

TAMESIDE CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PLAN

*A multi-agency partnership plan to improve services
for vulnerable children in Tameside*

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1 – FOREWORD

There is no greater responsibility for public services than making sure that vulnerable children and young people are happy, safe and confident in their future. This multi-agency improvement plan sets out how Tameside Council and partners intend to achieve this, acting on our self-assessment, information from partners and the recommendations made by Ofsted to deliver rapid, comprehensive and sustainable improvement to services which help, protect and safeguard children and young people in Tameside.

We are committed to fundamentally changing how our services are received by residents, including supporting families to become resilient, independent and self-reliant, and reducing dependency on public services. We will work closely across all agencies to ensure services meet the needs of people and are not delivered in silos supporting children and their families to be successful.

We are committed to working together to support sustainability, reducing dependency and levels of need in our communities, and making best use of shared resources.

We have acted quickly following the Ofsted inspection to strengthen our approach and have established an Improvement Board, with an independent chair, to provide direction and challenge to our Improvement Plan. Our Improvement Board brings together decades of experience from the public, community and voluntary sectors.

Our Improvement Plan has been informed by the views of Tameside's young people and the experience of frontline staff both in the Council and in partner agencies. Since the inspection Tameside Council and partners have taken action on priority areas highlighted by Ofsted to ensure children's safety. The ambition must now build on this early good work, creating the conditions in which children and young people will be able to thrive. This plan sets out the work we will undertake to improve our services and the outcomes for children. During our improvement journey we will have an open and positive dialogue with our children and young people, those who care for them, our partners and our frontline staff in order to make the improvements needed and ensure a continual journey of improvement.

We recognise to effectively support vulnerable children and help families with complex needs falls beyond the resources of one organisation so a partnership approach is essential. We have a track record in Tameside of working together with the local community and partners to solve a variety of problems. We have sought advice from the Local Government Association and other councils to develop a coordinated and thorough response based on experience, best practice and learning from others.

We have one simple aim; get Tameside to where we need to be to support our children and young people. And we have one simple ambition; children in Tameside are safe, healthy and happy and are positive about their future.

Councillor Kieran Quinn – Executive Leader, Tameside Council.

Councillor Peter Robinson – Executive Member for Children's Services, Tameside Council.

Steven Pleasant – Chief Executive, Tameside Council and Accountable Officer, NHS Tameside and Glossop Clinical Commissioning Group.

Stephanie Butterworth – Director of Children's Services, Tameside Council.

Our vision for an effective multi-agency Children's Services partnership

'We want children and their families in Tameside to be successful. We will work to ensure that positive opportunities and effective help are available at the earliest opportunity – enabling children and their families to make the choices that mean they can thrive and achieve. Where children and families do need to access services they will be responsive, of a high quality and focused on achieving self-reliance. We will seek to break the cycle of dependence on services, and support children and young people to grow in a stable and settled environment. Children will have better experience of their time growing up in Tameside and be supported to realise their aspirations'.

Our vision is supported by a number of cross-cutting themes:

- **Multi-agency partnership working** based on a shared understanding of common goals and collaborative action by all agencies to achieve better outcomes for children's and families.
- The **voice of the child** will inform both individual care and support planning as well as being a guide for the long-term development of services so that they are relevant to children at all levels of need.
- **Quality of practice** will be delivered by a highly engaged motivated and skilled workforce who have sufficient time, knowledge and resources to support children in need of help and support.
- Across the partnership there will be a **shared understanding of thresholds** and each agency will be **aware of their organisational responsibilities and accountabilities**.
- All activity by agencies and individuals will be focused on building resilience and independence to ensure children and families are successful and the **multi-agency partnership is sustainable in the long term**.

A range of organisations and groups will work together in a multi-agency partnership to deliver the Tameside Children's Services Improvement Plan. They include:

- Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
- NHS Tameside & Glossop Clinical Commissioning Group
- Tameside & Glossop Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust (Tameside Hospital)
- Tameside Safeguarding Children Board.
- Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust
- 2 Be Us (the Tameside Children in Care Council)
- New Charter Housing and other registered social landlords
- Tameside primary and secondary schools, and the 'virtual school'
- Tameside College
- Greater Manchester Police
- Action Together, on behalf of the Voluntary, Community and Faith sector
- Active Tameside
- Other GM partners/Councils
- NHS England
- Local Government Association
- Department for Education

We will publish quarterly reports updating you on progress on the delivery of the Tameside Children's Services Improvement Plan.

2 – BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In September and October 2016 Ofsted carried out an inspection of the effectiveness of our Children's Services. Ofsted also carried out a review of the effectiveness of Tameside Safeguarding Children's Board. Ofsted published the report into its findings on 9 December 2016 rating the overall effectiveness of Children's Services as 'inadequate' and the Tameside Safeguarding Children Board as 'requiring improvement'. The overall judgement is broken down into categories as follows:

Judgement	Score
Overall Effectiveness	Inadequate
Children who need help and protection	Inadequate
Children looked after and achieving permanence	Requires Improvement
<i>Adoption</i>	<i>Good</i>
<i>Experiences and progress of care leavers</i>	<i>Requires Improvement</i>
Leadership, management and governance	Inadequate
Local safeguarding children board	Requires Improvement

- 2.2 Like other Local Authorities in the UK, Tameside has undergone the challenge of remaining resilient in the provision of frontline services while working with reduced funding from central government. However Tameside has seen a sizable increase in demand in recent years, placing pressure on the service. For example between December 2015 and December 2016 there was a 65% increase in the number of Children in Need and a 74% increase in the number of children subject to a child protection plan. In conjunction with this, the service's ability to cope has been hindered by significant rates of staff turnover and the struggle to recruit and retain experienced staff. This has invariably led to the loss of skills and knowledge, and the resources for staff to carry out good social work practices with their cases. While this is no excuse for inadequate practice, it lays out the circumstances we currently stand in, and the challenges that the improvement process must address in order to succeed.
- 2.3 We have already taken some preliminary steps to begin to turn around the recent judgement. The Tameside Children's Services Improvement Board was set up in January 2017, and appointed Jane Booth as the Independent Chair to deliver the improvement programme. External support has been added to the Board, with Local Government Association and NHS England representation, while further advice from Greater Manchester has been sought. A Practitioner Improvement Group has begun to hold regular meetings with a view to share ideas from representatives from across the service as to what improvement should look like.
- 2.4 The plan will take the form of a 'bottom up' approach that will be built on the views and needs of frontline practitioners, managers and the voice of children looked after by the authority. It will focus on prevention strategies by developing the early help services, so that we pave the way for

a sustainable service that helps children to remain with their families and achieve the best possible outcomes.

- 2.5 The Tameside Children's Service Improvement Board was established in January 2017 to deliver an improvement programme. The objective of the improvement programme is for a multi-agency partnership, to achieve sustainable improvement across the full range of services for children and young people in Tameside.
- 2.6 Tameside Safeguarding Children's Board is the partnership responsible for making sure that children and young people are kept safe in Tameside. As such the Safeguarding Board form an intrinsic part of the improvement process in Tameside. The Safeguarding Board has produced an Improvement Plan setting out the steps it will take to secure improvement. Progress towards this plan will be reported to Tameside Children's Services Improvement Board in order to ensure that improvement activity is co-ordinated across Tameside and there is a clear read across between both improvement plans.
- 2.7 The Children's Services Improvement Board will lead and guide this process through the implementation of Tameside Children's Services Improvement Plan alongside the Tameside Safeguarding Children Board Improvement Plan to address the areas of concern identified in the Ofsted report; other areas for improvement identified and develop a sustainable model for future years.
- 2.8 The Board will be led by an Independent Chair. The Independent Chair of the Board will oversee the effective functioning of the Board, providing appropriate external challenge and rigour. The Chair is not accountable for improvement; that responsibility lies with the Council and its partners. The Board will report on progress to Tameside Council, the local Health and Wellbeing Board and both Ofsted and the Department for Education. Agencies represented on the Improvement Board will be responsible for leading and driving the improvement process within their own organisations to ensure a coordinated multi-agency approach.
- 2.9 The Board is responsible for strategic direction and oversight of the improvement programme. It will provide challenge and rigour to the process whilst collaborating to achieve and sustain continuous improvement in Children's Services and across the wider partnership in Tameside.
- 2.10 Delivery of the Improvement Plan will come from the bottom up; the practical ideas and projects that will deliver the board's vision and the plans objectives are best developed by practitioners and shaped by the children and young people they support.
- 2.11 Achieving sustainable improvement will require new ways of working across the agencies who commission and provide services for children and families, including careful analysis and tracking of performance to demonstrate effective improvement and tangible impact on outcomes.
- 2.12 Extensive work has been undertaken to identify the root causes of the problems identified by Ofsted and will continue until as a part of ongoing improvement activity. The findings of this work have informed the development of the Improvement Plan.
- 2.13 This document is underpinned by a performance scorecard which will provide a framework through which progress will be monitored.
- 2.14 A financial plan has been developed to enable the delivery of improvement activity, address increased demand and invest in the development of service and initiatives that reduce long term demand.
- 2.15 In order to ensure the Children's Services Improvement Plan is implemented effectively we are committed to transparency and accountability. Progress towards meeting the Improvement Plan

will be reported to Tameside Children's Improvement Board meeting monthly and quarterly updates on progress will be published on Tameside Council's website following the publication of the Improvement Plan.

