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CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

Day: Wednesday
Date: 6 March 2024
Time: 6.00 pm
Place: Committee Room 1 - Tameside One

Item No.	AGENDA	Page No
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest from members of the Scrutiny Panel.	
3.	MINUTES To approve as a correct record, the Minutes of the proceedings of the Children's Services Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 10 January 2024.	1 - 4
4.	OFSTED INSPECTION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES The Panel to meet Councillor Bill Fairfoull, Deputy Executive Leader (Children & Families); and Allison Parkinson, Director of Children's Services, to receive outcomes from the recent Ofsted inspection.	5 - 40
5.	CHILDREN'S PERFORMANCE The Panel to receive the Children's Services Performance and Quality Assurance Scorecard and a response to enquiries made against specific indicators from the meeting on 10 January 2024.	41 - 50
6.	SCRUTINY ANNUAL BUDGET LETTER The Chair to update members on the annual budget letter presented at the joint meeting of Executive Cabinet and Overview Panel on 14 February 2024.	51 - 54
7.	SCRUTINY ACTIVITY 2023/24 The Chair to present a summary of activity undertaken during the 2023/24 municipal year.	55 - 58
8.	CHAIR'S UPDATE The Chair to provide a verbal update on activity and future priorities for the Panel.	

From: Democratic Services Unit – any further information may be obtained from the reporting officer or from Paul Radcliffe, Policy and Strategy Lead, to whom any apologies for absence should be notified.

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9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that this is the last formal meeting of the Scrutiny Panel for the 2023/24 municipal year.

10. URGENT ITEMS

To consider any additional items the Chair is of the opinion shall be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

From: Democratic Services Unit – any further information may be obtained from the reporting officer or from Paul Radcliffe, Policy and Strategy Lead, to whom any apologies for absence should be notified.

Children's Services Scrutiny Panel 10 January 2024

Commenced: 6.00pm

Terminated: 7.40pm

Present: Councillors Roderick (Chair), Fitzpatrick, Howarth, Karim, Martin, McLaren, Owen, Robinson, T Smith

Apologies: Councillor Tilbrook

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted by members of the Scrutiny Panel.

35. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Panel held on 8 November 2023 were approved as a correct record.

36. SEND IMPROVEMENT

The Panel welcomed Councillor Leanne Feeley, Executive Member (Education & Achievement); Allison Parkinson, Director of Children's Services; and Jackie Ross, Interim Lead for SEND, to receive an update specific to the provision of SEND services and required improvements.

Members received a presentation that focused on the following areas:

- Context of the Local Area Partnership
- Recent changes to the local SEND system
- Plans for the next 12 months
- Planned improvements and key activities

It was reported that a SEND Partnership Board has been established, with an experienced independent chair, meeting for the first time in December 2023. The remit has widened and a focus is placed on strengthening partnerships and local area governance. The purpose is to ensure SEND and Alternative Provision arrangements are improved.

Members heard that a diagnostic review has been completed, with some of the recommendations taken forward and accountable to the SEND Area Improvement Board. Further detail touched on the statutory duties in relation to Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP), with data provided on the timeliness of EHCPs completed within 20 weeks. This shows that the gap between Tameside and the national average has improved. A quality assurance framework has been presented to the SEND Partnership Board regarding improved system oversight and sustainability.

Leadership and accountability for performance across SEND is being strengthened, with significant investment in SEND leadership and casework. A recovery plan was developed in October 2023 to address the backlog of annual reviews. Annual review improvement recommendations are now scrutinised by the Placement, Provision and Transport Panel. This provides multi-agency oversight, includes schools and bespoke post-16 plans.

It was reported that a lack of MDT response and gaps in the service offer were the biggest barriers to achieving ideal outcomes. The themes were drawn from case review workshops in April 2023, including 32 individual cases to assess outcomes for children and young people, enabling them to achieve their goals and aspirations.

Feedback from the parent/carer forum has shown that parental participation and satisfaction is improving but there is still some way to go. The increase in EHC needs and assessment referrals does show that there is a clear need to improve child and parental confidence in SEN support locally, with positive actions being taken with schools and partners to redefine and promote the graduated response.

Priority actions include the need to establish and promote closer working across the partnership and in ensuring improved SEN support and the graduated response have the impacts required in improving overall outcomes and to address future demand pressures. A breakdown was provided on plans for the next 12 months specific to 10 areas of weakness and the written statement of action.

A summary was provided on delivering better value (DBV) opportunities, key activities and work streams. This is focused around effective inclusion and transition and the system-wide approach needed in order to achieve sustainable outcomes and improvements. Information was also provided on the ongoing work and investment of health partners, CAMHS, the voluntary, community and faith sectors.

Reference was made to SEND improvement across the partnership, along with the challenges and solutions specific to Health and the management of demand and overspend within the high needs block.

Councillor Feeley and officers responded to a number of questions from the Panel on:

- The local offer, pathways, demand and support needs.
- The timeliness, backlogs and engagement with children and families.
- The impact of delays and backlogs on outcomes for children and young people.
- SEND provision at secondary level.
- Strategic priorities regarding alternative provision.
- The voice of children and opportunities for co-production within communities.

Actions: The points for action include:

- That SEND improvement remains as a key oversight priority for the Scrutiny Panel going into the 2024/25 municipal year.

37. RESPONSE TO LGSCO FOCUS REPORT

The Panel welcomed Councillor Leanne Feeley, Executive Member (Education & Achievement); and Allison Parkinson, Director of Children's Services, to receive a response to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Focus Report, Parent Power: learning from complaints about personal budgets, published November 2023.

38. CHILDREN'S PERFORMANCE

The Panel received the Children's Services Performance and Quality Assurance Scorecard and a response to enquiries made against specific indicators from the meeting on 8 November 2023.

Actions: The points for action include:

- The Scrutiny Panel to receive information at the next meeting, in response to enquiries made against specific performance indicators.

39. SCRUTINY MID-YEAR BUDGET LETTER

The Chair presented response letter sent to the First Deputy (Finance, Resources & Transformation); and the Director of Resources, following the mid-year budget update received on 6 November 2023.

40. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair updated members on:

- Scrutiny annual budget meetings arranged for 15 January 2024.
- LGA training sessions arranged for 6 February 2024 and 11 March 2024.
- Plans to be made for the next Scrutiny Panel meeting, with a focus on outcomes from the recent Ofsted of Children's Services

41. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the next meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Panel will take place on Wednesday 6 March 2024.

42. URGENT ITEMS

The Chair reported that there were no urgent items for consideration at this meeting.

CHAIR

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Tameside Children's Social Care



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Improvement Plan



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Introduction

It is of the utmost importance to us that we provide high quality services that are safe, effective and ensures support for our children, young people and their families enabling them to flourish and succeed.

Our vision is that all children, young people and families in Tameside have the best start in life to grow, thrive and achieve their best outcomes.

We will only be successful in achieving this ambition if our organisations and communities work together to improve the wellbeing and quality of life for our children and young people across our borough.

We are determined to continue to improve our services for our most vulnerable children, young people and families. With our partners we are committed to ensuring all our children have the best possible start in life. We believe that children should grow and achieve within their own families when it is safe for them to do so. We are committed to working together to make sure our children and young people are safe and able to reach their full potential and they remain at the heart of everything we do.

The judgement received in December 2023 was that Tameside's Children services is Inadequate.

The findings of our Ofsted Inspection in December 2023 demonstrated that progress had been made since August 2023 with the right areas for improvement being prioritised and a more systematic approach to improvement.

Ofsted feedback was that swift and decisive action had been taken in some areas to improve management oversight and raise the quality of social work practice. They told us that with our QA and Performance management frameworks and our approach at Brilliant at the Basics we have the right plans in place but that we now need to drive these at pace to deliver better outcomes for children and their families.

- Impact of Leaders on Social Work Practice – Inadequate
- Experience and Progress of Children in need of Help and Protection – Inadequate
- Experience and Progress of Children in Care – Inadequate
- Experience and Progress of Care Leavers – Requires Improvement to be Good.

We accept their findings that further work needs to be done and will work with tenacity and commitment to improve outcomes for the children of Tameside.



This refreshed Improvement Plan sets out what we will focus on over the next two years to achieve our vision and improve how we work with, understand and support children and families to be the best that we can be, building on what we know needs to improve from a range of evidence. The plan:

- Includes areas for improvement from inspections and our Improvement Notice of July 2022
- Reflects clear links to Tameside’s plan, and other key strategies and plans for children’s services
- Will adapt according to new external and internal drivers and areas for improvement, such as new legislation, local changes and new areas for improvement. This will enable us to ensure we are tenacious in focusing on the right things in a timely manner
- Is set out in four priority areas from which we will have shorter term six week ‘obsessions’ on specific actions that are the most critical for that period.

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This plan will help shape the future development of other key documents including the following:

- The Corporate Plan**
- Corporate Parenting Strategy**
- Early Help Strategy 2023-26**
- SEND Improvement Plan**
- Placement Sufficiency Statement Action Plan**
- Priority Education Improvement Area Delivery Plan**
- Community Safety Strategy**
- Youth Justice Strategy**

- Tameside Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021-26**
- Multi Agency Neglect Strategy 2019-22**
- Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Transformation Plan 2015-20**
- Workforce Development Strategy**

Whilst our initial focus is to directly address our four Ofsted areas for improvement; our ambition is to continue to build upon the work we have already undertaken across all of our services so that we achieve the best start for all our children, young people and families.

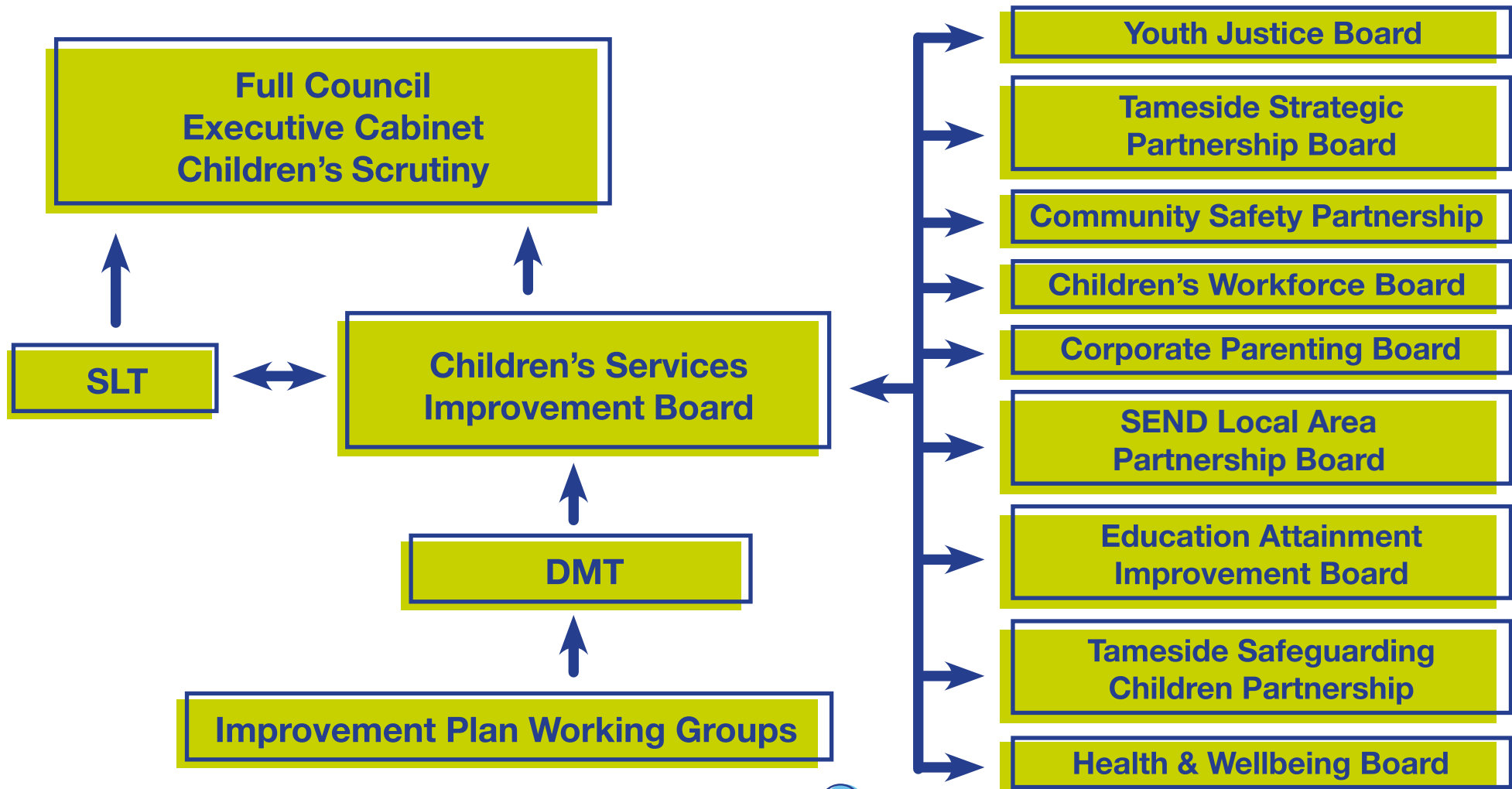
The DCS and AD of Children’s Social Care been in post for 6 months and their continued leadership will bring continuity of message and culture. Two new ADs in the service will bring new insight and experience to enhance the improvement journey. We recognise the importance of continuity of leadership in our improvement journey so will work towards a consistent and stable approach.

Funding from the Council has been received to continue our improvement journey, however, as a consequence of the cost of living crisis and the impact of the current inflationary challenges faced nationally Tameside Council is facing significant financial pressures. We will carefully monitor the impact of these to ensure the success of this improvement plan.

