion of the current chair and membership reviewed with the new group meeting in April. An audit is currently underway to try to quantify numbers and risk with a view of developing a targeted action plan. The management information presented to the Board will be revised to ensure information presented includes children	A

				<p>missing from home as well as care. This will be analysed by the Monitoring and Evaluation group to provide a more holistic oversight on an ongoing basis commencing in May.</p> <p>The next report to the Board will be in June and thereafter , September, December and March</p>	
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Key to Acronyms:

LA – Local Authority

LSCB – Local Safeguarding Children Board

BCP – Brent Children’s Partnership

ICO – Integrated Care Organisation (health providers for Brent, Ealing and Harrow)

DMT – Departmental management team

SCMT – Social Care Management Team

CPCIC – Care Planning and Children in Care Service

CQC – Care Quality Commission (health inspectors who worked with Ofsted on this inspection)

AD - Assistant director

HOS - Head of Service

CPA – Child Protection Adviser

LADO – Local Authority Designated Officer (responsible for dealing with concerns about the conduct of adults towards children)

IRO – Independent Reviewing Officer (responsible for chairing regular reviews for looked after children)

LAC – Looked after children (children in the care of the council)

CWD – Children with disabilities

QMF – Quality Management Framework

SLA – Service Level Agreement

SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and **Timebound**

	<p>Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee 11 October 2012</p> <p>Children and Families and Strategy, Partnerships & Improvement Joint Report</p>
For Information	Wards Affected: ALL
<p>Child Poverty Strategy 2011-2021</p>	

1.0 Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out a ten year strategy to address child poverty in the borough. The strategy sets out the key priority areas to reduce child poverty through improved collaboration of existing service areas in order to better coordinate efforts by services to reduce child poverty and improve life chances for children and young people. The child poverty strategy has been developed by working closely with our partners in not only in developing the outcomes we want to achieve, but also ensure that the strategies they are developing also reflect on the need to address child poverty. Mitigating the effects of child poverty and reducing it are key drivers of improving Children and families' health and wellbeing. There will be strong links between this Strategy and the developing Health and wellbeing Board for the City.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Agreement by the Council and its partners of this Child Poverty Strategy will fulfil the statutory requirement as detailed in the Child Poverty Act 2010

3.0 Detail

3.1 In March 2012 the Child Poverty Act 2010 was passed, which stated that compelling action needed to be taken at local and national levels to meet the target of eradicating child poverty by 2020. The Act requires the government to publish a child poverty strategy which was published on the 1st April 2011. The Act requires local authorities and their partners to co-operate to tackle child poverty in their local areas; including the duty to publish a local child poverty needs assessment and a child poverty strategy for their area.

3.2 The government commissioned independent reviews by Frank Field and Graham Allen which focused on children's life chances and the importance of early intervention. Both reviews are referenced in the governments' national strategy 'A new approach to Child Poverty: Tackling Causes of disadvantage and Transforming Families' lives' published in April 2011

In August 2011 Brent's Child Poverty Needs Assessment was completed in. It details some of the key issues and causes of Child Poverty in the borough. The full child poverty needs assessment is available on request. It provides a detailed analysis of child poverty levels in Brent, for example it shows poverty to be worst in the most deprived wards in the borough. It also highlights factors that can perpetuate child poverty, for example parents on low incomes, financial capability and debt, families that live in poor-quality or overcrowded housing, parents without qualifications or employment, parents/carers with mental health problems, disability or infirmity or if children are looked after or in care.

3.3 Brent ranks within the top 10 per cent most deprived in England according to the CWI (Child wellbeing index) and the borough ranks 15th out of 33 London Borough's in the overall CWI. 34.4% of children under the age of 16 live in poverty in Brent. The highest rates of poverty are in Stonebridge ward (which contains the top two worst ranking Super output areas in the country, St Raphael's, Brentfield and Mitchell Brook), Harlesden, Stonebridge, South Kilburn and parts of Welsh Harp, Barnhill and Alperton. The full needs analysis is available from andrea.lagos@brent.gov.uk

3.4 The Council's vision, which is central to the Child Poverty Strategy is:

For no children or young people to be disadvantaged by poverty in 2021 by breaking the cycle of deprivation and mitigating poor children becoming poor adults. Over the next decade we will ensure that each child has the best possible start in life and not be disadvantaged by family circumstance or background

3.5 The strategy sets out 6 key priorities to reduce and mitigate the levels of poverty in Brent over the next ten years. The strategy also demonstrates at which point in a child's lifecycle certain actions should be taken. A comprehensive review of the strategy will take place every three years until 2021 to allow sufficient time for any subsequent changes to be made and also factor in any further changes such as the impact of welfare reforms which will be introduced in 2013.

3.6 Our Priorities:

- Priority 1 Reduce poverty levels of children living in low income households
- Priority 2 Supporting troubled families
- Priority 3 Reduction in the NEET group
- Priority 4 Improve financial capacity of parents
- Priority 5 Support Looked after Children & Children at the edge of care
- Priority 6 Improve the health and wellbeing of children with a focus on reducing obesity, tooth decay and poor mental health

3.7 Mitigating the effects of child poverty and reducing it are key drivers of improving Children and families' health and wellbeing. There will be strong links between this Strategy and the developing Health and wellbeing Board for the City.