2.16 Underpinning these arrangements are a number of organisational and partnership structures that will be essential to securing effective improvement. The Board will work with in partnerships in order to ensure that whole system change is achieved. Key groups and decision making bodies include:

- Executive Cabinet of Tameside Council
- Tameside Health and Well Being Board
- Ofsted's Regional Director and Senior HM Inspector
- Department for Education Inspections and Interventions Team
- Tameside Safeguarding Children Board
- Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel
- Tameside and Glossop Single Commissioning Board
- Corporate Parenting Group

2.17 In addition to the bodies outlined above an Elected Member cross-party working group will provide objective support and challenge to the improvement process.

2.18 Effective partnership working is essential to maintaining the long term sustainability of services in Tameside through reducing duplication, increasing the flexibility and responsiveness of services and developing a holistic understanding of the needs of vulnerable children in Tameside.

2.19 For children and young people to receive the right help at the right time it is essential that those who play a role in supporting them work together effectively. To support and improve the achievement of high quality outcomes we will work to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of different partnership groups.

2.20 The Single Commissioning function brings together NHS Tameside and Glossop Clinical Commissioning Group, Tameside and Glossop Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust, and Tameside Council to deliver significant improvements in health and care for people in Tameside and Glossop. As such it is responsible the majority of health and social care services and will be a crucial partner in ensure that outcomes are achieved to the delivery of support to children, young people and their families in Tameside.

2.21 At a practitioner level strong partnership working will support robust decision making by developing mechanisms through which partners are able develop a shared understanding of decision making thresholds and have the opportunity to provide constructive challenge when it is appropriate to do so.

2.22 Transparency will also underpin our approach to service redesign. In particular using peer review and challenge and strong internal and external scrutiny arrangements to ensure Tameside Council and its partners are progressing towards effective and sustainable services that are meeting the needs of children and young people in Tameside.

2.23 How the Improvement Plan was Developed

2.24 A comprehensive programme of engagement work has been undertaken to develop this Improvement Plan. The summary below outlines the key milestones and activities with stakeholders to ensure multi-agency input to a truly partnership plan.

- Two workforce engagement sessions – November 2016 and January 2017.

- Elected members engagement session – January 2017.
- Tameside Primary School Heads Forum discussion – February 2017.
- Engagement event with 2BeUs (Children in Care Council) – February 2017.
- Two half day drop-in engagement sessions with the Director and Assistant Director of Children's Services – February 2017.
- Email survey to stakeholders and call for input from thematic leads (co-ordinating within their agencies) – 21 responses received – February into March 2017.
- Children's Services Improvement Board – January and March 2017.
- Health and Wellbeing Board – March 2017.
- Employee Consultation Group (including Trade Unions) – February 2017.
- Feedback from Performance Clinic Group – January to March 2017.
- Feedback from the Practitioner's Improvement Group – January to March 2017.
- Feedback from Executive Cabinet, Scrutiny Chair's and other lead Elected Members – March 2017.
- A range of other one to one or small group discussions between the Director or Assistant Director of Children's Services and stakeholders.

3 – CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN TAMESIDE

Tameside: total population = 221,692

- 0-17 years = 48,985 (22.1%), higher than the England average (21.3%)
- 0-21 years = 58,621 (26.4%)
- 0-25 years = 69,864 (31.5%)
- 18-64 years = 134,364 (60.6%)
- 65+ years = 38,343 (17.3%)

(ONS: mid-year population estimates 2015)

Population Projections

Between 2017 and 2022 Tameside's younger population is set to grow by:

- 0-17 years (1,987)
- 0-21 years (1,120)
- 0-25 years (39)

	Tameside	England	Tameside	England
	% population growth 2017-22		% population growth 2017-27	
0-17 years	4.0	5.1	4.5	7.3
0-21 years	1.9	3.0	4.3	7.1
0-25 years	0.1	1.7	1.3	4.5

- Between 2017 and 2022 the 0-17 population in Tameside is projected to grow by 4% compared to a decline in population for those classed as working age (18-64); a reduction of 0.6%. Population growth is slightly slower in Tameside than England overall.

(ONS: sub-national population projections 2014)

Deprivation

- In 2015 Tameside was ranked 41st most deprived area out of 326 local authorities.
- Tameside has 8 LSOAs in the worst 5% nationally for deprivation.
- Tameside has 7 LSOAs in the worst 5% nationally for income deprivation affecting children. This increased from 2 LSOAs in 2010.

(DCLG – Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015)

- Eligibility for free school meals also provides an indication of the percentage of children living in low income households. In 2016, 18.7% of secondary school pupils were eligible and claimed a free school meal, higher than England, NW and statistical neighbours (18.7%, 15.2%, 17.51% and 13.2%).
- In 2014, 23.7% of under 16 olds lived in low income families higher than both England and the NW averages (20.1% and 22.8% respectively).

Vulnerable Children

As at January 2017:

- 1425 in need of help (up from 702 in January 2016); an increase of 103%
- 351 child protection (up from 206 in January 2016); an increase of 70.4%
- 495 looked after (up from 424 in January 2016); an increase of 16.7%

(Tameside Children's Services)

Education

- 63% of five-year olds achieved a good level of development in the Foundation Stage Profile, an increase of 5 percentage points on 2015 (58%). Although school readiness remains below the England average, the gap is closing and reduced from 8% points in 2015 to 6% points in 2016.
- 55% of pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 2, slightly higher than the England average at 53% and stat neighbours (53.5%).
- 58% of Tameside's pupils achieved 5 A*-C GCSEs including English and Maths, higher than the England average at 52.8% with the gap widening over the last three years from 0.3% points in 2014 to 4.5% points in 2016.
- In 2015 22.2% of looked after children achieved 5 A*-C GCSEs including English and Maths compared to 57.3% of overall Tameside pupils.
- 93.4% of primary school pupils attend a good or outstanding school compared to 90.2% nationally. The rate is much lower for Tameside secondary school pupils with 59% attending a good or outstanding school compared to 81.9% nationally.
- Local monitoring data shows that 3.8% of 16-18 years are not in education, employment or training at Q3 in 2016/17. This was an increase of 0.2% points on the same quarter in 2015/16.
- In 2016, 45% of care leavers aged 19-21 were in education, employment or training and increase of 9% points on the previous year, however Tameside still remains below the England and Statistical neighbours average (49% and 49.4% respectively).

Health

- In 2014, 3.68% of births are classified as low birth weight, this is higher than the England average (2.68%) and is the highest rate for 5 years.

- In 2016, at reception, 23.55% of pupils are overweight or obese, slightly higher than the England average (22.14%) but lower than the statistical neighbours average (25.09%). By Year 6, a third of pupils are considered to be overweight or obese in Tameside (33.97%), however this is lower than both the England and statistical neighbours average (34.17% and 37.24% respectively)
- The rate for under 18 hospital admission due to alcohol was 67.84 per 100,000 population in 2012/13-2014/15, this is almost double the England average (36.61 per 100,000).
- Teenage pregnancy - Teenage conception rate has fallen consistently over the last 7 years from 59.8 per 1,000 population for the year to March 2008 to 24.4 for the year to March 2015.

Children's Services

- In 2015, 10% of looked after children have had 3 or more placement during the year, this equates to the England national average but is slightly higher than the NW (9%) and statistical neighbours averages (9.44%).
- 72% of looked after children have been in the same placement for at least 2 years or placed for adoption; higher than the England average (68%).
- In 2014-15, 26% of looked after children returned home after a period of being looked after, this reduced from 38% the previous year and is significantly lower than the England average of 34%.
- In 2016, Tameside's children in need rate per 10,000 population was 274.60 significantly below the statistical neighbours average (429.42) and the England and NW averages (337.70 and 380.10 respectively). However the percentage of children in need for 2 or more years stood at 41.8% in 2016, significantly higher than the England, NW and Statistical neighbours averages (30.9%, 31.3% and 29.41% respectively).
- In 2016 the rate of referrals to Children's Social care was 300.3 per 10,000 population, almost half the referral rate of the statistical neighbours (597.54) and lower than both England and NW averages (532.20 and 583.60 respectively). Between August 2016 and January 2017 the rate of referrals has risen to 579.11 closing the gap between Tameside and its statistical neighbours considerably.
- In 2016, 14% of looked after children were adopted, a fall of 3% points on the previous year and now below the national average of 15% and the statistical neighbour average of 21.2%.
- 53% of children wait less than 16 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family, higher than the England and statistical neighbours averages (47% and 50.9% respectively).
- Between December 2015 and December 2016 the percentage of re-referrals within 12 months of a previous referral was 15.5%. This is Below the national average of 24% and statistical neighbour average of 23%
- The proportion of Child Protection Conferences within 15 days between December 2015 and December 2016 was 79.3%. Slightly above the 2015 national average of 74.7% and in line with the north west average of 79.5% for the same period. Performance remains worse than the statistical neighbour average of 99.6%.
- In touch with 86% of care leavers
- 91% of care leavers in suitable accommodation – above national average (81%)
- 4 Residential Children's homes run by Tameside Council including: Boyds Walk – Outstanding. Clough Fold – Good, Chester Avenue Good