The Corporate Parenting Board captures and shares our continued commitment to improve for all our children, young people and their families. This Improvement Plan is led by the Director of Children’s Services and is supported across the Council, partners and with collaboration from our children, young people and their families.



Governance Framework



Priorities, Goals, Principles & Values

Our People – Our Place – Our Plan - For Everyone Every Day

Our vision is that all children, young people and families in Tameside have the best start in life, to grow, thrive and achieve their best outcomes. Tameside partners and communities work together to co-ordinate services to demonstrate improved overall wellbeing and quality of life for our children.

Our Priorities

- 1. Quality of Practice:** Children and young people receive a consistently good service: We have an environment where outstanding practice flourishes.
- 2. Working in Partnership:** The views, experiences and engagement with children and young people, their parents and our partners drive us to achieve success, together.
- 3. Commissioning and Sufficiency:** We have the right resources in the right place to meet the needs of the children and families we work with.
- 4. Leadership and Workforce:** We lead well, inspiring and supporting staff to be the best that we can be.

Our Goals

- Children and young people remain safely with their families
- Where children and young people cannot remain with their family they are placed close to home and are able to remain within their communities and support networks (where appropriate) ensuring meaningful relationships are maintained
- Families receive the right support at the right time, the first time, and in the most effective way
- Children and young people (including children with special educational needs and disabilities and our children in care) have their physical, emotional and mental health needs met
- Children and young people feel supported into adulthood and know all of the information they need to about themselves and their lives
- Children and young people are supported into education, employment or training
- Children and young people are consulted and directly involved in planning
- Children and young people's wishes and views are heard, understood and acted upon
- Our services are co-produced with our service users (children and families) to ensure best fit for them

Our Principles and Values

- Always listen and respond to the voices of children and families
- Help children and families to develop their own solutions and be ambitious advocates for them
- All agencies work together through a multi-agency co-ordinated response for children and young people
- We use practice model to consistently assess risks, concerns and identify solutions with families
- Everyone understands our practice framework and uses our thresholds consistently so that we offer the right help at the right time, locally, at the earliest opportunity to deliver impact and change for children and families
- We will use meaningful measures to demonstrate the quality of the work we do
- Our leaders are strong, visible and engaged with practice and practitioners
- We will equip children's services leaders to drive improvement across the service
- We are persistent and curious – our workforce are confident, assured and take action to keep children safe
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility – we will always keep our focus on the child

Our Improvement Plan

This high level Improvement Plan is set to outline our priorities moving forward with each improvement activity being linked to a measurable impact. We have identified four priorities for improvement; **1) Quality of Practice, 2) Working in Partnership, 3) Commissioning and Sufficiency, 4) Leadership and Workforce.** Our priorities are underpinned by 13 focus areas which are outlined in the delivery and service plans.

All our improvements link to the Ofsted judgement areas and have a dedicated sponsor to own and drive forward the improvement activity. They are supported by key members of staff who will develop and embed the changes required. The sponsors for each priority will report quarterly to the Children’s Improvement Board.

Ensuring we work with the voices of our children and families at the heart of what we do remains a top priority.

Experience and Progress of Children in need of Help and Protection	Experience of Cared for Children	Experience and Progress of Care Leavers	Impact of Leaders on Social Work Practice
FA1: The Voice of Children and Families			
FA2: Collaborative working with partners			
FA3: Identifying, assessing and managing risk	FA6: Effective placement matching	FA8: Consistency of support and pathway plans for care leavers	FA9: Governance and leadership
FA4: Practice framework (including Thresholds and timeliness)	FA7: Children in specific circumstances		FA10: Practice evaluation & performance management
FA5: Plans and Timeliness			FA11: Supervision and management oversight
			FA12: Recruiting and retaining a stable permanent workforce
			FA13: Data and Systems

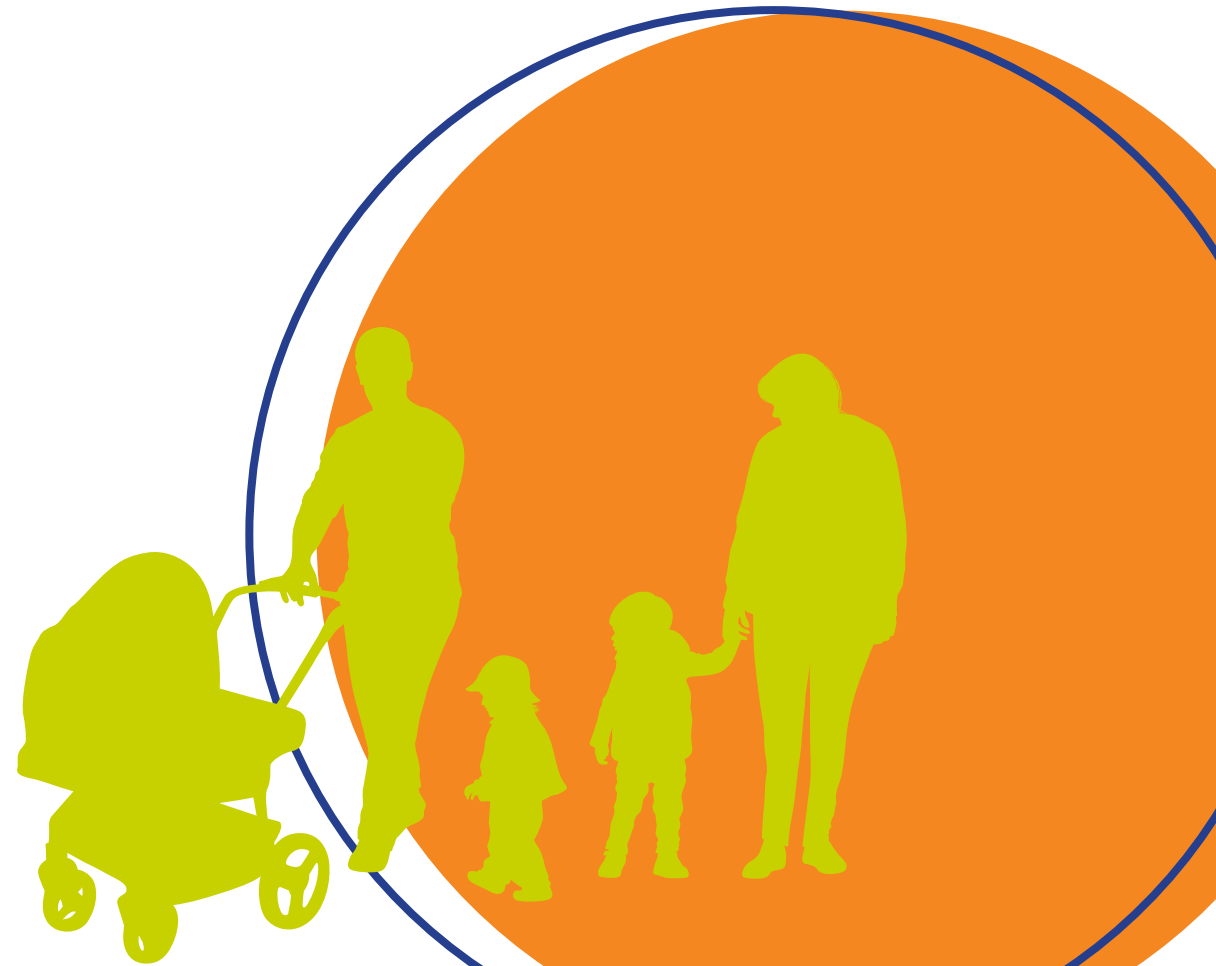
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Detailed Delivery and Business Plans

This improvement plan is supported by a detailed delivery plan and individual business plans which outline what specific activity/ actions are being undertaken and the quality and impact measures, in order to deliver the overall outcomes for children and young people in Tameside. The delivery plan addresses the four priority areas for improvement developed based on feedback from Ofsted

Business plans are set out to address all activity required to achieve operational change and to address everyday business as usual activity.

In developing the delivery plan each priority sponsor has worked with the Improvement Programme Team to develop detailed delivery plan with clear actions, leads and timeline for delivery. The delivery plan details the breakdown of activity with timeframes, measures and performance data for each of our goals.



Assuring the Quality and Impact of our Work

Everything we do, our leadership, procedures, measures and learning must always focus on what practitioners actually do with children and families, and what the quality and impact of that work is. We collect and measure enormous amounts of data, and whilst we know we have improved upon our ability to analyse what we collect, we also know that we can use data to even greater effect to drive improvements in the quality of practice.

We continue to strengthen our approach to quality assurance to ensure measures are meaningful to the people who do the work, supports learning and improves practice. Going forward our Quality Assurance System encompasses:

- Collaborative case audit,
- Dashboard to monitor application of our practice framework in individual case management;
- Children, young people, parents/carers staff feedback and feedback from partners on practice and organisational fit and leadership respectively;
- Core data for monitoring specific goals, case trends and outcomes with a small set of key indicators that are already collected.

Through our quality assurance activities we will demonstrate we understand ourselves and the difference we are making to the lives of children, young people, families and carers through good use of data, information, children, young people and family feedback, compliments and complaints – always asking ‘how can we make things better?’ and being curious and innovative in our practice.



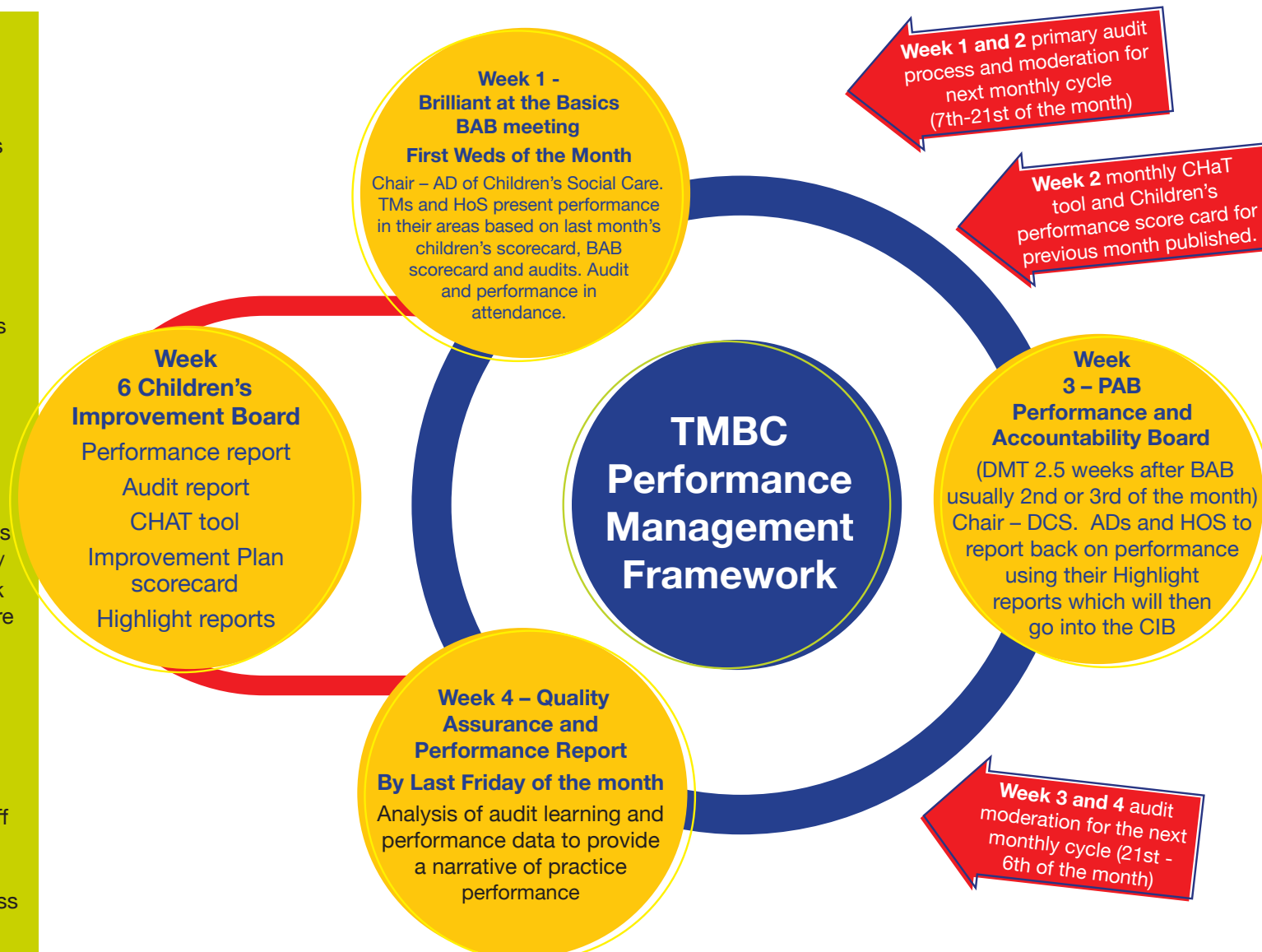
Our Performance and Assurance Cycle

Practice Improvement Activity

Collaborative Audits
 Thematic Audits
 Quarterly Practice Week
 Peer reviews
 Internal reflective practice discussions
 Rapid Reviews
 Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews
 National thematic learning reports
 Feedback from Children and families
 Feedback from IRO/CP chairs
 Feedback from Children in Care Council
 CAFCASS and feedback from proceedings
 Complaints and compliments
 Exit interviews / staff feedback
 Staff performance management process
 Panel meetings

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Performance Inputs

Children's Scorecard
 Improvement Board Scorecard
 Brilliant at the Basics (BAB) Scorecard
 ChAT (Annex A data report)
 Whole Service Data book
 Whole Service Data Quality Report
 Annex A Child Level Data and Data quality lists
 Daily and Weekly data reports
 Business Object Reporting (moving towards operational dashboards)
 Highlight reports
 Audit Report
 Inspection and feedback
 Safeguarding Learning Reviews
 CSC learning case reviews

Our Improvement Plan

1: QUALITY OF PRACTICE

Lead: Assistant Director, Children's Social Care (Alison Montgomery)

Ref.	Actions	How will we know?	Lead	Start Date	End Date	What our children will say	Action RAG	Impact RAG	Commentary
Application of Thresholds									
1.1	Ensure effective application of thresholds and intervention across the partnership, recognising risk, to achieve best outcomes for children. FV2	<p>Performance data and QA audit activity will demonstrate that children are referred to the appropriate level of service to meet their identified needs.</p> <p>Performance data and QA audit activity will demonstrate robust decision making in accordance with multi-agency effective support (thresholds) framework.</p> <p>Thresholds are applied consistently across the partnership.</p> <p>Performance data and QA audit will demonstrate that strategy meetings and subsequent enquiries will be high quality, timely and consistent.</p>	TSCP Independent Scrutineer	Sep 23	Apr 24	Children and their families will say they feel safe and supported and that everyone is working together to make sure the outcome is best for the child.			The consistency of applying thresholds require strengthening at pace. The threshold document is to be reviewed and revised by TCSP. DCS working with Chair to strengthen impact.