3.8 The correlation between crime and disorder and child poverty is described within the Child Poverty Needs Assessment. It includes such issues as the involvement in anti-social behaviour of children and young people, both as perpetrators and victims of crime, and also the impact on families of issues such as domestic violence or drug abuse

3.9 Sustainability implications depend on a range of factors within the borough and London as a whole such as employment opportunities, living and housing costs. The wider quality of life issues as the basis for sustainable and prosperous communities, and the impact that these have on families, is described in the Child Poverty Needs Assessment upon which the Child Poverty Strategy is built. The impact of welfare reforms will also have an impact on some of our most vulnerable families and child poverty needs to be taken into consideration.

3.7 A six week consultation process was conducted and aimed at targeted groups (including parents) and organisations that were strategically linked, delivered services. We received responses from several groups including the LAC youth group, Youth Parliament, Street League, Chalkhill Youth Forum, Help Somalia Foundation, Children centres, Health Visitors and School nurses as individual responses from residents of the borough

3.8 The Child Poverty Strategy is a long term document (2011-2021), recognising that the intergenerational factors influencing poverty are longstanding, cultural and vulnerable to the performance of the national economy.

3.9 The child poverty strategy has a robust action plan and the actions and progress towards achieving outcomes will be measured by a set of performance indicators and these will be owned and monitored by the Executive of the Partners for Brent as well as the individual service areas and partners responsible for their operational delivery. It is also proposed that Child Poverty be a standing agenda item at a number of existing strategic groups who already have responsibility for a number of the actions including those covering; Parenting, NEETS and Health & Well Being.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications directly resulting from the recommendations of this report. The action plan detailed in the strategy and any new activities suggested are within the remit of existing services and the intention is to deliver within existing resources and remodelling of services to place an emphasis on prevention will be conducted through specific projects such as the working with families and the council's employment offer. Any new investment requested should be assessed within the value for money context and a business case drawn up and approved before any financial commitments are made.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 No legal implications are required for this report

6.0 Diversity and Equality and other Implications

6.1 There are no diversity implications contained within this report.

6.2 As set above, we have considered the impact of this strategy to help safeguard against discrimination and promote equality. The intention of the child poverty strategy is to reduce the inequality of opportunity in the borough.

6.3 Sustainability implications depend on a range of factors within the borough and London as a whole such as employment opportunities, living and housing costs. The wider quality of life issues as the basis for sustainable and prosperous communities, and the impact that these have on families, is described in the Child Poverty Needs Assessment upon which the Child Poverty Strategy is built. The

impact of welfare reforms will also have an impact on some of our most vulnerable families and child poverty needs to be taken into consideration

6.4 The Child Poverty Strategy has implications for the public, community and voluntary and private sectors within the city as well as residents and Communities.

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

7.1 There are no accommodation issues contained within this report.

Background Papers

Brent Child Poverty Strategy

Contact Officers, address and email, telephone number:

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Director of Children & Families

Krutika Pau

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme – 2012/13

Meeting Date	Item	Issue for committee to consider	Outcome	Recommendations
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 61</p>	<p>Brent Youth Parliament</p>	<p>The members of the Brent Youth Parliament will be invited to provide an update on their work since the committee last met, as well as to raise any issues of concern they would like the committee to consider.</p>	<p>No representation from BYP at this meeting.</p>	
	<p>Achievement at KS5 and destinations</p>	<p>Committee will be presented with a short report on KS5, A level results analysis for individual schools in Brent. Report will also include the Destinations report, which is a report on school leavers and progression after leaving school. Report will be presented by John Galligan.</p>	<p>Report was noted by members of the committee. Breakdown of the type of “other courses” started in 2011 in the table in section 3.7 requested. This information is not available as yet as students have not completed their courses. To be followed up later in the year.</p>	
	<p>Expansion of Brent Schools</p>	<p>Progress Report on Brent being allocated the best Capital Settlement in the country and an update on the 2 application bids under the ‘Priority Schools Building Programme’ for Alperton and Copland. Committee will consider the plans on expanding Brent schools. Report will be presented by Rik Boxer.</p>	<p>Report was noted by members of the committee.</p>	

	Analysis of educational achievement by ethnicity	Report focussing in particular on attainment levels of under achieving groups in the borough.	Report was noted by members of the committee. Copy of the work programme mentioned in 4.7 of the report was requested. Query about why the 'White other' group was not filtered down into further groups and why was there no analysis on the individual groups that fall into this category. Naureen to feedback and provide information requested	
Meeting Date	Item	Issue for committee to consider	Outcome	
19 July 2012	Brent Youth Parliament	The members of the Brent Youth Parliament will be invited to provide an update on their work since the committee last met, as well as to raise any issues of concern they would like the committee to consider.	BYP to be invited to contribute ideas to the committee's work programme.	
	Background of Auditing Practices in Brent	The chair has requested for a report on the auditing procedures and findings for Brent schools. In addition to this information regarding governing practices and support to governors has also been requested. Report will also include an outline of procedures with C&F to ensure probity and correct auditing procedures and policies are in place. Report will be presented by Mustafa Salih, AD Strategic Finance CF and Simon Lane, Head of Audit & Investigations.	Report was noted and an update report is submitted to committee in six months' time.	