4 – VOICE OF THE CHILD

- 4.1 We are committed to ensuring that the voice of the child is an essential part of service planning and that engagement with children and young people is meaningful. At every stage of the child protection process we will ensure that the child is listened to and kept informed of the decisions that are being taken around their care pathway to ensure they feel safe and able to voice their wishes and concerns. We will use a variety of techniques to engage with our young people including conversations, play and drawings to ensure that all children feel comfortable in providing their views. We will continue to use the findings from our engagement with our young people and combine the findings with our other engagement mechanisms such as 2BeUs.
- 4.2 We have supported 2BeUs – the Tameside Children in Care Council and listened to what they want from the service during their time growing up in care. We have collected these views and wishes and made them into a list of promises, the Tameside Pledge.
- 4.3 The Tameside Pledge includes promises to:
- Always involve children in the decisions that will affect them
 - Help children stay in touch with important people in their lives
 - Keep children safe, and help children to keep themselves safe
 - Help children achieve their potential
 - Help prepare children for independence and adult life
 - Listen to 2BeUs
- 4.4 The refreshed Tameside Pledge was presented to the meeting of Full Council on 29 November 2016 with a speech to the assembled group from the Chair of 2BeUs. The pledge was agreed by Full Council and all the councillors individually signed the pledge.
- 4.5 Improvement Plan engagement with 2 Be Us**
- 4.6 In February 2017 an engagement session took place with the members of 2BeUs to identify what they want to see in this Improvement Plan.
- 4.7 Children have told us that they want:
- More people to be available in the service, who are easy to get to know and get in touch with
 - Social workers who stay with them for longer
 - More Early Help services
 - To get the right service at the right time if something happens
 - Everyone to be aware of their own role in safeguarding children
 - Support from specialists when needed
 - Caring foster carers, who know their children and what they need
- 4.8 We recognise that regularly feeding back the ideas of children in care is crucial in order for us to be able to keep improvement not just on track, but on track with children's needs at the heart of the service. We will explore other opportunities and engagement mechanisms to capture the views of young people both in the care system and outside of it to understand how improvements in preventative work can be made to ensure better outcomes for young people and their families.

5 – WHAT DOES/WILL GOOD LOOK LIKE

- 5.1 We want children and their families in Tameside to be successful. We will work to ensure that help is given at the earliest opportunity that enables children and their families to thrive wherever we can. In doing this we will seek to support families to break the cycle of reliance on services, and support children and young people to grow in a stable and settled environment. Children will have better experience of their time growing up and be supported to realise their aspirations.
- 5.2 Children and young people will be seen by a confident practitioner who is compliant with statutory guidance and applies the threshold of need accurately. This will ensure that children and young people are always given the best care possible and the most suitable placement.
- 5.3 Children and young people in care will be supported into stable placements where they are safe from harm and happy so that they are helped to live healthy lifestyles, and achieve at school. This will be possible because we see the voice of the child as a vital source of information that will direct future planning and implementation of the service.
- 5.4 Children, young people and their families will be actively involved in the plans that determine their care, both on an individual case level and the strategic level. Feedback from children and young people will be seen by elected members, senior leaders, managers and frontline practitioners, and will be used to draw up benchmarks of improvement so we know how well we are performing.
- 5.5 We will seek to achieve the following outcomes:**
- Children and young people are supported to do well, be healthy both physically and emotionally, they feel safe from harm and their needs and wishes are listened to.
 - Children in need and their families receive good, multi-agency support based on their needs, so that children are helped to remain with their families where it is safe and appropriate to do so.
 - Children live healthy lifestyles and are enabled to do so by all professionals who know them
 - Children looked after are equipped to manage their emotional and mental health, and professionals refer them to the right care at the right time when concerns are identified.
 - Children in need of help and support are supported to attend and achieve at school, and any concerns such as missing lessons are identified and addressed by school and social work staff
 - Children looked after will not be held back at school by their personal backgrounds, or special educational needs or disabilities.
 - Care leavers will be supported and encouraged to be in education, training or employment as adults
 - Overall our children will be safe, happy, healthy, well-educated and prepared to make a positive contribution to society.

5.6 How will this be achieved?

- 5.7 To achieve 'good', there will be a culture change that will allow for a strong multi-agency partnership including, police, schools, health, housing and safeguarding bodies across Tameside. The partnership will be aware of and work towards common goals and objectives around a vision of successful families sustained by high quality services (where intervention or support is need).
- 5.8 All practitioners and staff will have a full understanding of thresholds which will be applied consistently. There will be respectful challenge between colleagues and partners of threshold application and casework decisions in an environment of shared learning and develop best practice through common understanding.
- 5.9 Social work teams will have appropriate caseloads, and cases assigned to them that are appropriate for their level of experience. Help and support will be provided holistically with no gap between agencies and organisations. Support provision will take account of a full range of needs including health, emotional well-being, and education.
- 5.10 Feedback from children and young people and their families will inform care planning on both an individual case basis but also as a collective evidence base to provide strategic direction for service planning.
- 5.11 Elected members, strategic leaders, managers, frontline practitioners and all relevant partners will be aware of what good looks like and actively drive and support improvement.
- 5.12 Team managers will carry out effective supervision which ensures they know their staff and their cases well and are able to support effective decision making. Caseloads that are manageable and suited to the social worker's skills and experience will enable them to build positive relationships with children and see them regularly.
- 5.13 Assessments of children and young people will be carried out in a timely manner, capture their views and take into consideration a comprehensive view of their parents' capacity to look after them at home. Assessments will result in objective and tangible, positive outcomes for the safety and wellbeing of children. This will be measured by benchmarks drawn up from good quality and up to date performance management reporting.
- 5.14 The responsibility of all partner agencies will be clearly understood with appropriate levels of accountability. A governance framework led by the Children's Services Improvement Board will ensure a transparent approach to improvement involving partners from a wide range of agencies both in holding responsible agencies to account and in sharing ownership of the improvement journey.

5.15 Delivering Improvement

- 5.16 The action plan in section two sets out an 18 month timescale for the delivery of improvement commencing in October 2016. Delivery timelines will be reviewed by the Children's Services Improvement Board to ensure that actions remain deliverable and appropriate.
- 5.17 The delivery of each of the actions included in section 7 of the improvement plan will be delivered by the lead identified within the improvement plan. Each action will be supported by a project plan which sets out the project tasks that will deliver the action.
- 5.18 The plan will set out timescales in greater detail and enable the project lead to escalate concerns to a designated strategic lead who will be responsible for assisting the project lead towards the completion of project tasks.
- 5.19 Progress towards delivery of each action will be monitored by the Children's Services Improvement Board where concerns will be escalated as appropriate

5.20 The Role and Responsibilities of Partners

5.21 Multi-agency working will be essential for achieving positive outcomes for children and young people. The agencies that form the Children's Services Improvement Board will play a pivotal role in the leadership of the improvement process to support the journey of children in Tameside.

5.22 Key agencies involved in the supporting the journey of the child include:

- **Schools** – as the most frequent point of contact with public services for the majority of children, schools play a vital role in nurturing and supporting families. Schools are frequently the first agencies to recognise where support is needed and will often be the lead agency where assessments are carried out using the Common Assessment Framework.
- **Health** – health agencies play a continuing role throughout the journey of children in Tameside from the services delivered by midwives and health visitors to support the early life of the family through to school nurse services, General Practitioners, acute services and targeted commissioned support. The integration of health services with wider support offered to children and their families is essential to the delivery of services.
- **Police – Greater Manchester Police** have contact with families during some of the most difficult times and are the key point of contact in cases where criminality is involved. This may be apparent in a range of situations and particularly where evidence of domestic abuse is present.
- **Tameside Council** – The Local Authority has a duty under the Children Act 1989 to make enquiries about any child where there are concerns for their welfare and safety. The local authority must work with all partner agencies to ensure children are effectively safeguarded.
- **Voluntary Community and Faith Sector** – as both a provider of services and a champion for local communities the Voluntary, Community and Faith sector in Tameside, play an essential role in helping support children and families who are having difficulties. Effective collaboration between the voluntary and public sectors is vital to maintaining an effective offer of early help in Tameside.
- **Registered Housing Providers** – registered housing providers work with vulnerable families with complex needs to provide housing including temporary housing that supports families to lead independent lives.