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Ref.	Actions	How will we know?	Lead	Start Date	End Date	What our children will say	Action RAG	Impact RAG	Commentary
Front Door / MASH									
1.2	<p>Develop a consistent, high quality, multi-agency front door to effectively identify children who need help and protection, to ensure the right intervention at the right time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear lines of management accountability and responsibility. • Appropriate staffing and resources to deliver the service. • Delegation of decision making in response to contacts and referrals. • Use of the RAG rated system. • Multi-agency involvement in initial screening and decision making. • Practice regarding multi-agency strategy meetings and/vs the use of risk management meetings. 	<p>External review and internal oversight will confirm if changes evidence a positive impact on the provision of the service</p> <p>The service is fully staffed and able to meet the demands of the front door.</p> <p>There are effective initial responses for our children and young people.</p> <p>Children and young people at risk of harm are identified at the earliest opportunity to keep them safe.</p> <p>The history of children is gathered and used to inform next steps for children and young people.</p> <p>Timeliness and quality of strategy meetings is good and child focused.</p> <p>There is an effective multiagency response when children go missing from home or care.</p> <p>Assessments are effective at identifying all children's needs and risks.</p> <p>Children aged 16 to 17 years old who present as homeless have their needs fully assessed and met.</p>	AD Children's Social Care	Sep 23	Mar 24	Children will say I know that the right decisions are made for me at the right time and I understand why these decisions have been made.			Progress against the plan not as expected. Additional capacity to review policies and practice in MASH to strengthen offer. MASH Strategic Board established to strengthen the quality of referrals, information sharing and multiagency holding of risk.

Ref.	Actions	How will we know?	Lead	Start Date	End Date	What our children will say	Action RAG	Impact RAG	Commentary
Practice Basics									
1.3	<p>Embed practice standards to improve the quality and consistency of practice to create a “Brilliant at the Basics” approach. ILAC, FV1, FV2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessments • Visits to children • Voice of the child • Plans • Chronology • Supervision • Management Oversight 	<p>Social work practice will consistently be of a high standard and compliant with guidance.</p> <p>Assessments and Plans will be of high quality and will clearly demonstrate the voice of the child.</p> <p>Systems will show clear chronology and be updated in a timely manner.</p> <p>Staff will have regular supervision with clear outcomes and learning areas.</p> <p>Our practice will be timely and consistent.</p> <p>Children and young people will say that their plans clearly show their wishes and feelings and that they feel listened to.</p> <p>Analysis of concerns will be consistent, identifying risks and needs of the children to ensure the right interventions at the right time.</p>	AD Children’s Social Care	Aug 23	Sept 24	Children will say that they feel secure and are part of a happy family.			Evidence that practice is improving. However, work to do show this is consistently and fully embedded. Robust senior oversight of 3 task and finish groups: Practice model; Practice Standards and Brilliant at the basics.



Ref.	Actions	How will we know?	Lead	Start Date	End Date	What our children will say	Action RAG	Impact RAG	Commentary
Child Protection and Child in Need									
1.4	Child Protection Planning is timely and effective and keeps children safe.	<p>Initial and Review Child Protection Conferences will be timely, multi-agency and demonstrate the voice of the child</p> <p>Child Protection Plans will be of a high quality and reviewed in line with practice standards</p> <p>Risks and needs of children will be consistently recognised to ensure plans are timely and effective and children are receiving the right intervention at the right time.</p> <p>Children and families will have a copy of their Child Protection Plans and will be able to articulate the changes requires and safety plan.</p>	AD Children's Social Care	Feb 24	Aug 24	Children will say I know the right decisions and made for me at the time and I understand why these decision have been made.			



Ref.	Actions	How will we know?	Lead	Start Date	End Date	What our children will say	Action RAG	Impact RAG	Commentary
1.5	<p>All plans to include clear evaluation of educational attainment and progress and identify the steps being taken to improve overall outcomes for children and young people</p> <p>ILAC</p>	<p>Virtual school and health partners are a visible part of a child's network .</p> <p>Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are done within required timescales and are of good quality (termly).</p> <p>Health Assessments and Strength and Difficulty Questionnaires (SDQs) are in the PEP's actions.</p> <p>C&YP who are Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) will have robust NEET planning which is reviewed in accordance with NEET strategy.</p> <p>All children with a social worker who receive their education at home will have an evaluation of the appropriateness of the education provided and how this is supporting good educational outcomes.</p> <p>Clear plans are in place for children with a social worker who are on reduced education timetable to ensure educational outcomes are well supported.</p> <p>Ensure the virtual school is working collaboratively with education establishments to implement more systematic and rigorous systems to support the needs of children more effectively.</p>	AD Education	Sep 23	Jun 24	<p>Children will say that Tameside Council cares about their education and their future ambitions and goals.</p> <p>Children will know we are aspirational for them, understand their individual needs and work hard to help them gain their best opportunities.</p> <p>Young people will know we are working with them to help them find the best opportunities for their next steps, that the services work together to ensure we are focused on creating opportunities and supporting young people on their pathway.</p>			The impact of actions in relation to PEP quality and timeliness are not yet embedded. There will be a review of action and measures for impact against the Improvement Plan.

Ref.	Actions	How will we know?	Lead	Start Date	End Date	What our children will say	Action RAG	Impact RAG	Commentary
1.6	To re-launch the Public Law Outline (PLO) process and ensure plans are of good quality with timely implementation during pre-proceedings ILAC, FV1	<p>Legal services report good quality and timely evidence provided.</p> <p>Fewer children enter the care of the Local Authority as a result of robust PLO planning and intervention.</p> <p>Performance scorecard enables effective management oversight to strengthen pre-proceedings through improved tracking and the implementation of multi-agency legal gateway meetings, providing uniformity in decision making.</p> <p>Effective and timely PLO pre-proceedings enables quicker decisions about children's permanence.</p>	AD Children's Social Care	Oct 23	May 24	Children and families will be well informed and understand the decision making process. They will say their plan is easy to understand.			Strengthen data to support delivery of improvement, including additional system development.



Ref.	Actions	How will we know?	Lead	Start Date	End Date	What our children will say	Action RAG	Impact RAG	Commentary
Care Leavers									
1.7	<p>Use practice improvement sessions and strengthened management oversight to improve the quality of pathway plans.</p> <p>Ensure pathway plans are purposeful, outcome focused and co-produced with young people to drive best outcomes for their futures.</p> <p>Ensure all cared for children have pathway plans from 16years. ILAC</p> <p>Care leavers to receive consistent, high quality support and guidance, ensuring changing needs and risks are fully explored and understood.</p>	<p>Effective pathway plans and reviews evidence how we are ambitious for all of our care experienced adults, they have suitable accommodation, are in education, training and employment, and are free of debt.</p> <p>Performance data demonstrates we are in touch with our care leavers (% Performance measure)</p> <p>Care Leavers will have knowledge of health passport at final health assessment.</p> <p>Care leavers will feel well supported with their emotional health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Care leavers have good relationships with their Personal Advisors and are visited regularly. They feel that their voice is heard and feel ready for independence.</p> <p>Disabled care-experienced young people have their needs understood and are visited regularly.</p> <p>Care leavers understand their entitlements and know how to provide feedback.</p> <p>Care leavers feel ready for living independently.</p>	<p>AD Children's Social Care</p> <p>HOS cared for Children</p>	Sep 23	Jun 24	<p>Young people will say they feel well supported and have a clear plan for their future.</p> <p>Young people will know what they are entitled to when leaving care.</p> <p>Young people will know that we are here to support them and will have ownership of their individual pathway plans that will help them gain confidence to grow into adulthood.</p>			

Ref.	Actions	How will we know?	Lead	Start Date	End Date	What our children will say	Action RAG	Impact RAG	Commentary
Children in specific circumstances									
1.8	Embed a clear practice framework for children and young people at risk of exploitation.	<p>Risk will be managed, and good outcomes will be achieved for children who are at risk of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) via robust contextual safeguarding planning.</p> <p>Performance data will ensure children at most risk of CCE are tracked and appropriate interventions in place including return home interviews and multi-agency risk management plans.</p>	AD Children's Social Care	Sep 23	Feb 24	<p>Our children and young people will say they feel safe and know that that their social worker is doing all they can to support them.</p> <p>Children will feel listened to and say they can trust and confide in their social worker to keep them safe.</p>			
1.9	Review the practice and outcomes of the children with disabilities service to improve practice ILAC19&21	<p>Deep dive and dip sampling of files will identify areas of strength and areas for improvement which will inform service and team plans.</p> <p>Social workers are confident in using alternative communication tools to understand the experiences of disabled children</p> <p>Monthly audits will evidence how planning for children with special educational needs and disabilities supports good outcomes.</p> <p>Performance data and QA will evidence that personal advisors will visit regularly and demonstrate an understanding of their needs.</p>	AD Children's Social Care	Nov 23	Jun 24	<p>Children and young people will say that their needs have been understood and their outcomes are achievable for them.</p> <p>Children will see that we take care to make sure that when we see we need to make improvements we make sure we do this in a timely way and hold their experience in our minds to ensure we all learn together.</p>			Further work required to improve practice in this area.

Ref.	Actions	How will we know?	Lead	Start Date	End Date	What our children will say	Action RAG	Impact RAG	Commentary
1.10	Improvement Board receive assurance of the implementation of the SEND improvement plan.	There will be clear governance and accountability for service improvement	AD Education	Oct 23	Apr 24	Children and their families will see that their Education and Health Care plans are focused and led with pace and care. That services work together to ensure we give children the best opportunities to grow and we are aspirational in our approach.			SEND Improvement Plan has secured additional capacity to develop and implement at pace.



2: WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Lead: AD Children's Social Care (Alison Montgomery)

Ref.	Actions	How will we know?	Lead	Start Date	End Date	What our children will say	Action RAG	Impact RAG	Commentary
Partner Organisations and Services									
2.1	Work with Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to develop the strategic and operational relationship to ensure timely engagement in CP assessment and planning. ILAC, FV1, FV2	There will be evidence of working together to jointly input into child protection assessments in a timely effective way.	AD Quality and Improvement	Oct 23	Nov 23	Children and young people will say they know all professionals are working together to ensure they are safe and that the right decision has been made for them.			Strategic and operational MASH meetings now in place to strengthen the quality of referrals, information sharing and multiagency holding of risk, need and harm.
2.2	Work with partners to develop robust tracking and ensure initial and review health assessments for cared for children are completed within timescale, with particular attention to initial health assessments ILAC, FV1	Performance scorecard will demonstrate timely referrals and assessments that are completed on time for both IHA and RHA Audit data will demonstrate how IHA and RHA ensure cared for children's health needs are consistently met and identify any areas requiring improvement.	AD Children's Social Care Tameside Safeguarding Children's Partnership	Oct 23	Dec 23	Children and young people will say that we understand their health needs and are able to provide support for their health & wellbeing including emotional support.			Further work required to ensure the timeliness of Initial Health Assessments.

Ref.	Actions	How will we know?	Lead	Start Date	End Date	What our children will say	Action RAG	Impact RAG	Commentary
2.3	Work with Adult services to proactively plan and prepare young people who will require support from adult social care so that they have the appropriate provision and services in place.	Young people will live in accommodation suitable for their needs and receive the right support at the right time from a multi-agency perspective.	AD Adults AD Children's Social Care AD Education	Nov 23	Mar 24	Young people will say they live in accommodation that suits their needs and circumstances and they are well supported.			
Voice of Child and Family									
2.4	Ensure parents, carers, children & young people's feedback and engagement is central to our understanding to how effective our front line work is.	There will be two way engagement with children & young people who are service users, using digital means there will be an improvement in the attendance at Children in Care Council (CICC), Youth Council, Schools, Young Carers, Care Leaver Forum.	AD Quality and Improvement	Oct 23	Jun 24	Children and families will say that their input is valuable and that it drives best practice and good outcomes for children. Children and young people will say they feel listened to and regularly meet with leaders to share their lived experience.			Progress delayed against original timelines. Implement the strategy and further develop the link with partners to provide oversight and grip.
2.5	All children receive life story work consistent with good practice expectations, evidenced on children's files and confirmed by audit. ILAC	Participation work with children and young people evidences the impact of life story work.	AD Quality and Improvement	Nov 23	Jun 24	Children will know their journey and will have access to all the information they need to help them understand why decisions were made. Children will say they don't have to keep repeating their story, but we hold their stories with care.			Progress delayed against the original timelines. Additional capacity now in place with working group established to implement the delivery plan.

