

Cllr. Bernstein: In helping to manage expectations could the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People share what she believes would be a good outcome from the expected Ofsted monitoring visit in October 2022?

Ofsted's next focused monitoring visit is regarding our children subject to Child Protection Planning, including our families subject to Pre-Proceedings framework. As part of our improvement journey so far, compliance of statutory performance in relation to assessments, visiting children, children's reviews and plans has been addressed to a satisfactory level

Key data:

- Current timeliness of visits – 89%
- Reviews – currently only 3 reviews outside of timescales
- Plans – every child has a CP plan in place
- CP over 2 yrs – reduced to 2 families, 3 children
- Planning over 18mths – 14 children

Ofsted will see compliance is now well monitored and the newly appointed Director of Practice has implemented a weekly accountability framework that drives performance in these areas. Strategic Leads are required to report on gaps in compliance and therefore all children are accounted for every week. There remains areas of concern that continues to fall short of expected standards, including Core Groups, Repeat Plans and ICPC timeliness.

Key data:

- Repeat planning - 33% which is too high
- ICPC timeliness – 58% which is too low

A newly devised dashboard showing team level data is addressed weekly as part of performance management and this area will need to improve Core Groups recording at pace.

The Quality Assurance Unit are not yet functioning to the level expected and being the drivers of progress. The Unit has audited all children over 12mths and inputted direction and management oversight to help drive planning better in the short term. A revised Dispute Resolution process will also be implemented prior to the next monitoring visit, further strengthening oversight of planning and identifying delays sooner.

In a recent audit of 22 case files, the progress of children was not evidenced and as a result, over half of the cohort audited were adjudged to have fallen below expected standards, with particular regard to quality of planning. Recording templates have been updated and training has been delivered to assist in breaking the mold of process driven planning to a more outcome focused social work practice.

Ofsted will note the progress in regard to building better scaffolding around child protection planning to improve outcomes.

- A new threshold framework has been agreed by the partnership, setting the expectations more clearly in relation to significant harm and Child Protection threshold.
- A new supervision template has been designed, alongside a new supervision framework, to better capture defensible decision making,

enabling line managers to better focus on impact, progress and outcomes for children.

- A New Quality assurance framework has been designed and implemented to better capture learning, and devise workstreams to close the loop.
- A newly devised strategy meeting and Sec 47 template now captures a child safety plan for every child at point of entry.
- A robust Pre-Proceedings framework. All new families made subject to Pre-Proceedings will adhere to this new framework.

Further work streams have been implemented alongside getting the basics right, including teaching days on outcome focused planning, better demonstrating how direct work and the voice of the child is informing our work and management oversight/supervision.

Ofsted will note that progress has been made in relation to compliance, meeting our basic statutory duties of children being assessed and visited in accordance with expected timescales and all children having a plan in place. Revised frameworks and standard setting will also be evident to support better practice.

Ofsted will note that progress of families remains inconsistent with drift and delay, but this drift and delay being noted and addressed. Planning remains inconsistent and task focused and is not yet outcome focused. There are too many families outside the 26 weeks of Pre-Proceedings timescales, although this is now closely monitored and being addressed as part of performance management. Social workers are receiving timely supervision, but this is not recorded on case files timeously and is inconsistent in quality, not driving planning for children as it should. Safety planning is evident on case files for recent new interventions but is not routinely completed as part of a defensible decision-making framework.

Recruitment remains a barrier to progress. An agreed re-structure, creating a direct line of sight and increasing social work capacity is still in consultation, but recruitment has begun in preparation for an increased establishment. Working with HR, Bury are now competitive in a very crowded market and are creative about recruitment. The rolling recruitment programme is attracting applicants, but not filling vacancies at the pace required. We have had some successes in converting agency staff to permanent staff and international recruitment is now being considered. There are currently four SWs with caseloads deemed too high. Two further agency staff have been recruited to enable a reduction and ensure caseloads are commensurate to enabling all standards to be met.