5.23 How will we know when we are improving?

5.24 We will evidence our improvement journey in a number of ways to provide assurance to children and families, the Improvement Board, Elected Members and wider stakeholders that we are improving our services and supporting children and young people to lead successful lives. The tools we are using will include:

- **Performance Scorecard** – a comprehensive performance scorecard will bring together the key indicators we will use to evidence improvement. A subset of these indicators will be reported as focus areas at each Improvement Board meeting.
- **Team Plans** – each team will produce a plan on a page which includes the improvement actions each team is taking and shows progress against indicators of success. Team managers will meet regularly at performance clinics to discuss their improvement journey, address challenges and highlight best practice.
- **Quality Audit** – a rolling programme of quality auditing will support and challenge the application of thresholds and decision making. Involvement of partners from key agencies such as health, education and Greater Manchester Police will ensure that decision making remains consistent and robust.
- **Monitoring and Accountability** – the improvement Board will form the central pillar of accountability and scrutiny of progress. Regular updates on progress will be provided to key

decision making bodies such as the Single Commissioning Board, Tameside Councils Executive Cabinet and the Health and Well Being Board and the Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel.

- **Practitioner Improvement** – practitioner groups will support improvement led by frontline staff bringing together best practice and providing evaluation of service delivery.
- **Peer Review and Challenge** – improvement will be supported by a programme of peer review and challenge. This will be taken forward through work in collaboration with organisations such as the Local Government Association, North West Employers and sector leaders across Greater Manchester and the North West.
- **External Support** – commission external support and expertise to support the improvement process through the analysis of the effectiveness systems and processes. Followed by critical friend review and testing of redesign.
- **Communication and Engagement** – a communications and engagement plan will set out the mechanisms for communication with stakeholders including use of social media, websites, newsletters and briefings. This will support the understanding of progress made in the delivery of the Improvement Plan, support engagement and collaboration and raise wider awareness of the support and services available to children and their families.

5.25 Honest reflection and constructive challenge between colleagues and partners around performance across the system will be essential to driving improvement. The whole of the information available, whether it be indicator data or reflective feedback from an audit, will provide the common understanding of progress towards good.

6 – OUR RESPONSE AND APPROACH

- 6.1 We are committed to rapidly addressing the concerns raised by Ofsted in order to ensure services within Tameside provide the best possible support to children and young people. To ensure that our approach is sustainable in the long term we will support children and young people and their families to become independent and self-reliant, and reduce dependency on public services. We will work closely with our partners so that services that meet the needs of children and young people are not delivered in silos. We will work together to support sustainability, reducing dependency and levels of need in our communities, and making best use of shared resources. The improvements we will undertake fall into 6 main themes:
- Leadership and Strategy
 - Demand and Need
 - Resources and Capacity
 - Quality, Practice and Compliance
 - Outcomes for Children
 - Sustainability
- 6.2 A core principle that will underpin the above six themes will be the voice of the child. This will inform the actions taken towards improvement, given that the needs of children in our care are paramount in securing genuine and sustainable improvement.
- 6.3 **Leadership and Strategy** – improving the leadership of services and the quality of information used to inform decision making.
- 6.4 Our aim is to build the understanding of issues that impact on the lives of children and young people in Tameside and ensure that agencies across Tameside have the right information at the right time to make the effective protection and safeguarding decisions at the earliest possible opportunity. To achieve this we must ensure that they are fully involved decision making and that services are shaped by their experience and views.
- 6.5 Building leadership skills and capacity and equipping the workforce with the right range of decision making tools is essential to ensuring professionals are enabled to work together with children and young people to achieve positive outcomes.
- 6.6 Working with Tameside Safeguarding Children Board as a key partner we will ensure that performance management information provided to senior leaders and elected members is timely and high quality and an effective quality assurance framework is used to support improvement across all partners. Tameside Safeguarding Children Board will be a key partner providing support and challenge to the improvement process.
- 6.7 The strategic approach to services to support children and their families recognises the journey of children and young people through services from the receipt of universal services to targeted early help and support through the continuum of need to children's social care services. Leaders

in agencies across Tameside are committed to developing an offer that ensures the right support is available at the right time to improve outcomes and that wherever possible children and their families don't need to access social services and where they do they are supported to move downwards through the continuum of need towards universal services.

- 6.8 Demand and Need** – understanding the demand on services and ensuring that services are equipped to respond rapidly and effectively to need.
- 6.9 Our approach is to make better use of information: using accurate and up to date performance information to ensure that there is an understanding of demands on services and use this information to inform delivery and development of services which take account of underlying need. We recognise that frontline staff are one of our most valuable assets and whilst immediate demand has been met by an increase in agency staffing we are taking steps to ensure that workforce stability is increased and caseloads are reduced to allow staff to respond to need effectively.
- 6.10 Understanding need is about more than understanding the presenting needs of children and young people at the point of contact, it is about developing a holistic understanding of the support that it is required and ensuring that services are in place that are resourced to meet need effectively. At points of access to services we will ensure that pathways are effective and that thresholds are applied appropriately.
- 6.11 As a part of understanding holistic need we are focused on effective integration of services with key partners to enable effective early intervention.
- 6.12 Resources and Capacity** – equipping services across Tameside to respond appropriately and deliver effective services.
- 6.13 The delivery of effective services for children and young people is reliant on the committed and skilled workforces of agencies across Tameside. A balanced financial plan has been put in place to ensure that adequate resources are committed to enable services to address both existing and emergent demand.
- 6.14 We recognise that in addition to financial resources effective delivery of services is reliant on the capacity both in terms of individual and collective skills of staff members and staffing numbers. To be able to practice well practitioners who work with children and young people must work in an environment which supports their development as professionals.
- 6.15 We are committed to ensuring that staff delivering services in organisations across Tameside have a suitable level of qualification for their job role and that they are supported in their professional development through an effective workforce development programme.
- 6.16 Quality, Practice and Compliance** – ensuring that practice based decisions are made using consistent thresholds which result in high quality outcomes for children and young people in Tameside. We will develop frameworks which support all agencies to understand and apply thresholds consistently, that allows for practical guidance and mediation.
- 6.17 Consistent decision making based on a thorough understanding of needs and viewpoints of children and young people is essential to delivering services that are fit for purpose. We are committed to bringing partners together to ensuring that assessments are informed by

consideration of family history and parental capacity and reflect changes in the child's needs and circumstances.

- 6.18 We will use regular single and multi-agency quality audits and reflective practice across all agencies in Tameside to check that decision making is consistent and effective, and to ensure that the right help is delivered at the right time to support children and young people. We will be transparent in sharing findings from audit with partners supporting a culture of continual improvement.
- 6.19 We will work in partnership with Tameside Safeguarding Children Board to ensure frontline practice is effectively evaluated and that learning is shared and informs decision making.
- 6.20 Outcomes for Children** – achieving the best possible outcomes for children by focusing improvement and development activity on understanding and meeting the needs of children and young people in Tameside.
- 6.21 We will work with partners to improve outcomes by ensuring that help and support is available at the earliest possible opportunity using effective early intervention to improve life chances. Our outcomes framework will hold the voice of the child at its heart.
- 6.22 We will work together with education, health, housing and public protection services in Tameside to ensure that young people who are vulnerable are supported by all services to realise their aspirations be that in relation to living independently, education, employment or other ambition. We will work with children and young people by listening to them and using their insight to shape services which meet their needs.
- 6.23 Sustainability** – maintaining long term improvement by putting in place services and interventions which address systemic issues driving demand on services.
- 6.24 Most children who are at risk of abuse or neglect will have contact with professionals working in services such as health, social care and education throughout their lives. Early intervention work focusing on identifying risk to children at an early stage, will enable services to take the most appropriate action to support children and young people and start to break cycles of reoccurring need. We will work with partners such as schools to ensure that opportunities to support children and young people who are at risk are not missed. Our Integrated Neighbourhood Support service will be a key partner in the journey by being at the forefront of the prevention agenda.
- 6.25 We are committed to a sustainable approach to service improvement including investment in programmes of work designed to reduce long term need. This includes the creation of an Edge of Care Service focused on an intensive whole family response to children on the edge of care focused on supporting families to remain together where safe. Other projects aimed at increasing sustainability include:
- Investing in intervention models that enable extended family members to work together with services to identify family options that help to secure permanence for children where appropriate.
 - Adopting more effective transition planning model for looked after young people that equips them with skills to continue their journey into adulthood. Working with partners such as, Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust, Active Tameside and New Charter we will work creatively with young people to ensure that their needs are met and they are supported in respect of employability and life skills.

- Working together with partners on these and other projects we will seek out additional opportunities to ensure that effective intervention leads to reduced demand for services and supports the long term sustainability of services to support children and young people across Tameside.
- Work through the Tameside and Glossop Single Commissioning Function to reduce duplication and increase sustainability in planning services to improve health outcomes which meet the needs of children and young people and their families.
- We recognise that effectively meeting the needs of children and young people and those who care for them a multi-agency approach must be adopted, working in partnership and through delivering and applying an integrated health and social care offer.

7 – IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The section below outlines each of the six thematic improvement areas in more detail including key actions that will be taken and measures we will use to monitor progress.

Each thematic area is supported by a strategic lead and each action by an allocated lead officer. The role of the lead officer is to deliver the tasks associated with the delivery of individual actions and monitor progress through a detailed project plan.