3: COMMISSIONING AND SUFFICIENCY

Lead: Head of Commissioning (Mark Love)

Ref.	Actions	How will we know?	Lead	Start Date	Start Date	What our children will say	Action RAG	Impact RAG	Commentary
Achieving Permanence									
3.1	Revise placement sufficiency strategy and commissioning activities to increase placement quality and choice. FV1	<p>There will be an increased choice of placements that will ensure better matching to meet the needs of the children.</p> <p>Performance data will evidence stability and permanence.</p> <p>Fewer children and young people will be residing in unregulated placements.</p>	Head of Commissioning	Sep 23	Jun 24	<p>Children and young people will have a stable and secure home that is suitable for their needs.</p> <p>Children will say that we try hard to keep children in the borough when they cannot stay in their family and family network.</p> <p>Children will say that the care they are receiving is the best it can be.</p>			
3.2	Expand the range of accommodation and services that are available to our care leavers to provide high quality support and preparation for adulthood.	<p>Supported accommodation commissioned for our cared for children and 16+ care leavers .</p> <p>Reduction in use of temporary and unregistered accommodation.</p>	Head of Commissioning	Sep 23	Dec 25	<p>Young people will feel supported in their transition to adulthood and will have options to choose from that suit their needs and circumstances.</p>			

Ref.	Actions	How will we know?	Lead	Start Date	End Date	What our children will say	Action RAG	Impact RAG	Commentary
Fostering									
3.3	<p>Streamline the foster carer recruitment process to accelerate the recruitment and assessment of foster carers and ensure the foster care offer is competitive for the local market.</p> <p>Review the timeliness and quality of the induction, training and review of foster carer agreements.</p>	<p>Timeliness of the assessment and approval process will improve.</p> <p>Tameside provide a competitive offer to new and existing foster carers improving year on year net increase in the number of in-house foster placements available.</p> <p>Ensure the use of foster care agreements with clear expectations and carers held to account regarding the quality of care.</p>	AD Quality and Improvement	Nov 23	May 24	Children will say they have been able to remain close to their friends and family.			Fostering requires strengthening at pace. Clear delivery plan in place to further improve recruitment and foster care offer.
3.4	<p>Review and update the support offer to foster carers and children to increase in-house capacity to care for children and young people.</p>	<p>There will be increased choices and availability for children and young people with specific therapeutic needs.</p> <p>Fewer children and young people will be residing in unregulated placements.</p>	<p>AD Children's Social Care</p> <p>Head of Commissioning</p>	Nov 23	May 24	<p>Children will feel supported by carers who understand their lived experience and help them to settle with great care.</p> <p>Children will feel when things are difficult we are able to provide good support to help them.</p>			Fostering requires strengthening at pace. Clear delivery plan in place to further improve recruitment and foster care offer.

Ref.	Actions	How will we know?	Lead	Start Date	End Date	What our children will say	Action RAG	Impact RAG	Commentary
Permanency									
3.5	<p>Develop a robust performance data system to ensure a plan for children's permanency is evidenced by second review or before. ILAC</p> <p>Ensure timely, authoritative assessments and ambitious plans for children to secure permanence at the earliest opportunity.</p>	<p>Performance data will demonstrate placement stability for cared for children who experience fewer placement moves.</p> <p>Placement tracking will ensure timely searches for placement and review of unregulated placements</p> <p>Deep dive audits will evidence placement matching and decision making for cared for children.</p> <p>Performance data will evidence how matching procedures ensure permanence is secured for children in long term foster care</p> <p>A1, A10 A20 performance data will demonstrate timely adoption for children whose permanence is secured via adoption in line with national average.</p>	HOS Cared for Children	Sep 23	Apr 24	<p>Children will say that they feel secure and are part of a happy family.</p> <p>Children will say they know that they are cared about, because managers know their personal story's and ensure they help children return home where it safe to do so, stay in their family network, or find their forever family that meets their personal timeframe.</p> <p>Children will say that managers create meaningful measures that keep them safe, and ensure that their lived experience is recorded in way they can understand in their personal children files.</p>			



4: LEADERSHIP AND WORKFORCE

Lead: Director of Children's Services (Allison Parkinson)

Ref.	Actions	How will we know?	Lead	Start Date	End Date	What our children will say	Action RAG	Impact RAG	Commentary
Strategic Leadership									
4.1	Ensure the Leadership of the Council including all Directors, Members and senior leaders make an effective contribution to driving the improvement plan and provision of support from the wider infrastructure of the Council and partners. ILAC,FV1,FV2	The Leadership of the Council including CEX, Lead Member and DCS recognise and prioritise the needs of children and this is reflected in corporate decision making, scrutiny activities and activity of the Improvement Board.	Lead Member TMBC CEO and DCS	Sep 23	Mar 24	Children and young people will say I know that everyone in Tameside have listened to what Ofsted said and agreed to make things better as quickly as possible in a way that will make all their services good in future and my experience has improved as a result.			
4.2	Develop a governance structure that enables senior leaders and Members to drive improvement outcomes for children including Corporate Parenting Board (CPB), Improvement Board and Scrutiny Committee	Senior leaders and Members will demonstrate good oversight, challenge and support to achieving best outcomes for children.	DCS SLT Head of Transformation	Sep 23	Dec 23	Children and young people will say the people leading the council know about their lives.			

Ref.	Actions	How will we know?	Lead	Start Date	End Date	What our children will say	Action RAG	Impact RAG	Commentary
4.3	Undertake scrutiny and assurance development session with key political and corporate leaders ILAC,FV1,FV2	Senior leaders and Lead Members understand the experience of children receiving support services in Tameside.	DCS SLT AD People and Workforce Development Improvement Lead	Sep 23	Mar 24				
4.4	Ensure clear link between Childrens Improvement Plan and Safeguarding Partnership to improve outcomes for children.	Strategic links in place achieved by clear governance. Appropriate policies will be in place Multi-agencies working in partnership to implement policies.	DCS Chair of Safeguarding Board Chair of SEND Improvement Board and Chair of Improvement Board	Sep 23	Apr 24				DCS working with independent Chair to strengthen the partnership at pace.
Operational Leadership and Management Grip									
4.5	Practice learning workshops will be delivered for all staff across children's services to ensure the Practice framework is known, understood and implemented consistently across the workforce	The outcome of practice audits evidence improvement across all areas. Our workforce describe and evidence understanding of the framework Data will evidence that every member of our workforce has completed training to enable them to implement the practice framework.	Head of Quality Assurance & Audit	Oct 23	Mar 24	Children and young people will feel confident that their Social Worker has the appropriate knowledge and skills to support them in making positive outcomes			Evidence that practice is improving. However, work to do show this is consistently and fully embedded. Robust senior oversight of 3 task and finish groups: Practice model; Practice Standards and Brilliant at the basics.

Ref.	Actions	How will we know?	Lead	Start Date	End Date	What our children will say	Action RAG	Impact RAG	Commentary
4.6	Use performance and accountability processes alongside practice development workshops to drive improved management oversight and decision making ILAC,FV1	<p>Children's files will consistently provide demonstrable evidence of critical reflection, hypothesis, support and challenge to ensure practice is consistently good and better.</p> <p>Progression of children's plans will be evidenced and demonstrate how best outcomes have been achieved.</p> <p>Case file audits will evidence consistently good practice.</p> <p>Social care staff will describe the impact and difference good management support is making to their practice.</p>	DMT	Oct 23	Mar 24	Children and young people will say I know that services are working to the best standard possible and my social worker works with others to make things better when they need to.			Processes are now in place, requires longer to demonstrate more significant impact.
4.7	Implement a Quality Assurance framework that delivers high quality program of reliable audit and learning activities that creates culture of learning and accountability	<p>Monthly audits will evidence improved practice as a result of clear actions and evaluation of the outcomes via closing of the learning loop.</p> <p>Deep dive and thematic audits will provide direct line of sight as of the quality of practice to Senior Leaders together with the Improvement Board and inform practice improvement activity.</p> <p>Thematic learning from monthly audits will contribute to systemic improvements across children's and inform commissioning of training services.</p> <p>Learning from QA activity (including child practice reviews and section 11 audits) will be used to inform training and development programme for the workforce.</p>	HoS Quality Assurance Chair of Safeguarding Board	Sep 23	Jan 24	Children and young people will say that the help and support they get from their social worker is getting better.			Processes are now in place, requires longer to demonstrate more significant impact.

Ref.	Actions	How will we know?	Lead	Start Date	End Date	What our children will say	Action RAG	Impact RAG	Commentary
4.8	Clearly defined first and second tier management roles and responsibilities to empower and support operational managers to succeed in delivery and a culture of continuous improvement.	<p>Learning from QA activity evidencing scrutiny and supportive challenge from managers.</p> <p>Managers operating within the delegated duties framework and have clear accountable tasks.</p> <p>Manager feedback / employee survey.</p> <p>Delivery of business plans. Service specific performance indicators.</p>	DMT	Nov 23	Jun 24	Children and young people will say I know that managers in children's services know how good our services really are and make sure they are always of high quality.			Increase the pace of activity to ensure structures and roles meet the needs of the service, including implementing the training offer.
4.9	Work in collaboration with the corporate improvement team to drive forward the actions set out in our improvement plan to ensure the progress continues at pace with dedicated project management resource	<p>Change and improvements are driven effectively.</p> <p>Performance data demonstrate that the improvements are having a positive impact.</p> <p>Each service to have a delivery plan, with SMART actions and accountability to prioritise the right areas for improvement.</p>	Head of Transformation	Sep 23	Jun 24				Strengthen performance data. Additional capacity has been secured and working with the AD of digital to develop automated solutions.



Ref.	Actions	How will we know?	Lead	Start Date	End Date	What our children will say	Action RAG	Impact RAG	Commentary
Workforce									
4.10	Develop a Children's Workforce Board to implement the Children's workforce strategy to improve staff retention and recruitment. ILAC, FV1	<p>Number of permanent social workers will increase.</p> <p>There will be a reduction in number of changes of social workers for children</p> <p>Career pathway is clear and demonstrates progression routes for all social care staff.</p> <p>Staff are inducted well and have regular effective performance conversations in supervisions.</p> <p>Outcomes in line with our workforce development strategy will be achieved to support recruitment and retention.</p>	AD People and Workforce Development DCS	Oct 23	June 24	Children will say they feel confident that their Social Worker will be consistent and remain un-changed			
4.11	Review capacity in the service to ensure the resources are deployed to enable the most effective support at the appropriate level needed, creating a stable supportive workforce. ILAC, FV2	<p>Caseloads will be maintained within the caseload policy thus enabling good purposeful social work interventions that provide positive outcomes for children.</p> <p>Data demonstrates timely interventions at appropriate levels.</p> <p>Strengthen the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) social worker standards.</p>	AD People and Workforce Development	Oct 23	Feb 24	Children will say they have a good, trusting relationship with their social worker.			

Ref.	Actions	How will we know?	Lead	Start Date	End Date	What our children will say	Action RAG	Impact RAG	Commentary
4.12	Develop and implement workforce engagement sessions to ensure that all children's social care staff are kept informed, updated and have the opportunity to share their views	Feedback will tell us that our staff feel part of our improvement journey and that their input is valued.	AD People and Workforce Development	Nov 23	Oct 24	The workforce I come across are happy, motivated and passionate about making a difference to my life.			



Appendix A: Accompanying notes

Current Post Holders (February 2024)

Job Title	Current Post Holder
Director of Children's Services	Allison Parkinson
Assistant Director (Social Care)	Alison Montgomery
Assistant Director (People & Workforce Development)	Tracy Brennand
Assistant Director (Education)	Deborah Myers
Assistant Director Quality and Improvement	Teresa Gallagher
Tameside Children's Strategic Partnership Independent Scrutineer	Chad Thompson
Head of Commissioning	Mark Love
Head of Early Help and Family Help	Faye Edwards
Head of Fostering and Residential	Gordon Murray

Job Title	Current Post Holder
Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance	Melanie Field
Head of Child Protection and Children in Need	Helen Delamare
Head of Youth Justice	Charlie Spencer
Head of Cared for Children	Allison Sollom
Head of Service	Claudious Madembo
Strategic Lead of SEND	Vacant
Head of Access	Vacant
Head of Virtual School	Rachel Weeden
Head of Education Improvement & Partnerships	Jo Pearson
Improvement Lead	Emily Drake

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Key to monitoring of Action and Impact BRAG ratings

BRAG RATING: The 'BRAG' rating for progress and impact will be updated on a monthly basis in the detailed delivery plan.