	Safeguarding and LAC action plan/Adoption inspection and Adoption Scorecard update	Committee will be presented with an update on the action plan and an opportunity to scrutinise progress in its implementation. Report on the latest inspection of Adoption services will also be provided with an update on new Adoption scorecards. Report will be presented by Graham Genoni.	<p>The committee received an update from Hilary Brooks on the Adoption inspection and Adoption Scorecards and the report was noted. Members requested to know how many trans racial adoptions have taken place in Brent in the last 2 years.</p> <p>The Safeguarding and LAC action plan item was deferred to the October committee meeting.</p>	
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Meeting Date	Item	Issue for committee to consider	Outcome	
11 October 2012	Brent Youth Parliament	The members of the Brent Youth Parliament will be invited to provide an update on their work since the committee last met, as well as to raise any issues of concern they would like the committee to consider.		
	Safeguarding and LAC action plan	Committee will be presented with an update on the action plan and an opportunity to scrutinise progress in its implementation. Report will be presented by Graham Genoni. This item was deferred at the last meeting.		

	Impact and Service Improvement Report	Anna Janes to provide information and will present the report.		
	Child Poverty Strategy	Anna Janes to provide information and will present the report.		

Meeting Date	Item	Issue for committee to consider	Outcome	
11 December 2012	Brent Youth Parliament	The members of the Brent Youth Parliament will be invited to provide an update on their work since the committee last met, as well as to raise any issues of concern they would like the committee to consider.		
	Working with Families Initiative	Members to receive an update on how this is being progressed. Report to include an update on the restructure of the children's centres.		
	Review of young people's services	Committee to receive a report on the proposed restructure and how this will bring the different strands together.		
	Corporate Parenting	Report on our model of corporate parenting in comparison to other local authorities. Including reasons for our approach and details of member involvement in the process. Graham Genoni will present the report.		

Meeting Date	Item	Issue for committee to consider	Outcome	
12 February 2013	Brent Youth Parliament	The members of the Brent Youth Parliament will be invited to provide an update on their work since the committee last met, as well as to raise any issues of concern they would like the committee to consider.		
	Bullying in Schools	Request from BYP for the committee to request a report on how this is being tackled in Brent schools. A best practice presentation from a Brent school would be beneficial.		
	Youth Offending Task Group	Members to receive a progress update on the recommendations made by the task group.		
	Early Years Intervention Task Group	Members to receive a progress update on the recommendations made by the task group.		

Meeting Date	Item	Issue for committee to consider	Outcome	
20 March 2013	Brent Youth Parliament	The members of the Brent Youth Parliament will be invited to provide an update on their work since the		

	<p>Short breaks provision</p> <p>Services for SEN</p>	<p>committee last met, as well as to raise any issues of concern they would like the committee to consider.</p> <p>Committee to be presented with a report on how the provision for respite centres has been tackled and resolved.</p> <p>Committee to receive an update report following the changes that have been made to the service. How are we addressing the issue of placing children outside of the borough?</p>		
Items from the Forward Plan and Work Programme to be timetabled.				
The committee will be presented with a list of items related to children and young people's services on the Forward Plan, to decide whether there are any they wish to scrutinise. The committee's work programme will also be included on the meeting agenda				
Item	Issue for the committee to consider			
Domestic Violence – Children's Partnership Project	The committee will consider the Children's Partnership report on domestic violence in Brent, following up previous presentations to the committee on this issue.			
Youth service review update	As requested by the committee in October 2010, the committee will receive an update on the progress of the ongoing youth services review, being carried out by the Children's Trust Sub Group.			
Local Safeguarding Children's	Update report against the LSCB action plan goes to executive on 19			

Board (LSCB) Annual report April 2012	September 2012.	
Early Years	Committee to be presented with a report on how the provision for early years has changed and what these changes mean for Brent. Report will be from a policy perspective.	
Safeguarding Annual Report 2012	Committee will presented with a report and findings of the latest audits. Report will be presented by Graham Genoni.	
Educational Benefits of all through schools	Suggestion for a report covering the benefits and disadvantages of all through schools for members to consider.	
Adoption and Fostering annual report April 2011 to March 2012	Report goes to Executive on 19 September 2012. Main action of report is to increase recruitment and to move children out of Independent Fostering Agencies (IFS's)	
A plan for Children and Families in Brent (PSCFB) 2012-2015	Report on how Brent is will provide the support to ensure that children and young people in Brent are healthy and safe. The aim is to narrow the gap between those children who do well and those who need extra support to thrive. Report goes to Executive on 19 September 2012.	
Travel Plans and Parking Permits for schools	Report on the progress made on school travel planning, the process for school parking permits and future priorities.	

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