Where blockages or critical decision points are identified within delivery of the project plan the role of the strategic lead is to ensure that appropriate action is taken to address blockages and that strategic decision relating to the project plan are taken at an appropriate level.

Areas of substantial concern will be highlighted at each Children's Services Improvement Board meeting to facilitate a multi-agency approach to problem solving.

Overall progress towards the delivery actions set out in the Children's Services Improvement Plan will be discussed at each Improvement Board meeting with priority for discussion based on the delivery timeline for each action.

7A – LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGY

7.1 Leadership and the management of performance at a strategic level were identified as a key area of concern by Ofsted. In particular, recommendations for improvement were made in relation to:

- The quality of performance reporting to senior leaders, Elected Members and the Tameside Safeguarding Children Board (R5)
- The effectiveness of arrangements to scrutinise the performance of services (R4, R5)
- The quality of supervision and management oversight (R2, R4, R6)
- The use of the Common Assessment Framework amongst partner organisations (R8)
- Ensuring that children's views and wishes are consistently gathered recorded and used to inform planning. (R7)
- Delivery of the Corporate Parenting Strategy (R14)
- Ensure that support to the Children in care council enables effective representation of the views of children of all ages and those placed at a distance from the local authority. (R20)

Initial Response

7.2 A range of activity has been carried out in immediate response to concerns regarding Leadership and Strategy inside the service. These include:

- Regular governance visits scheduled throughout the year to increase the oversight and visibility of senior managers
- Monthly whole workforce engagement sessions

- Implementation of a revised induction framework for staff developed and ready for implementation by March 2017
- Weekly briefing email circulated to all staff by the Assistant Executive Director for Children's Services together with minutes of senior managers meetings to increase communications and increase the visibility of decision making processes
- An updated, improved performance scorecard to better inform strategic managers
- An updated and improved data booklet for frontline teams to enable them to address issues and celebrate positives at the earliest stage
- Training opportunity via STRIVE for front line managers available immediately and well attended
- Performance clinics monthly for all managers to be held to account and for them to be able to flag up danger areas or blockages to success

Key Actions

- 7.3 The following actions will underpin ongoing improvement in relation to the strategic leadership of services to safeguard vulnerable children and young people in Tameside:
- The introduction of a fully integrated multi-agency performance framework underpinned by regular and timetabled reporting to key stakeholders, including partners, team leaders, senior managers, elected members and scrutiny panels.
 - Implementation of programme of activity enabling reflective learning including, regular staff workshops, programme of governance visits, and effective staff supervision to ensure that the impact of changing demand on services is understood.
 - Work with Tameside Safeguarding Children Board to ensure that the Common Assessment Framework and Graded Care Profile processes are embedded across services in Tameside and that all agencies are held to account in the application of these processes.
 - All members of the Tameside Council Children's Leadership team will undergo a 360 evaluation programme. Following this and working in partnership with North West Employers a development and improvement programme will be put in place to ensure that there is a clear performance management framework for senior leaders.
 - Development of the training available to staff and partners through Tameside safeguarding Children Board and other agencies.

What Will Good Look Like?

- 7.4 Strong leadership and collaborative strategies between agencies will be the crucial ingredient to improvement. The voice of children, including those in care will be the fundamental driver of high-level strategic improvement. Senior and middle managers, leaders and elected members will frequently seek and use feedback from children and their families.
- 7.5 The Tameside Safeguarding Children Board will have a reviewed business plan and structure. The board will gather the views and experiences of children and these will help to inform and direct the work of the board. Understanding of good safeguarding practice will ensure senior leaders scrutinise practice effectively and enforce timely application of thresholds. There will be strengthened reporting links between the Tameside Safeguarding Children Board and the Corporate Parenting Strategic Group and Family Justice Board, so that safeguarding children can be monitored effectively.
- 7.6 Senior and middle managers will have a strong grasp of the concerns of children at risk of sexual exploitation, and awareness of this will be the focal point of achieving good outcomes such as ensuring that children feel safe and protected from harm. Leaders of agencies across Tameside will establish a collaborative approach by building relationships with key groups such as the

Tameside Safeguarding Children Board and Corporate Parenting Strategic Group, so that all parties share an understanding of how well services are benefitting children and young people.

- 7.7 Leaders will regularly monitor performance data and feed this information back to workers and managers, so leaders, managers, frontline staff and key partners all have clear benchmarks upon which to measure the success of improvement.

7.8 Action Plan

STRATEGIC LEAD – Steven Pleasant – Chief Executive and Accountable Officer				2016/17		2017/18			
Ref	Action / project	Rec	By who?	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
A1	Tameside Council to lead on the engagement of peer support and challenge for the improvement process across all partners with a focus on shared development and learning re multi-agency practice and quality.	All	Steven Pleasant Chief Executive and Accountable Officer DCS Stephanie Butterworth AED Children's Services Dominic Tumelty	●	●	●	●	●	●
A2	Secure Local Government Association input to the development of, and ongoing support to, the improvement process (including membership of the Board and advising on peer review arrangements).	All	DCS Stephanie Butterworth	●	●	●	●	●	●
A3	Engagement of external Directors of Children's Services challenge visits alongside the ongoing improvement process with a focus on critical friend challenge and learning.	All, R5	DCS Stephanie Butterworth	●	●	●	●	●	●
A4	Integrated programme of activity to enable reflective learning based on practitioner insight including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular all staff/agency workshops • Regular all managers meetings • Staff surveys and consultation with partners to gauge progress • Scheduled governance visits to increase oversight by and visibility of senior leaders. 	R2, R3, R4, R5, R6	AED Children's Services Dominic Tumelty	●	●	●	●	●	●

	<p>Progress against this action will be reported at each Children's Services Improvement Board.</p> <p>Sharing of best practice and insight to be undertaken through the Tameside Safeguarding Children Board as the key multi-agency forum.</p>								
A5	<p>Implimentation of the revised Looked After Children's Strategy:</p> <p>Review to be carried out by Corporate Parenting Group Chaired by the Executive Member for Children and Families the process will be undertaken in the following key stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial discussions at Corporate Parenting Group in March 2017 • Revised draft to be produced for consideration • Revised final document to be considered by for agreement by Executive Cabinet following agreement at Corporate Parenting Group 	R14	Sheena Wooding reporting to the CPG		●	●	●		
A6	<p>Promotion of the Corporate Parenting role across Tameside Council including embedding understanding of the corporate parenting role across services. This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and implementation of Corporate Parenting Communications Strategy including - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Elected member development sessions to build on understanding and ownership of the corporate parenting role ○ Awareness raising sessions with key services ○ All staff communications through, Chief Executives Brief, staff newsletter and staff intranet pages ○ Design and display of additional promotional materials 	R14, R20	DCS Stephanie Butterworth Councillor Robinson			●	●	●	●
A7	<p>Development of wider links to support the voice of the child including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in partnership with children young people and to identify priority 	R7, R12	Head of Service , Safeguarding and			●	●	●	●

	<p>areas for the development of the voice of the child</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting and engaging Tameside Youth Council as a key agency for youth advocacy Engagement with wider networks The development of the youth champions network Ensure that key leaders are able to advocate for the voice of the child in every aspect of planning and delivery of services. Co-design of campaigns to support awareness of the voice of the child in Tameside 		Review Ged Sweeney						
A8	<p>Work in partnership with Tameside Safeguarding Children Board to increase the effective use of the Common Assessment Framework and Graded Care Profile by organisations across Tameside.</p> <p>This action will be supported by D11 - the recruitment of CAF co-ordinator roles.</p>	R2, R4, R8	Head of Service, Early help and YOT and Chair TSCB Sally Dickin / David Niven			●	●	●	●
A9	<p>Introduction of a new performance framework involving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team self-assessment Improvement planning process Regular performance clinics (managers and staff) <p>The performance framework will be underpinned by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly caseload reporting focusing on key cohorts including Child in Need, Child Protection Plans and Looked After Children Monthly reporting of baseline indicators and Children's Services Improvement Plan framework, including workforce statistics and investment decisions. Regular timetabled reports to key stakeholders including, senior manager, elected members, scrutiny panels, Tameside Safeguarding Children Board and key partner organisations. 	R2, R3, R4, R5, R6	AED Children's Services Dominic Tumelty Head of performance Jane Barker	●	●	●	●	●	●

A10	Implementation of a development and improvement programme working with the North West Employers organisation focused on the development of high quality leadership.	R4	AED Children's Services Dominic Tumelty		●	●	●		
A11	Put in place a strong and multi-layered assurance process that provides both effective challenge and constructive support to the improvement process. The assurance process needs to draw on experience from children, families, staff, managers, lay-members, VCFS and elected members.	R4	Head of Service QA Katherine Mackay			●	●		