BLUE	Completed and impact evidenced, target achieved and this is likely to be sustained.
RED	Action: Tasks not been completed or timescales slipped and need attention Impact should start to be seen and measured, but are not met.
AMBER	Action: Tasks are not fully on track but plans are in place to ensure progress by identifiable timescale Impact can start to be measured but are yet to be demonstrable
GREEN	Action: Tasks are progressing as expected and deemed to be on target Impact of outcomes can be demonstrably measured

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Appendix B: Performance Measures

Focus Area	Action Ref.	Measure	Data Source
FA1: The Voice of Children and Families	1.3, 1.5, 2.3, 2.4	• Feedback and complaints	Complaints Team
		• Attendance at forums and meetings	To be developed
		• Child & Family surveys	To be developed
FA2: Collaborative working with partners	1.2, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2	• % strategy meetings attended by police	Scorecard - CIN10a
		• % strategy meetings attended by health.	Scorecard - CIN10a
		• % of police attendance at child protection assessments.	Scorecard - SG8
		• % of attendance at initial CP conference by police	Scorecard – SG8
		• % of attendance at initial CP conference by health	Scorecard – SG9
		• Initial health assessment	Scorecard - CF22
		• Review health assessments	Scorecard - CF23
FA3: Identifying, assessing and managing risk	1.2, 1.3, 1.6	• Timeliness of S47 enquires to Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC).	Scorecard - SG6
		• Return home interviews	Scorecard – CIN21-24
		• Assessment and plan timeliness	Scorecard - CIN8
FA4: Practice framework (including Thresholds and timeliness)	1.1, 1.3	• Management oversight including supervision records	To be developed
		• Chronologies	To be developed
		• MASH Dashboard	To be developed



Focus Area	Action Ref.	Measure	Data Source
FA5: Plans and Timeliness	1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6	• No. of child & family assessments completed under 45 working days	Scorecard - CIN 8
		• % of child protection statutory visits taking place within timescale	Scorecard - CIN20, CF3
		• No. of dip samples reaching required standard	To be developed
		• % of Child Protection (CP) reviews within timescales	Scorecard - SG11-12
		• % actions completed following audits	To be developed
		• Actions following children's serious case reviews	To be developed
		• No. children with permanence plan in place.	To be developed
		• % of permanence plan reviews completed on time.	To be developed
		• Achieved outcomes	To be developed
FA6: Effective placement matching	1.3, 1.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4	• Cared for children with 3 or more placements in a 12 month period	Scorecard - CF4
		• Cared for children for 2.5 years who were living in the same placement for at least 2 years	Scorecard - CF5
		• Number of children in un-regulated placements	Scorecard - CF19-20
		• Use of temporary accommodation	To be developed
		• Accommodation options for care leavers	To be developed
FA7: Children in specific circumstances	1.5, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10, 3.2	• EHCP performance	Education Scorecard
		• Audits	Scorecard - SG16-20 and Quality Assurance Reporting
		• Sampling of files	To be developed



Focus Area	Action Ref.	Measure	Data Source
FA8: Consistency of support and pathway plans for care leavers	1.4, 1.5	• % of care leavers with education, employment or training plans.	To be developed
		• % of care leavers with a health passport.	To be developed
		• % care leavers with allocated worker.	To be developed
		• % of up to date pathway plans.	Scorecard - CF29
		• (%) of children with a social worker or personal adviser in Education, Training and Employment	To be developed
FA9: Governance and leadership	4.1, 4.4, 4.8	• Attendance at meetings	To be developed
		• Pace of progress	To be developed
		• Improved management oversight	To be developed
FA10: Practice evaluation & performance management	4.6, 4.7	• Quality Assurance Activity	Education Scorecard
		• No. of audits showing improvements graded over 55% Requires Improvement (RI) or better	Scorecard - SG16-20 and Quality Assurance Reporting
FA11: Supervision and management oversight	1.3, 4.7, 4.8	• % of Supervisions completed on time	DMT Scorecard
		• Case file audits	Scorecard - SG16-20 and Quality Assurance Reporting
		• Staff feedback	



Focus Area	Action Ref.	Measure	Data Source
FA12: Recruiting and retaining a stable permanent workforce	4.5, 4.6, 4.9, 4.10	• Staff feedback through surveys	Workforce Development Team
		• Workforce data	Workforce Development Team
		• Training data	Workforce Development Team
		• Caseload data	Scorecard - WF6 - WF14
		• Exit interview feedback	Human Resources
FA13: Data and Systems	4.1, 4.4, 4.8	• Quality of data	To be developed
		• Training attendance records	To be developed





January 2024

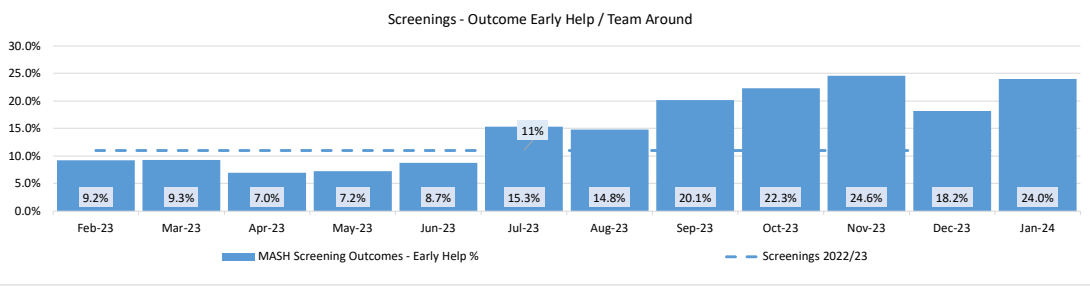
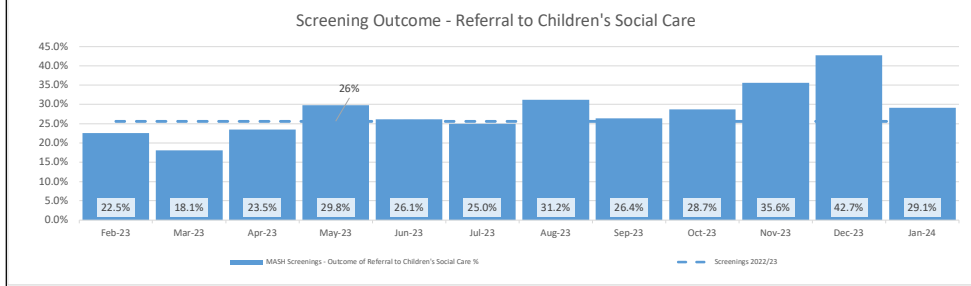
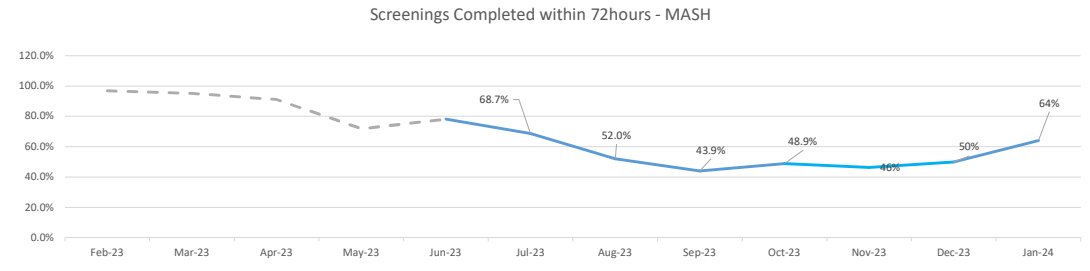
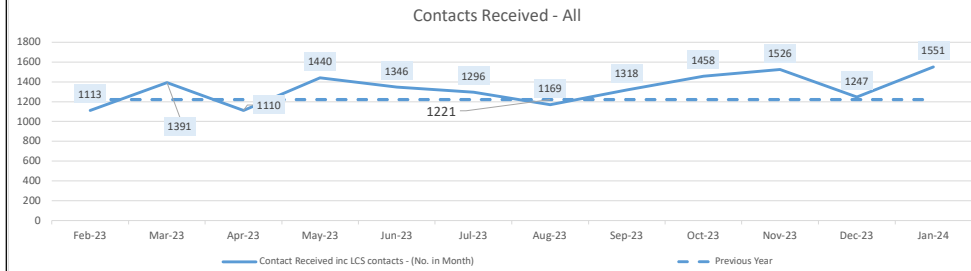
CHILDRENS SERVICES PERFORMANCE AND QUALITY ASSURANCE SCORECARD

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Agenda Item 5

Summary Performance Charts

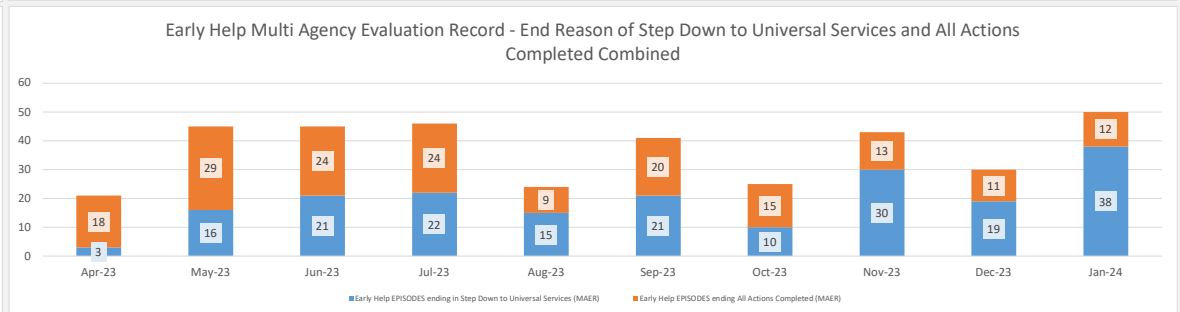
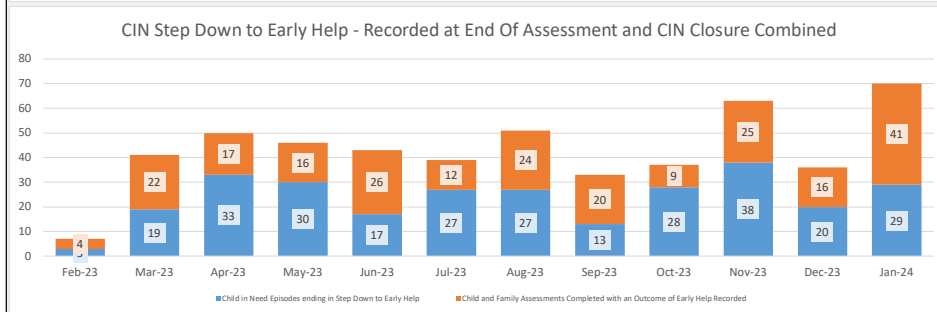
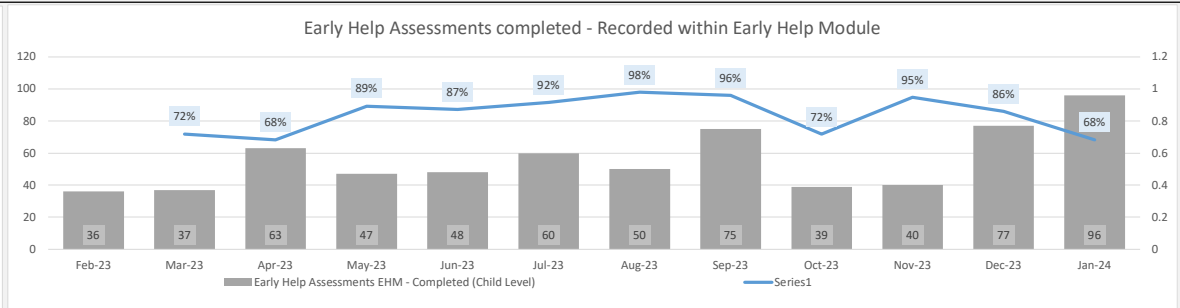
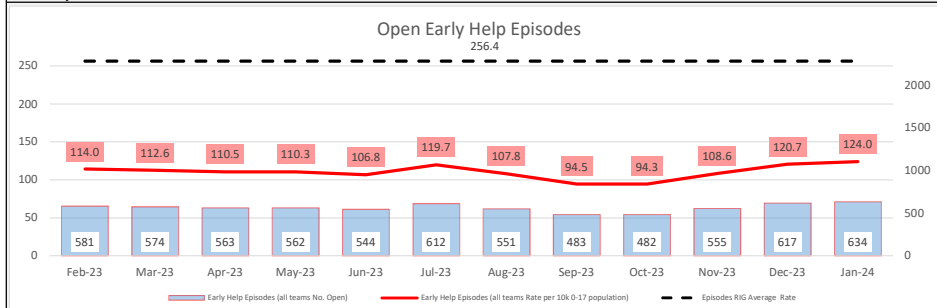


Highlight Indicators

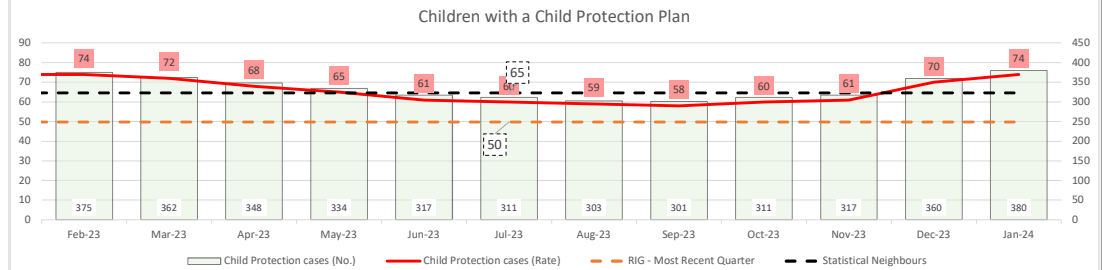
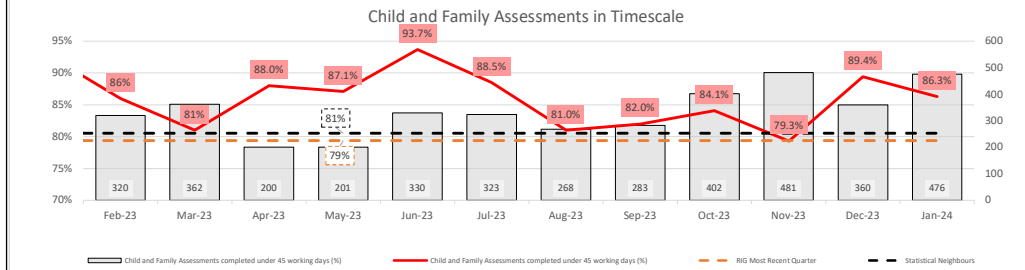
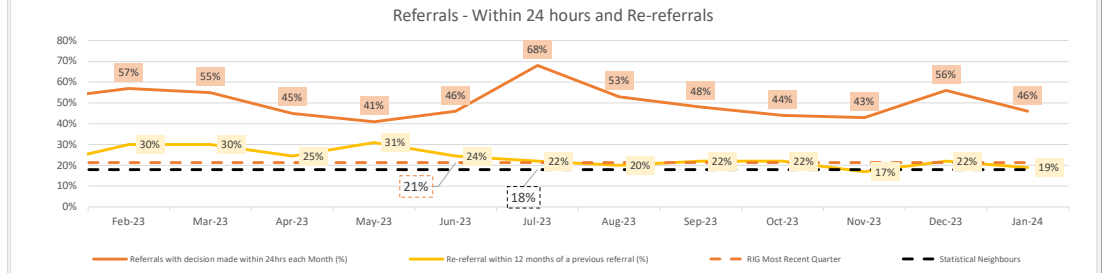
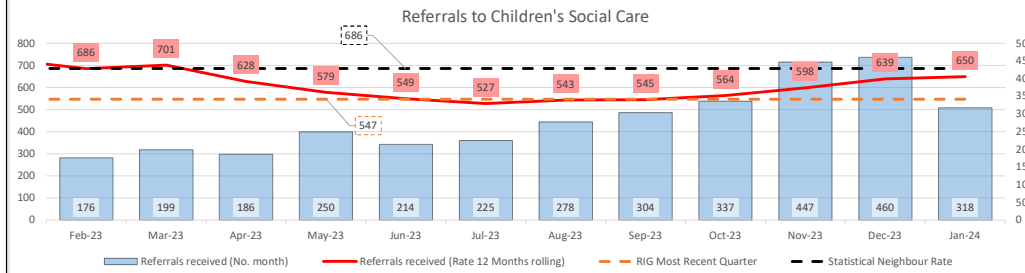
Ref	Indicator	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Previous Year	Target	Greater Manchester Average	North West Average	Statistical Neighbour Average	England Average	Last 12 Months	Performance	Direction of Travel
FD1	Contact Received inc LCS contacts - (No. in Month)	1169	1318	1458	1526	1247	1551	1350								↑
FD2	Contact - (12 Month Rolling Rate)	3058	3043	3056	3049	3059	3091	2732								↑
FD2a	MASH Contact (No)	1150	1307	1451	1524	1239	1548	1343								↑
FD2b	MASH Contact Ending Prior to Screening (No)	295	114	209	139	94	192								G	↑
FD2c	MASH Contact Ending Prior to Screening (%)	26%	9%	14%	9%	8%	12%								G	↑
FD2d	Requests for Information Received	58	84	87	38	27	53									↓
FD2e	MASH Screenings Completed	852	1185	1209	1318	1096	1120								A	
FD2f	MASH Screenings Completed within 72hrs	52.0%	43.9%	48.9%	46%	50%	64%								A	
FD7	Contact Referred to children's social care (% of ALL contact in month EHM and LCS with an outcome of Children's Social Care by month end)	21.6%	22.4%	22.5%	28.1%	33.2%	20.5%	20%							G	
FD8b	Requests for Information Completed	58	84	87	55	16	47									
FD8c	MASH Screening Outcomes - Referral to Children's Social Care %	31.2%	26.4%	28.7%	35.6%	42.7%	29.1%	26%							G	
FD8d	MASH Screening Outcomes - Early Help %	14.8%	20.1%	22.3%	24.6%	18.2%	24.0%	11%							G	
FD8e	MASH Screening Outcomes - Referral to Other Agency %	1.1%	1.0%	1.2%	1.7%	1.1%	0.7%	13%							G	
FD8f	MASH Screening Outcomes - Information and Advice %	53.2%	52.0%	47.2%	37.9%	37.9%	46.0%	53%							G	
FD16	Domestic Abuse Notifications Received	285	269	283	302	295	332									

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Summary Performance Charts






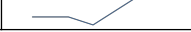


Ref.	Indicator	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Previous Year	Target	Greater Manchester Average	North West Average	Statistical Neighbour Average	England Average	Last 12 Months	Performance	Direction of Travel
EH2	Early Help Episodes (all teams No. Open)	551	483	482	555	617	634	570							G	↑
EH3	Early Help Episodes (all teams Rate per 10k 0-17 population)	107.8	94.5	94.3	108.6	120.7	124.0	111.9							G	↑
EH7	Early Help Assessments recorded within EHM - Open at month end Number	88	75	74	101	136	152	59								↑
EH9	Early Help Assessments EHM - Completed (Child Level)	50	75	39	40	77	96	34							G	↑
EH9a	Early Help Assessments Completed in Timescale 45 days % each month	98%	96%	72%	95%	86%	68%								R	↓
EH10	Early Help Episodes ending in Step Up to Children's Social Care (Multi Agency Evaluation Record)	14	44	25	38	19	20	4							A	
EH10a	Early Help EPISODES ending in Step up to Childrens Social Care (Episode End Reason)	0	0	0	0	4	1									
EH10b	Early Help EPISODES ending in Step Down to Level 2 (MAER)	2	5	13	5	29	24								A	
EH10c	Early Help EPISODES ending in Step Down to Universal Services (MAER)	15	21	10	30	19	38								G	
EH10d	Early Help EPISODES ending All Actions Completed (MAER)	9	20	15	13	11	12								G	
EH11	Child in Need Episodes ending in Step Down to Early Help	27	13	28	38	20	29	9							G	
EH11a	Child and Family Assessments Completed with an Outcome of Early Help Recorded	24	20	9	25	16	41								G	

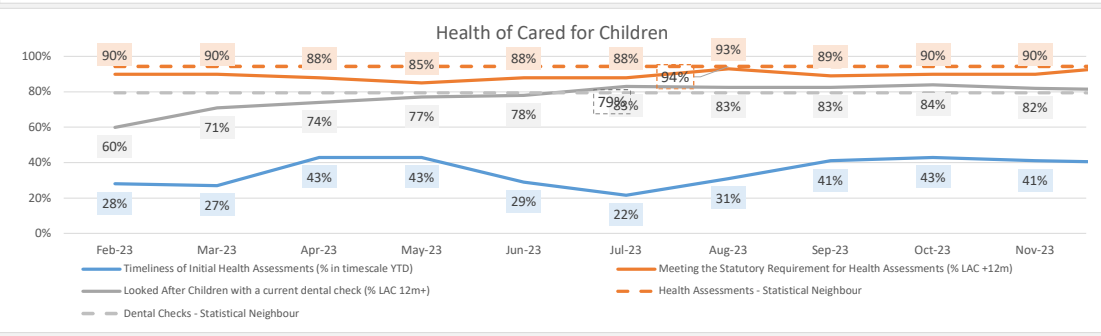
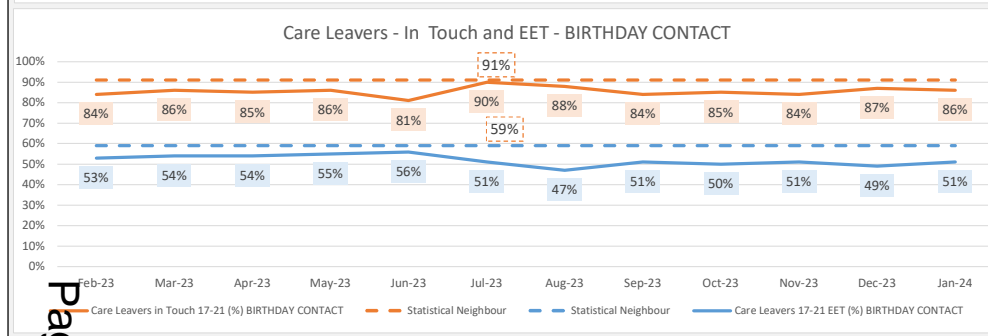
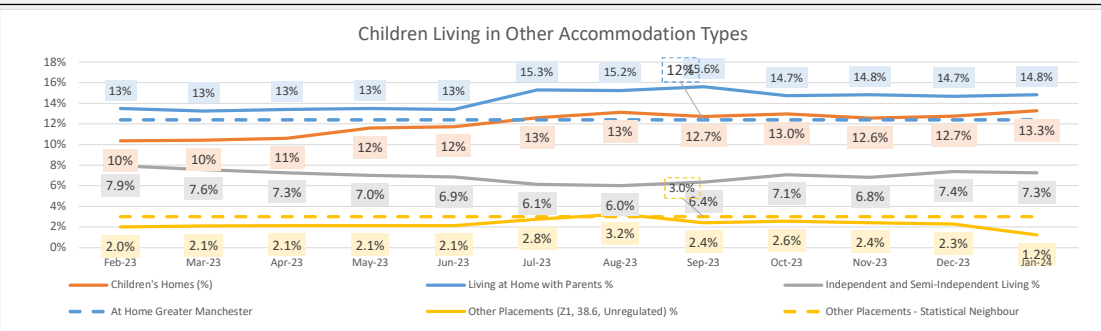
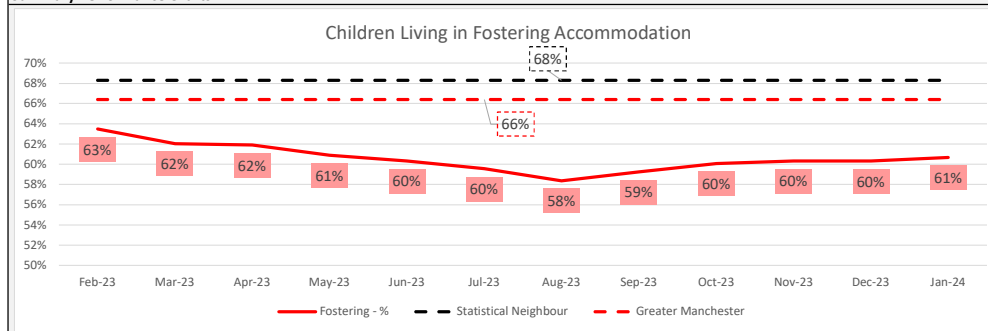


Ref	Indicator	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Previous Year	Target	Greater Manchester Average (2021/22)	North West Average (2022/23)	Statistical Neighbour Average (2022/23)	England Average (2022/23)	Last 12 Months	Performance	Direction of Travel
CIN1	Referrals received (No. month)	278	304	337	447	460	318	280							A	↓
CIN2	Referrals received (Rate 12 Months rolling)	543	545	564	598	639	650	701	612	674	530	686	545		R	↑
CIN3	Referrals with decision made within 24hrs each Month (%)	53%	48%	44%	43%	56%	46%	46%							A	↓
CIN4	Re-referral within 12 months of a previous referral (%)	20%	22%	22%	17%	22%	19%	28%	20-24%	23%	21%	21%	21%		G	↓
CIN5	Referrals where a child was found to be not in Need after Assessment.	11%	12%	26%	27%	27%	26%	30%	29%	24%	27%	33%	30%		G	↔
CIN6	Assessments Completed (No. Month)	268	283	402	481	360	476	383							A	
CIN7	Assessments Completed (12 Month Rolling Rate)	697	681	692	726	732	777	900							A	
CIN8	Child and Family Assessments completed under 45 working days (%)	81.0%	82.0%	84.1%	79.3%	89.4%	86.3%	76%	85%	81%	79%	81%	82%		G	↓
CIN9	Strategy Meetings (No. Completed Month)	143	153	153	215	189	180	151								
CIN10	Strategy meetings (12 Month Rolling Rate)	332	334	336	343	355	364	353								
CIN10a	Strategy Meeting Attendance by Key Agency - Police (%)	99%	99%	100%	100%	100%										
CIN10b	Strategy Meeting Attendance by Key Agency - Health (%)	89%	83%	90%	89%	86%										
CIN10c	Strategy Meeting Attendance by Key Agency - Education (%)	44%	81%	81%	90%	56%										
CIN11	Strategy Meeting Outcome - 547 (% Month)	59%	67%	59%	75%	73%	74%	74%							G	
CIN12	Strategy Meeting Outcomes-No Further Action (% Month)	33%	26%	36%	28%	25%	19%	21%							G	
CIN13	Section 47s Completed (no. Month)	80	86	112	124	129	122	113								
CIN14	Section 47s Completed (12 Month Rolling Rate)	235	235	232	231	238	239	268		207	176	247	165			
CIN15	Section 47s Completed - % Conference Outcomes ICPC (YTD)	34%	39%	36%	38%	38%	38%	39%		32%	33%	34%	33%		G	
CIN16	Child in Need Plan (No.)	425	408	420	419	421	410	513		576	486	585	460			
CIN16a	Child in Need Plan (Rate.)	80	82	82	82	82	80			113	95	114	90			
CIN17	Child In Need Reviews that were due completed in timescale (% YTD)	68%	69%	71%	72%	73%	74%	74%	80%						A	
CIN18	Child Protection cases (No.)	303	301	311	317	360	380	348		289	251	330	221		R	
CIN19	Child Protection cases (Rate)	59	58	60	61	70	74	68		57	49	65	43		R	↑
CIN20	Child Protection - Statutory visits in timescale (visit within last 28 days at Month end)	91%	94%	95%	96%	96%	71%		95%						R	↓
CIN21	Number of Times a Child was Reported Missing (No Month)	165	185	185	161	101	129	145							R	↑

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CIN22	Number of Incidents where a Missing from Home Interview was Offered (by month end)	105	137	94	102	62	96								A	
CIN23	Missing incidents completed return home interview with 72hrs (No)	57	92	57	46	12	16								R	
CIN24	Number of Children with one or more missing incident each month	94	90	94	95	64	72	79							A	↑
CIN25	Complex Safeguarding - Referrals into the Complex Safeguarding Team (Quarterly)		27					17								
CIN26	Complex Safeguarding - Referrals into the Complex Safeguarding Team Closed NFA % (Quarterly)		33.33%					46%								
CIN27	Complex Safeguarding Team - Cases Open to Complex Safeguarding Team (Quarterly)		37					37								