7.9 Key Indicators

Quantitative Indicator	Link to Action
Number of contacts at the service entry point	A9
Referrals per 10,000 of the child population (projected rate)	A9
Re-referrals received within 12 months of a previous referral	A9
Percentage of referrals where a decision was made within 24 hours	A9
Timeliness of assessments, statutory visits, and child protection conferences	A9
Percentage of children with up to date child protection reviews and care leavers with pathway plans which are effective	A7
Qualitative Indicator	Link to Action
Stability, experience and caseloads of workers	A9
Findings from Audit on the quality of work being undertaken	A4, A11
All staff will receive high-quality supervision and managerial oversight as often as they need it, and fitting with their level of skills and experience	A1, A2, A3, A4
Reporting of performance management to senior leaders and elected members is timely and of a high calibre	A1, A2, A3, A9
A refreshed Corporate Parenting Strategy will be shared across the partnership, so that external bodies can support the improvement process	A5, A6
There is an effective quality assurance framework in place that will monitor, improve and increase the use of Early Help services	A11
Safeguarding practice is well-informed and is kept up to date though regularly capturing information and evaluating the effectiveness of the current strategy	A4

7B – DEMAND AND NEED

7.10 During the Ofsted inspection concerns were raised regarding Tameside's ability to respond effectively to increased demand on services and understand the needs of vulnerable children in Tameside. Concerns were raised with regard to the following:

- Ensuring there were sufficient staff in key areas to deal with demand on services and that workloads are manageable. (R1, R6)
- Ensuring that staff have suitable levels of qualification and experience for the role that are required to undertake. (R1, R6)
- Ensuring that action is compliant with statutory guidance and that thresholds are applied appropriately at points of access to services. (R2)
- Ensuring that the quality assurance work by senior and middle managers routinely considers the quality of managerial decision making and application of thresholds at all stages of a child's involvement with the local authority, including contacts within the Children's Hub. (R4)
- Work with partners to ensure coordinated early help for a wider group of children through increased use of early help assessments and plans. (R8)
- Ensuring that when children go missing from home or care, the information gathered at return home interviews is used to inform planning effectively and reduce future risk. (R10)
- Tameside Safeguarding Children's Boards capacity to evaluate thresholds across the partnership effectively. (R17)

7.11 Initial Response

7.12 In response to concerns relating to management of and response to underlying demand and need for services the following actions were taken:

- Immediate increase in agency staffing to meet immediate needs and ensure that sufficient capacity is in place to meet the needs of vulnerable children and young people.
- Rolling programme of recruitment is underway to stabilise the workforce in the medium term.
- Commitment to ensuring there are sufficient resources in place to ensure appropriate caseload levels allowing social workers and other staff sufficient time to carry out assessments and deliver services that meet the needs of children and young people.
- Undertaken a staffing review to ensure that suitable staff are available, deployed effectively and in the right numbers to meet demands on the service provided.

7.13 Key Actions

7.14 The following actions will underpin the approach of Tameside Council and its partners in meeting the needs of children and young people in Tameside and in ensuring that services in place are able to meet current demand and respond effectively to changes demands on services in the coming years:

- Multi-agency work will be undertaken in partnership with the Tameside Safeguarding Children Board to analyse underlying need across the Tameside including all critical points of access such as, schools, health (incl. school nursing), the police and children's social care.
- Development of a shared understanding of the roles of different agencies to increase coordination and reduce duplication in meeting the needs of children and young people.

- Ongoing assessment of service entry points to ensure that a sustainable model is in place that is responsive to changing demand levels and enables effective delivery of services to children and young people.
- Support the development of Tameside Safeguarding Children Board multi-agency data set to enable the effective delivery of scrutiny, and improve transparency that enables support and challenge across Tameside.
- Assessment of all contact points to ensure a sustainable model is in place that is flexible to demand and able to respond effectively.

7.15 What Will Good Look Like?

- 7.16 Leaders and senior managers across Tameside are aware of changing and emergent demand and have sufficient information to enable effective decision making which supports timely response by services.
- 7.17 Children and young people in need of help and support will be seen by practitioners and workers who have the right knowledge and experience to be able to address each child's unique needs and formulate a plan based on the best outcome for that child.
- 7.18 Practitioners will have their caseload tailored to their ability to fulfil the job they undertake, and will have more time to deal with complex and varying circumstances with careful consideration. Children and young people in need of help and protection will not be delayed in receiving the right intervention that is consistently compliant with statutory guidance, no matter what walk of life or type of care the child needs.
- 7.19 Leaders, managers and workers will have strong self-awareness of how application of thresholds benefits children in need, and how they are performing in this area. They will take appropriate action to address areas of concern. This will be guaranteed through higher level evaluation of whether the application of thresholds is both consistent, and effective in ensuring the best outcomes for vulnerable children and their families. As a result, as soon as a child is identified as being at risk of harm, they will receive the right intervention at the right time.

7.20 Action Plan

STRATEGIC LEAD – Stephanie Butterworth – Director of Children's Services				20216/17		2017/08			
Ref	Action / project	Rec	By who?	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
B1	Maintain recruitment programme for agency staff to meet short term demand and develop approach to ensure that rapid recruitment options are available to manage short-term and unanticipated pressures on the workforce. Reassessment to take place once demand levels have stabilised and an understanding of long-term workforce requirements has been established.	R1	AED Children's Services Dominic Tumelty Head of HR Tracy Brennand	●	●	●	●		
B2	Implement a rolling recruitment programme for permanent social work staff to increase workforce stability and reduce changes of social worker for children. Levels of permanent staff required to be assessed based on long term demand forecasting.	R1	AED Children's Services Dominic Tumelty Head of HR Tracy Brennand	●	●	●	●	●	●
B3	Identify causes and addressed issues within the Children's Hub following spike in unassigned contact ensure points of failure have been addressed and waiting times have been reduced. Performance will be monitored on an ongoing basis and changes undertaken as appropriate as a part of the continual improvement process. Key areas of focus to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of the equipment and working environment • Monitoring of contact and referrals to ensure that historic patterns of demand are fully understood • Development of a performance framework that ensures that managers and leaders are equipped with information that enables a rapid and effective response to changes in demand 	R2, R4	AED Children's Services Dominic Tumelty Head of Service referral and assessment	●	●	●			

B4	<p>Multi-agency assessment of all contact points to ensure a sustainable model is in place that is flexible to demand and able to respond effectively, including increasing involvement from partner agencies to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-agency analysis of existing processes • Co-location of staff from the Greater Manchester Police Public Protection and Investigation Unit • Health services i.e. LAC Health Teams and Safeguarding Provider Teams • Re-launch of a revised Children's Hub developed through multi-agency engagement and input from relevant stakeholders and principal lead agencies. • Revised model to be clearly and comprehensively communicated to all parties to ensure clarity of understanding of threshold points and access routes. <p>(Links to B9 and B10)</p> <p>This model will be re-assessed as a part of continual improvement processes, to ensure that it is working as effectively as possible.</p>	R2, R4	<p>AED Children's Services Dominic Tumelty</p> <p>Head of Service Referral and Assessment</p>			●	●	●	
B5	<p>Development of a financial plan which enables stabilisation of services and long term investment to reduce demand through invest in services that reduce long term demand through effective intervention at the earliest opportunity.</p>	All	<p>DCS Stephanie Butterworth</p> <p>Finance Manager Stephen Wilde</p>	●	●	●			
B6	<p>In partnership with Tameside Safeguarding Children board carry revise data and information sharing approach to ensure interfaces between partners and agencies enable more effective and timely decision making. In particular relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children Missing from Home. • Looked After Children moving into Tameside from other local authority areas. • Safeguarding where family members attend different schools 	R8, R10, R18	<p>Head of Service, Conference and Review Ged Sweeney</p> <p>Head of performance Jane Barker</p>			●	●		

B7	Development of links between the Elective Home Education team and Children's Social Care to ensure that electively educated from home are not excluded from safeguards available to all children.	-	Head of Service, Referral and Assessment			●	●		
B8	Support the development of Tameside Safeguarding Children Board multi-agency dataset to enable the effective delivery of scrutiny, support and challenge across Tameside.	R2, R4, R15, R18	Head of Performance Jane Barker Chair of TSCB David Niven			●			
B9	Work with the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector to assess existing support capacity and ensure information is shared appropriately to support effective delivery of services.	R8	Head of Service Early Help and Intervention and Sally Dickin			●			
B10	Develop a multi-agency early help strategy that explains and co-ordinates preventative services providing agencies with a clear pathway for accessing help and support that is outside of universal but sub-threshold.	R8	Head of Service Early Help and Intervention and Sally Dickin			●	●		

7.21 Key Indicators

Quantitative Indicator	Link to Action
Total number of referrals received	B3, B4
Number of Children in Need	B3, B4
Number of episodes of children missing from home	B6
Number of return home interviews completed	B6
Number of Children on a Child Protection Plan	B1, B2
Number of Children on a Child Protection Plan for more than 18 months	B1, B2
Number of Looked After Children	B1, B2
The proportion of children who attend planning meeting	B1, B2
Percentage of contacts with a decision in 1 working day	B3, B4
Percentage initial child protection conference within 15 working days	B1, B2
Percentage child and family assessments completed within 45 working days	B1, B2
Qualitative Indicator	Link to Action
All areas of service have a sufficient level of staff that are well-equipped for the role they are required to take.	B1, B2
Quality assurance of work by senior and middle managers considers the quality of managerial decision-making at all stages of a child's involvement with the local authority	B8
The application of thresholds for support of children and young people is consistent and results in appropriate, timely intervention for children.	B1, B2
Stabilising the workforce – recruiting more agency social workers in the short term; rolling out the recruitment drive for permanent social workers will strengthen skilled workforce	B1, B2
Good support/supervision/oversight of social work staff makes for happier workforce; increase staff satisfaction/retention in the long run.	B1, B2