Summary Performance Charts



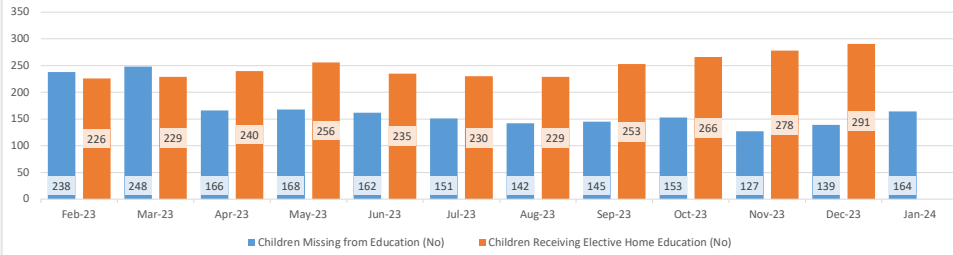
Ref	Indicator	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Previous Year	Target	Greater Manchester Average (2021/22)	North West Average (2022/23)	Statistical Neighbour Average (2022/23)	England Average (2022/23)	Last 12 Months	Performance	Direction of Travel
CF1	Cared for Children (No.)	663	660	651	648	640	641	656	552							↔
CF2	Cared for Children (Rate)	128	128	126	125	124	124	131	110							↔
CF3	Cared for Children - Statutory Visits in Timescale (%)	81.0%	92.0%	87.0%	92.0%	87.8%	83.0%	83%	90%						R	↓
CF4	Cared for Children with 3 or more placements in a 12 month period. (%)	10.4%	10.3%	10.3%	10.0%	9.4%	8.3%	5.0%	<7%	9%	9%	9%	10%		G	↓
CF5	Cared for Children for 2.5 years who were living in the same placement for at least 2 years (% Quarterly)	70.5%	70.5%	70.5%	70.5%	68.3%	68.3%	68%	73%	67%	69%	68%	69%		G	↔
CF6	Cared for Children subject to 3 or more changes of Social Worker in the last 12 months (%)	31%	34%	36%	35%	36%	35%	29%	10%						R	↓

Where We Live																
Ref	Indicator	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Previous Year	Target	Greater Manchester Average (2021/22)	North West Average (2022/23)	Statistical Neighbour Average (2022/23)	England Average (2022/23)	Last 12 Months	Performance	Direction of Travel
CF7	Within Tameside (%)	58.5%	58.5%	59.0%	58.2%	58.4%	57.3%	59%	>65%	59%	61%	59%	56%		A	↓
CF8	Fostering - No.	387	391	391	391	386	389	407							A	
CF9	Fostering - %	58%	59%	60%	60%	60%	61%	62%	71%	66%	66%	68%	68%		A	↑
CF10	Placed for Adoption (No)	20	16	12	14	12	13	20							G	
CF11	Placed for Adoption (%)	3.0%	2.4%	1.8%	2.2%	1.9%	2.0%	3.0%		3%	2%	3%	2%		G	
CF12	Living at Home with Parents No.	101	103	96	96	94	95	87							A	
CF13	Living at Home with Parents %	15.2%	15.6%	14.7%	14.8%	14.7%	14.8%	13%	8%	12%	11%	8%	7%		A	↔
CF14	Children's Homes (No)	86	83	83	86	86	86	76							A	
CF15	Children's Homes (%)	13.0%	12.6%	12.7%	13.3%	13.4%	13.4%	12%							A	↔
CF16	Independent and Semi-Independent Living No	47	45	48	47	44	43	46							G	
CF17	Independent and Semi-Independent Living %	7.1%	6.8%	7.4%	7.3%	6.9%	6.7%	7.0%							G	
CF18	Secure Units No	1	1	0	0	0	1	3							A	

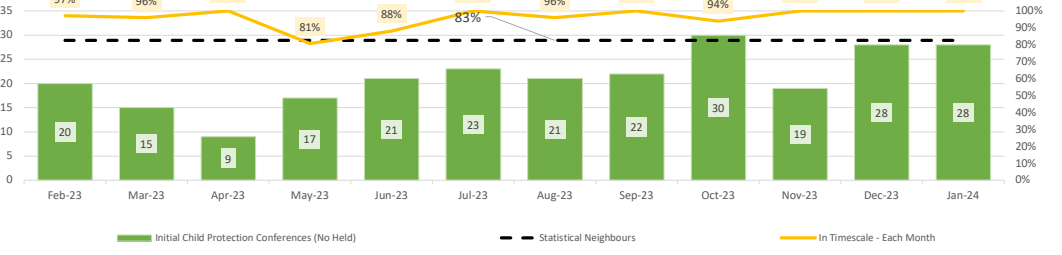
CF19	Other Placements (Z1, 38.6, Unregulated) No.	17	16	15	8	15	12	14							A	
CF20	Other Placements (Z1, 38.6, Unregulated) %	2.6%	2.4%	2.3%	1.2%	2.3%	1.9%	2.1%		2%	1%	3%	1%		A	
Outcomes																
CF21	Timeliness of Initial Health Assessments (% in timescale YTD)	31%	41%	43%	41%	40%	42%	27%							R	↑
CF22	Timeliness of Initial Health Assessments (% in timescale MONTH)	50%	74%	56%	18%	22%	55%	27%							R	↑
CF23	Meeting the Statutory Requirement for Health Assessments (% LAC +12m)	90%	90%	95%	93%	90%	91%	85%	96%	94%	92%	94%	89%		G	↑
CF25	Looked After Children with a current dental check (% LAC 12m+)	84%	82%	81%	80%	77%	74%	77%	80%	75%	77%	79%	76%		R	↓
CF27	Looked After Children with an Education Health and Care Plan (%)	21%	21%	n/a	17%	17%	17%	22%							A	
CF28	Looked After children 3 - 15 with a current Personal Education Plan (% Quarterly)	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%							G	↔
CF29	Care Leavers with a Pathway Plan in place (%)	87%	87%	87%	87%	91%	90%	86%							A	↓
CF30	Care Leavers in Touch 17-21 (%) BIRTHDAY CONTACT	88%	84%	85%	84%	87%	86%	92%	93%						A	↓
CF31	Care Leavers 17-21 EET (%) BIRTHDAY CONTACT	47%	51%	50%	51%	49%	51%	54%	52%						A	↑

Summary Performance Charts

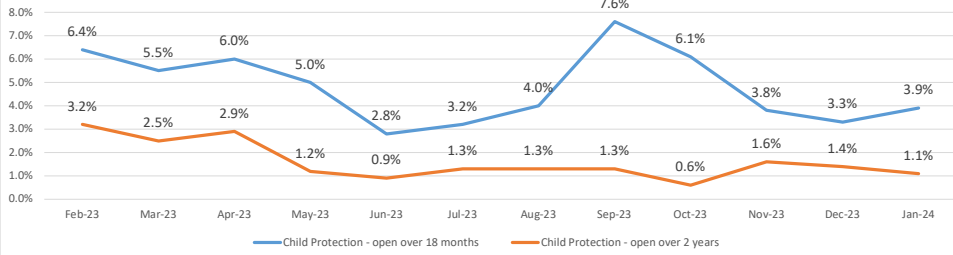
Children Missing from Education and Receiving Elective Home Education



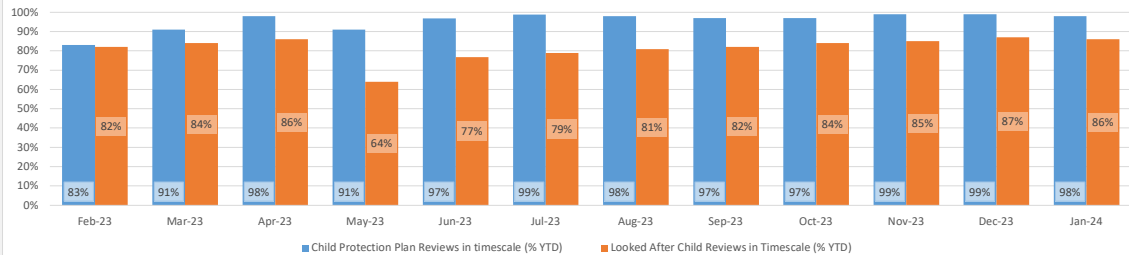
Initial Child Protection Conferences No. vs Timescale



Duration of Open Child Protection Plans



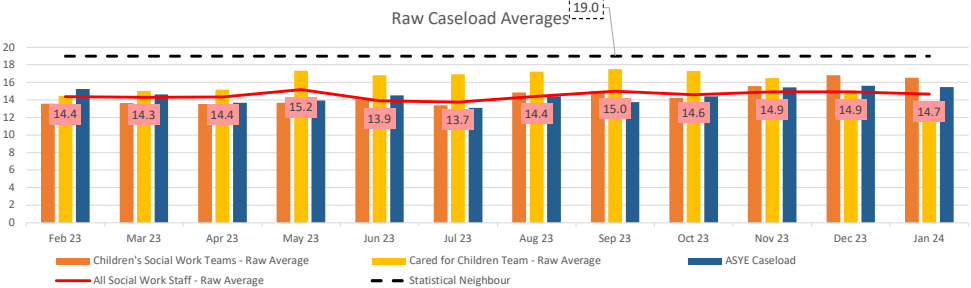
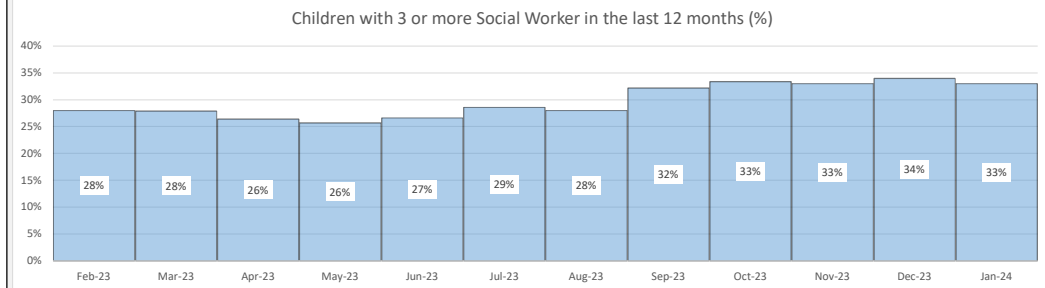
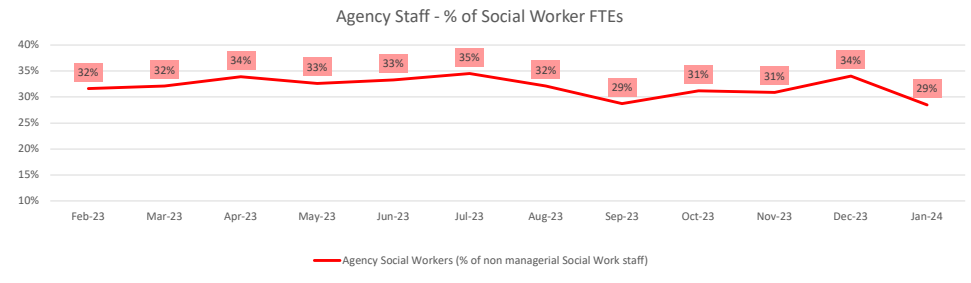
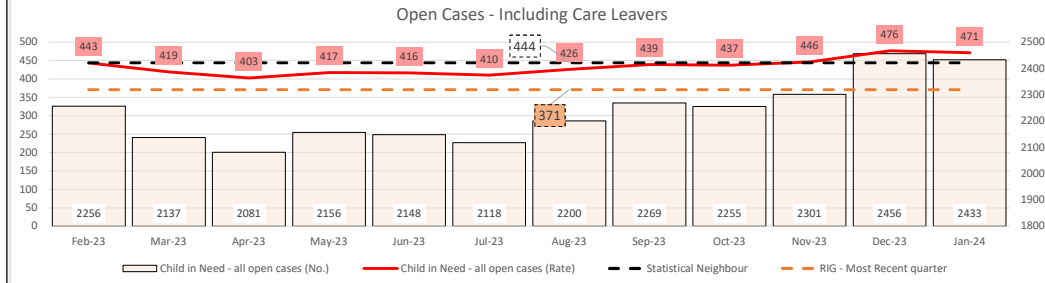
CP and Cared for Reviews in Timescale - Year to Date



Ref	Indicator	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Previous Year	Target	Greater Manchester Average (2021/22)	North West Average (2022/23)	Statistical Neighbour Average (2022/23)	England Average (2022/23)	Last 12 Months	Performance	Direction of Travel
SG1	Children Missing from Education (No)	142	145	153	127	139	164	248							A	↑
SG2	Children Receiving Elective Home Education (No)	229	253	266	278	291		229							N/A	
SG3	% of Children receiving Elective Home Education who are open to Children's Social Care	1.7%	1.6%	0.8%	0.4%	0.7%		2.2%							N/A	
SG4	Child in Need (all open cases) with a Education Health and Care Plan (%)	14%	13%	n/a	12%	11%	11%	15%							A	
SG5	Children with Initial Child Protection Conferences held under 15 Working Days (% YTD)	93%	94%	94%	95%	96%	96%	72%	83%	83%	80%	83%	78%		G	↔
SG6	Children with Initial Child Protection Conferences held under 15 Working Days (% IN MONTH)	96%	100%	94%	100%	100%	100%	72%							G	↔
SG7	Initial Child Protection Conferences (No Held)	21	22	30	19	28	28	18								
SG8	Attendance at Initial Child Protection Conference by Police	95%	86%	90%	90%	82%	71%	59%							A	
SG9	Attendance at Initial Child Protection Conference by Health	81%	100%	97%	90%	75%	57%	85%							A	
SG10	Attendance at Initial Child Protection Conference by Education	36%	86%	65%	82%	50%	65%	77%							A	
SG11	Child Protection Plan Reviews in timescale (% YTD)	98%	97%	97%	99%	99%	98%	86%	91%	88%	87%	83%	88%		G	↓
SG12	Child Protection Plan Reviews in timescale (% Each Month)	100%	97%	100%	100%	100%	90%								A	
SG13	Child Protection - open over 18 months	4.0%	7.6%	6.1%	3.8%	3.3%	3.9%	5.5%							G	↑
SG14	Child Protection - open over 2 years	1.3%	1.3%	0.6%	1.6%	1.4%	1.1%	2.5%	2.1%	3%	3%	2%	2%		G	↓
SG15	Looked After Child Reviews in Timescale (% YTD)	81%	82%	84%	85%	87%	86%	87%	95%						G	↑