7C – RESOURCES AND CAPACITY

7.22 Several improvement areas have been identified relating to the allocation of resources to support children and young people and the capacity of organisations in Tameside to respond effectively to need. In particular the following areas have been highlighted as priorities for improvement:

- Ensuring that all services have sufficient staff levels to cope with demand. (R1)
- Equipping staff across services with the skills they need to improve the services they deliver. (R1)
- Ensuring staff have suitable qualifications for the role they are required to do. (R1, R6)
- Ensuring that action taken by social workers is compliance with statutory guidance and the application of threshold in casework is appropriate. (R2)
- Ensuring that newly qualified social workers on an assessed and supported year in employment receive sufficient support and training. (R6)
- Working with partners to ensure coordinated early help for a wider group of children. (R8)
- Ensuring children are provided with timely service to make certain that their emotional health and well-being are promoted. (R9)

7.23 Initial Response

7.24 In response to concerns regarding the resources and capacity available to meet the needs of vulnerable children and young people the following actions were taken:

- Increased opportunities for staff to share ideas and concerns via scheduled staff engagement sessions including regular staff surveys, the set-up of an improvement inbox and working groups to address specific development areas.
- The decision making protocol has been revised to ensure that managers are supported to make decisions in a timely manner.
- All newly qualified social workers are enrolled on a university assisted Supported Year in Practice programme.
- Additional funding has been made on an ongoing basis to meet immediate demands on service together with specific funding to support the long term improvement programme.

7.25 Key Actions

7.26 The following actions will be undertaken to ensure that sufficient resources are available and that services have capacity to deliver support that meet the needs of children and young people in Tameside.

- Implementation of a revised workforce development model focused on developing a stable and skilled workforce including a full development programme for Newly Qualified Social Workers.
- Revision of existing salary and progression structure to ensure that Tameside remains a competitive employer and supports staff retention.

- Implementation of an appropriate caseloads approach setting out Tameside's approach to managing caseloads and providing team managers with an established framework to address caseload pressures.
- Implementation of multi-agency involvement at points of access to children's social care including clearer multi-agency arrangements for planning for vulnerable families.
- Development of referral pathways into services such as the Child and Adult Mental Health Service. This action includes a review of transition into key health services and consideration of a 'fast track' process where appropriate.

7.27 What Will Good Look Like?

- 7.28 Children looked after and children in need of help and protection from the authority will be seen by staff from a stable supported workforce. Children and young people will consistently receive the level of service that they require. Decisions will be made with careful consideration. The workforce will have manageable caseloads. Meaning that social workers will have the time to visit children on their caseload and build positive relationships with families.
- 7.29 The authority is working towards a workforce made up of permanent staff and will reduce reliance on agency staff, so that children will be known well by their social worker, and will not have to repeat their story again and again. Newly Qualified Social Workers will be fully supported in their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment, guaranteeing that they are fully able to undertake their role and are supported in the decision-making process.
- 7.30 All social work staff will receive regular supervision and managerial oversight that reflects their level of experience, so children and their families can be sure that the right decision is being made about their future. Leaders and managers will be aware of and understand the volume of cases and the quality of care plans and decisions which will provide accountability for safe and effective social work practice. Supervision will boost confidence among teams and help to retain and develop staff for longer.

7.31 Action Plan

STRATEGIC LEAD – Dominic Tumelty – Assisntant Executive Director Children's Services					2016/17		2017/18			
Ref	Action / project	Rec	By who?	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
C1	<p>Refreshment and implementation of a workforce strategy to support skills development and recruitment, and build workforce stability. This process will be broken down into the following key stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce engagement process to determine needs and views of the workforce • Production of a draft strategy • Communication and implementation • Check and review of effectiveness 	R1	<p>AED Children's Services Dominic Tumelty</p> <p>Workforce Development Brendan Kennedy</p>			●				
C2	<p>Design and implement a revised induction process to ensure that new staff are provided with effective information and support in their role. Supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with staff and team leaders to identify key information • Design of revised induction process • Pilot-process to test effectiveness • Roll-out of revised induction process 	R6	<p>AED Children's Services Dominic Tumelty</p> <p>Workforce Development Brendan Kennedy</p>			●				
C3	Establishment of an appropriate caseload level based on an assessment of skills and experience of staff members	R1, R3	AED Children's Services Dominic Tumelty			●				
C4	Bring forward proposals based on salary and progression structures form across the region to ensure the Tameside offer is competitive and helps support the staff retention.	R1, R6	<p>Head of HR Tracy Brennand</p> <p>AED Children's Services Dominic Tumelty</p>			●				

C5	<p>Develop an audit process to ensure that supervision processes are embedded and effective and used at all levels within the organisation. Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised performance framework including indicators on the completion of supervision Quality assurance framework including consideration of supervision Staff survey to collect feedback on the impact of the supervision process 	R6	<p>Head of Service QA Katherine Mackay</p>			●			
C6	<p>Undertake a programme of University-supported training to support Newly Qualified Social Workers at Manchester Metropolitan University</p>	R6	<p>AED Children's Services Dominic Tumelty</p> <p>Workforce Development manager Brendan Kennedy</p>			●	●		
C7	<p>Ensure that partners and safeguarding leads are provided with sufficient information to support the understanding of processes for making referrals to Children's Social Care and that processes are fully understood.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources to be made available via appropriate channels such as the Tameside Safeguarding Children Board webpages. Multi-agency engagement to support development of information that meets the needs of services Development of process enabling constructive feedback on the effectiveness of processes 	R1, R4, R2, R17	<p>Head of Service, Referral and Assessment</p>			●			
C8	<p>Ensure that all staff and partners involved in making referrals to safeguard children and young people are able to challenge and discuss decision making where appropriate to ensure that there is mutual understanding of decision-making, and that the application of thresholds is effective and consistent. Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with schools to develop a supportive approach to decision 	R1, R2, R3, R4, R8, R14, R17	<p>Head of Service, Safeguarding and Review Ged Sweeney AED Education Bob Berry</p>			●	●	●	●

	<p>making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building relationships between agencies based on dialogue, mutual respect and shared understanding. • Effective and timely communication. • Decision making focused on the needs of the child. • Signposting to other agencies where appropriate. • Careful consideration of case closure. 		<p>Head of Service Early Help and Intervention and Sally Dickin</p>						
C9	<p>Development of electronic referral processes to enable effective and accurate recording of referral information, and reduce delay in response to requests for services</p>	<p>R3, R4, R8</p>	<p>AED Children's Services Dominic Tumelty</p> <p>Head of Performance Jane Barker</p>			•	•		
C10	<p>Work with Tameside Safeguarding Children Board to develop the partnership-wide training offer which offers a range of training opportunities to all agencies</p>	<p>R2, R7, R8</p>	<p>Head of Service , Safeguarding and Review</p>			•	•		
C11	<p>Development of referral pathways into services to support children and young people with mental health needs.</p> <p>This will include a review of transition into key health services and consideration of a 'fast-track' process where appropriate</p>	<p>R9</p>	<p>Head of Service LAC Sheena Wooding</p>			•	•		

7.32 Key Indicators

Quantitative Indicator	Link to Action
Average overall caseloads for social work staff	C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6
Average caseload for none social work practitioners	C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6
Average caseload of Newly Qualified Social Workers	C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6
Number of permanent Social Work staff	C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6
Looked after children and children on a child protection plan with 3 or more changes of social worker over the previous 12 months.	C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6
Qualitative Indicator	Link to Action
Social work staff will have manageable caseloads that are appropriate for their skills and experience, so that they are guaranteed time with children and their families.	C3
All social work staff will receive regular supervision and managerial oversight that reflects their level of experience	C1, C2
Staff on the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment will receive the appropriate level of management oversight according to their needs, and have access to external support	C6

7D – QUALITY, PRACTICE AND COMPLIANCE

7.33 A range of improvement areas has been highlighted regarding quality, practice and compliance with statutory requirements and guidance. These include:

- Ensuring that action taken is compliant with statutory guidance and that application of thresholds in casework with children and families is appropriate and consistent (based on a common understanding of thresholds across all partners). (R2, R17)
- Effective consideration of history and parenting capacity that informs thorough analysis of risk. (R3)
- Ensure that all care leavers have an up to date and good quality pathway plan that reflects their current needs and circumstances and that they have full information about their entitlements to support them into adult life. (R11)
- Consistency of gathering, recording and use of children's views and wishes. (R7)
- Ensuring assessments are updated regularly and reflect children's changing needs and circumstances. (R3)
- Ineffective methods of ensuring the views of children and young people influence service planning. (R7, R12)
- Ensuring that when children go missing from home or care, the information gathered at return home interviews is used to inform planning effectively and reduce future risk. (R10)
- The quality of managerial decision making and the application of thresholds and all stages of a child's involvement with the local authority. (R2, R4)
- Effective scrutiny and evaluation of the quality of frontline practice and services provided to children. (R4, R16)
- Support 2BeUs to provide effective representation of the views of children of all ages and those placed at a distance from the local authority. (R12)

7.34 Initial Response

7.35 In response to concerns regarding quality, practice and compliance the following immediate steps have been taken:

- Practitioners group has been established to support high quality practice which feeds directly into team and service improvement plans.
- Performance clinics are held monthly and chaired by the Assistant Executive Director, bringing increased focus on team level performance
- The use of online case management systems has been expanded to the Fostering service to increase consistency of practice and availability of information. Plans are in place to increase use of this system further.
- Voice and Experience of the Child working group has been established to support the development support and resources aimed at ensuring that the Voice of the Child is heard in all areas of service delivery, is evident in all areas of involvement with children and shapes care planning.