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Summary Performance Charts



Ref	Indicator	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Previous Year	Target	Greater Manchester Average (2021/22)	North West Average (2022/23)	Statistical Neighbour Average (2022/23)	England Average (2022/23)	Last 12 Months	Performance	Direction of Travel
WF1	Child in Need - all open cases (No.)	2200	2269	2255	2301	2456	2433	2137	2175	2087	1978	2271	1752		A	↓
WF2	Child in Need - all open cases (Rate)	426	439	437	446	476	471	427	433	408	387	444	343		A	↓
WF3	Newly Qualified Social Worker on ASYE (% of Social workers FTE)	25%	24%	25%	20%	28%	24%	20%							R	
WF4	Agency Social Workers (% of non managerial Social Work staff)	32%	29%	31%	31%	34%	29%	32%	14-22%						R	↓
WF5	Children with 3 or more Social Worker in the last 12 months (%)	28%	32%	33%	33%	34%	33%	28%	15%						R	↓
WF5a	Child in Need Supervision Completed in the last 4 Weeks	34%	66%	58%												
WF5b	Care Lever Supervision Completed in the last 8 Weeks	85%	100%	94%												
WF5c	Supervision Completed in the Last 4 weeks - Excluding Cared for Children and Care Leavers				80%	49%	65%								R	↑
WF5d	Supervision Completed in the Last 8 weeks - Cared for Children and Care Leavers				89%	89%	64%								R	↓
Caseloads																
WF6	All Social Work Staff - Raw Average	14.4	15.0	14.6	14.9	14.9	14.7	14.3	16-18						G	↓
WF6a	All Social Work Staff - Excluding ASYE	14.5	15.4	15.1	14.8	15.3	15.2								G	↓
WF8	All Social Work Teams - Highest Individual Caseload	27.0	33.0	34.0	33.0	39.0	34.0	40							R	↓
WF9	Children's Social Work Teams - Raw Average	14.8	15.0	14.2	15.6	16.8	16.5	13.6							G	↓
WF10	Children with Disabilities Team - Raw Average	16.5	19.0	24.7	20.0	16.0	15.4	11.2							G	↓
WF11	Cared for Children Team - Raw Average	17.2	17.5	17.3	16.5	15.0	13.5	15							G	↓
WF12	Adoptions Team - Raw Average	5.7	5.2	5.3	4.8	4.8	5.0	5.5							G	↑
WF13	Leaving Care Team - Raw Average (Personal Advisors post 18 caseload)	29.4	24.5	20.1	20.1	20.0	19.1	-							G	↓
WF14	ASYE Caseload	14.4	13.8	14.4	15.4	15.6	15.5	14.6							G	↓

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Chair of Overview Panel

Chairs of Scrutiny Panels

Councillor Jacqueline North
First Deputy
Finance, Resources and Transformation

Mr Ashley Hughes
Director of Resources
Section 151 Officer

Tameside One
Market Place
Ashton-under-Lyne
OL6 6BH

email:	paul.radcliffe@tameside.gov.uk
Ask for	Paul Radcliffe
Direct Line	0161 342 2199
Date	24 January 2024

Dear Councillor North and Mr Hughes,

Consultation with Scrutiny Panels regarding the 2024/25 Budget

We write in response to the budget consultation meetings held on 15 January 2024, at which Scrutiny members received an overview of the 2023/24 financial outturn and budget planning for 2024/25. In addition to the mid-year budget monitoring information presented to Scrutiny Panels in November 2023, the sessions enable members to seek assurances on the Council's approach to managing and mitigating financial risk and uncertainty.

Thank you for responding directly to the Scrutiny mid-year budget letter and providing a detailed reply to the questions and comments shared in November 2023. We would also like to thank the Chief Executive and Directors for attending the budget meetings; the ongoing work of officers and the Council's Executive during such challenging financial times.

From your response, it is pleasing to hear that the Council will work towards a unified accommodation sufficiency strategy, with the Director of Place leading a partnership approach. This is an area that Scrutiny activity has picked up on regarding significant pressures across accommodation for care leavers, homelessness and victims of domestic abuse. We therefore fully support any steps that will aim to address both current pressures and long-term planning for accommodation and housing options in the borough. Scrutiny would like to remain updated throughout planning, development and delivery phases.

With significant savings to be achieved prior to the close of the 2023/24 financial year, a level of detail and assurance was provided on targeted recovery planning and monthly financial reporting to Executive Cabinet for both revenue and capital. This is further supported with greater detail and monitoring undertaken by Star Chamber on a bi-monthly basis.

The Period 7 forecast outturn showed a revenue overspend of £13.007m, with the most sizeable variance across the Children's, Adults and Place directorates. It was reported that recovery plans have been submitted, with mitigating actions to the effect of £8.734m, resulting in a residual overspend of £4.274m. The concern of members rests upon the ongoing pressures, risks and fragility of current budgets, given that directorates and services are expected to find compensatory ongoing efficiencies to offset any shortfalls.

The Council continues to face challenging and unavoidable decisions year on year, with a statutory responsibility for budget reductions and revenue expenditure to align. It was explained that since 2018/19 a total of £41m in reserves have been used to support the Council's revenue budget, with a further £2m committed as part of the MTFS in 2024/25.

It was noted that there is no planned use of reserves for 2025/26 onwards, however the level of uncertainty and risk remains high and it feels as though this could present a 'no alternative' approach to ensure future agreed financial outturns can be delivered.

While it pays testament to the Council's past financial management, it also presents a significant worry and concern should further budget reductions and external economic pressures continue past 2024/25. This highlights the wider financial challenges faced when taking account of funding streams and ability of the Council to generate income growth above that already achieved.

A single year financial settlement creates added complexity and limits foresight in the Council's ability to budget and plan accordingly. The overall sustainability of future budgets presents as a genuine concern for members. The efforts made to incorporate a total of £12.69m in budget reduction proposals has enabled the Council to put forward a balanced budget for 2024/25 and the collective efforts to achieve this are commended.

This letter provides an account of discussions captured from the meetings and subsequent feedback received, with a request for consideration to the points raised prior to the budget report being finalised.

The local context provided was extremely useful in allowing members to clearly understand the cumulative impacts that sustained budgetary reductions and economic pressures have placed on residents and communities. Over time the Council has had no reasonable options but to proportionately increase the reliance on Council Tax to generate income growth. Members are particularly concerned of a growing financial burden being placed on households at such a challenging time.

It is asked that the Executive remain vigilant and mindful to how difficult decisions can be perceived by the public and it is important to promote and encourage transparent information and communication between the Council, businesses and residents. Not only to highlight the difficult decisions taken locally, but also the impacts and implications should the decisions not be made.

Members recognise that persistent budget reductions have impacted and impeded the Council's ability and ambitions to invest and innovate. The Council has remained prudent and mindful of the financial decisions it makes and the impression this has on service delivery. This has shaped a prolonged period of the Council taking actions to survive rather than thrive. Members appreciate the avoidance and inability to invest in new technology and IT systems, albeit with decisions upcoming to future-proof services and the Council's fleet moving to electric vehicles, as an example.

Discussion touched on in-year monitoring and the deliverability of savings put forward, separate to the unforeseen and unbudgeted pressures placed on statutory services. It is felt that reducing delay and ensuring issues are flagged at the earliest opportunity is key to the success of recovery plans and options relating to shortfalls in delivery.

Improving outcomes for children and vulnerable residents remains a budget pressure. Costly demand is continuing to outstretch resources and consideration is needed as to how services can respond to demand differently, how we support people earlier, achieve better outcomes in permanence planning and develop appropriate pathways of support across all services and sectors. Questions were asked about the financial contribution of partners such as Health, particularly for eligible cases in which the Council faces the full financial burden of commissioning and facilitating specialist care.

Members are mindful that Tameside Children's Services is awaiting a judgement from the recent Ofsted inspection. There is a concern of additional budgetary and workforce pressures should the outcome be unfavourable, with strategic and operational improvement actions that may follow.

Members asked questions on part of the budget that will support and enable investment and regeneration across the borough, including capital projects. This touched upon the Levelling Up programmes, the Council's current position, skills, expertise and capacity within existing teams to deliver this within set timeframes.

Scrutiny priorities remain aligned with the Council's Corporate Plan and members have continued to keep abreast of more strategic measures for the borough in relation to social and economic issues. Future activity will continue to review and support work of the Executive to improve outcomes for residents while at the same time consider the range of efficiency requirements and delivering value for money.

Going forward Scrutiny will look to incorporate the views and lived experiences of residents, service users and patients within future work programming. We will look to monitor and test the ongoing resilience of communities and partnership with the third sector.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Jim Fitzpatrick - Chair of Overview Panel

Councillor Claire Reid - Chair of Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel

Councillor Hugh Roderick - Chair of Children's Services Scrutiny Panel

Councillor Naila Sharif - Chair of Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel

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Scrutiny Activity 2023/24

The table below provides a summary of Scrutiny activity and oversight carried out during 2023/24. This includes updates to seek assurances on service provision and outcomes.

Table 1: Summary of Scrutiny activity and oversight (March 2023 to March 2024)

Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel	Children's Services Scrutiny Panel	Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive Growth – strategy and delivery • Response to LGSCO focus report - More home truths: learning lessons from complaints about the Homelessness Reduction Act, published March 2023 • Neighbourhood Enforcement • Crime and Disorder - GMP Neighbourhood Model and Community Safety Partnership – (Working group established). • Response to LGSCO focus report - Out of Order: learning lessons from complaints about anti-social behaviour, published August 2023 • Response to LGSCO focus report - Not in my back yard – Local people and the planning process, published August 2023 • Scrutiny response to the Draft ASB Policy • Economy, Employment and Skills • Local Plan • Major projects • Budget consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ofsted inspection of Children's Services • SEND Improvement (March 2023 and January 2024) • Tameside Safeguarding Children Partnership • Scrutiny summary report – review and monitoring of Children's Services 2021 to 2023 • Support and services for Care Leavers • Children's Social Care Performance and Quality Assurance • Children's Social Care Improvement Plan • Response to LGSCO focus report - Parent Power: learning from complaints about personal budgets, published November 2023. • Children's Services Performance and Quality Assurance Scorecard • Budget consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GMICS Update • Primary Care Access • Domestic Abuse - (working group established). • Adult Social Care • Tameside Mental Health Provision (Pennine Care) • Tameside Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board • Elective waiting lists (follow up activity) • Healthwatch Tameside • Budget consultation

Budget Consultation

Scrutiny mid-year budget update received on 6 November 2023. The First Deputy (Finance, Resources and Transformation) and Director of Resources received a formal response of the Scrutiny Chairs, capturing a range of points for consideration in supporting the Council's ongoing work in this area. The letter was tabled in a report to the meeting of Overview Panel on 21 November 2023.

Scrutiny Annual Budget meetings held on 15 January 2024. The First Deputy (Finance, Resources and Transformation) and Director of Resources received a formal response of the Scrutiny Chairs, capturing a range of points for consideration in supporting the Council's ongoing work in this area. A summary of the activity and letters is tabled in a separate report to the joint meeting of Executive Cabinet and Overview Panel on 14 February 2024.

Consultation and Engagement

Scrutiny will remain suitably informed of open consultations at a local, regional and national level. Each panel will also undertake engagement outside of the formal meetings with Council services and external partners, where necessary.

Following a meeting on 12 September 2023, members of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel received a draft version of the Council's Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) Policy, for review and comment. A formal and collective response of the Scrutiny Panel was submitted to Councillor Vimal Choksi, Executive Member (Towns & Communities), on 10 October 2023.

At a meeting of the Community Safety working group on 1 November 2023, members received an updated version of the draft ASB Policy where the comments of Scrutiny had been given full consideration and informed the document.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

Scrutiny Panels continue to review decisions and focus reports published by the ombudsman. The aim is to ensure learning opportunities are shared with services in a timely manner and for a formal response and/or position statement to be returned to the appropriate Scrutiny Panel within agreed timescales.

Scrutiny activity informed by recently published LGSCO focus reports include:

- Focus report – More Home Truths: Learning lessons from complaints about the Homelessness Reduction Act (published March 2023).
 - Report shared with the Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Homelessness & Inclusivity. The report and response was tabled at a meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel on 6 June 2023.
- Focus report – Out of Order: Learning lessons from complaints about anti-social behaviour (published August 2023).
 - Report shared with the Executive Member for Towns & Communities. The report and response was tabled at a meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel on 12 September 2023.
- Focus report – Not in my back yard: Local people and the planning process (published August 2023).
 - Report shared with the Executive Member for Planning, Transport & Connectivity. The report and response was tabled at a meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel on 12 September 2023.
- Focus report – Parent power: Learning from complaints about personal budgets (published November 2023).
 - Report shared with the Executive Member for Education & Achievement. The report and response was tabled at a meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Panel on 10 January 2024.

Training and Development

There is an ongoing commitment to ensure all scrutiny members receive a suitable level of training and guidance. In addition to online resources, it is important that new and existing members have access to external provision based on scrutiny principles, national guidance and expectations.

Detail below on training and development sessions delivered during the 2023/24 municipal year.

- **28 November 2023** – Members of the Children’s Services Scrutiny Panel invited to attend a training session delivered by the LGA and Councillor Paul Watling (Political Peer). The session was on the Effective Scrutiny of Children’s Services. A further two sessions to be held on **6 February 2024** and **11 March 2024**.
- **19 January 2024** - Scrutiny members invited to access an online session delivered by the LGA, titled an Introduction to Scrutiny for Councillors.

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