- The Tameside Pledge to Children in Care has been refreshed and approved at Full Council on 29 November 2016.

7.36 Key Actions

7.37 The section below outlines key actions that will be undertaken to ensure that quality and practice is sufficient to effectively meet the needs of children and young people in Tameside and that the authority complies with all statutory guidance and requirements in delivering these services:

- Revision of Tameside's Quality Assurance Framework in order to ensure a consistent and rigorous approach to quality is the norm.
- Work with Tameside Safeguarding Children Board to embed effective application of thresholds across organisations working in Tameside including the revising thresholds where appropriate, overseen by a new sub group of the Strategic Board focusing on Threshold management.
- Quality Audit of the Child and Family Assessment to ensure there is adequate analysis of risk and consideration of the history and chronology of individuals.
- Revision of operational and commissioning arrangements to ensure multi-agency care provision can be delivered effectively.

7.38 What Will Good Look Like?

7.39 Thresholds for social care intervention will be revised and updated to ensure they are effective, and will be applied rigorously and consistently across the service. Children and families can be sure they will be seen by a workforce that is clear on the criteria for intervention.

7.40 Practitioners will be thorough in assessments and care planning, ensuring that all issues with regard to the child's wellbeing are taken into account. For example, Child and Family Assessments will take full consideration of family history and parental capacity, with learning clearly articulated including from effective and up to date chronologies.

7.41 Assessments are regularly updated and shape care planning. When a child goes missing, a return home interview will always take place and information gathered will be used to safeguard the child, promote their emotional health and protect them from sexual exploitation.

7.42 The voice of children looked after will be heard and recorded through various channels. 2BeUS will be supported to represent children looked after, including those who have been placed away from the area. Data from groups such as this will inform planning at a strategic level, and the views of children and young people will be used to inform planning on an individual level.

7.43 Action Plan

STRATEGIC LEAD – Katherine Mackay – Head of Service Quality Assurance				2016/17		2017/18			
Ref	Action / project	Rec	By who?	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
D1	In depth individual case audits to support learning and development together with wider case audits to quality assure decision making and practice. To be supported by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of the quality assurance framework • Structured programme of case audits to inform the development of services • Use of multi-agency audits through Tameside Safeguarding children Board to check and review decision making • Implementation of learning via the Practitioners Improvement Group led by the Head of Service for Quality Assurance. 	R4, R5, R16	Head of Service QA Katherine Mackay			●	●	●	●
D2	Development of a programme of improvement activity to support good quality practice which complies with statutory requirements. The improvement activity is to be led by the Consultant Social Worker. Supported by the implementation of the revised quality assurance framework through the Practitioners Improvement Group	R2, R3, R4	Head of Service QA Katherine Mackay Workforce Development manager Brendan Kennedy			●	●		
D3	Increasing development activity and support of Children In Care Council following refreshment and reorganisation in 2016. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing membership of the Children in Care Council to ensure a broad base of representation • Development programme to support their role in shaping service delivery • Increasing involvement of the Children in Care Council in the co-design of services to meet the needs of vulnerable children and young people 	R7, R12	Head of Service, LAC			●	●		
D4	Revise Tameside's Quality Assurance Framework. Project to be overseen by the Head of Service in Charge of Quality Assurance in	R2, R4	Head of Service QA Katherine Mackay			●			

	<p>order to ensure consistent and rigorous Quality Assurance is embedded into service delivery at all levels.</p> <p>This project will include of the redesign audit tools used within the quality assurance process to ensure that they are fit for purpose.</p>								
D5	<p>Ensure that thresholds are applied effectively and revised where they are inappropriate.</p> <p>The focus of this activity will be on ensuring that clear thresholds ensure that decisions taken are consistent and appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of existing thresholds to ensure appropriateness • Implementation of review programme to ensure that thresholds remain appropriate • Quality Assurance Framework and challenge processes to ensure that application of thresholds is consistent and appropriate 	R2, R3, R4, R8, R16, R17	Head of service, safeguarding and review			●			
D6	<p>Work with Tameside Safeguarding Children Board to embed thresholds with partner agencies and ensure that there is a clear understanding and application of thresholds across organisations working in Tameside.</p>	R2	Head of Service, Safeguarding and Review			●	●	●	●
D7	<p>Where Child In Need procedures have been revised including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes in place for when a Child in Need moves across Local Authority boundaries. • Clarification of step up and step down processes. <p>Further work will be undertaken to ensure that process remains fit for purpose and that data and information sharing takes place at appropriate points.</p>	R2, R4	Head of Service, Safeguarding and Review Ged Sweeney			●	●		
D8	<p>Impliment a revised system of Domestic Abuse notifications in partnership with Greater Manchester Police to ensure a timely response to notifications.</p>	R2	Chair of Strategic Domestic Abuse Steering Group Stephanie Butterworth			●			

D9	<p>Ensure that information regarding missing children is gathered and used effectively across agencies including working in partnership with Greater Manchester Police to inform planning and reduce future risk through:</p> <p>a) Effective contract monitoring; missing children contract b) Implementation of the recommendations of the review of the missing panel c) Address gaps in performance information relating to children missing from home or care or those at risk of child sexual exploitation.</p>	R2, R4, R10	Head of Service, Safeguarding and Review Ged Sweeney			●	●			
D10	Prepare and bring forward a report on assessments over 12 months old with further reviews to take place on practice and application of assessment processes.	R3	Head of Service QA Katherine Mackay			●				
D11	Impliment revised Child and Family Assessment process to ensure that adequate analysis of risk and consideration of the history and chronology of individuals as a part of the ongoing quality assurance and review process.	R3	Head of Service QA Katherine Mackay			●				
D12	<p>Ensure compliance with the requirement for pathways plans to be completed within timescales.</p> <p>a) Ensure that caseload levels are suitable and allow completion of pathway plans b) Ensure consideration of entitlement is given in all pathway plans c) Ongoing monitoring of pathways plans regular reporting of completion</p>	R3, R11	Head of Service LAC Sheena Wooding			●	●	●	●	●
D13	<p>Ensure referral processes are clearly documented and available to those involved in safeguarding children.</p> <p>This will include engagement with multi-agency partners to build understanding of how, why and when the Common Assessment Framework process is used.</p>	R8	Head of Service, Early Help Sally Dickin			●	●	●		
D14	Establish a strategic framework for the governance of Early Help provision in Tameside. In partnership with Tameside Safeguarding Children Board.	R8	Head of Service, Early Help Sally Dickin				●	●	●	

			Tameside Safeguarding Children Board						
D15	<p>Develop two-way communication process between key agencies that ensures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and timely feedback on decision making is provided where referrals do not meet threshold. • Notifications take place when changes take place such as a change of social worker • Enables reflective learning processes 	R2, R3, R8	Head of Service Referral and Assessment			●	●		
D16	Recruitment of Common Assessment Framework coordinators to promote use of the framework amongst universal services.	R8	Head of Service, Early help Sally Dickin		●	●			
D17	Assessment of operational and commissioning arrangements to ensure multi-agency care provision can be delivered effectively.	-			●	●	●	●	●
D18	Engagement with external experts to support the improvement process through system analysis and redesign.	R5	AED Children's Services Dominic Tumelty		●	●	●		
D19	<p>Further develop the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) to ensure that is clearly understood and followed by all relevant partners.</p> <p>The framework should collate and utilise data to review CAF activity to drive improvement.</p>	R8	Head of Service Early Help and Intervention and Sally Dickin		●	●			

7.44 Key Indicators

Quantitative Indicator	Link to Action
Percentage of Child protection plans, looked after children reviews and pathways plans completed within timescales and reviewed on a regular basis.	D1, D2, D5, D10, D12
Percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation	D12
Percentage of case file audits graded inadequate, Requires improvement, Good and outstanding respectively	D1, D2, D4, D5, D12
Percentage Looked After Children reviews attended by allocated social worker or team manager	D11
Number of episodes of children missing from home	D7, D9
Number of return home interviews completed	D7, D9
Qualitative Indicator	Link to Action
Children and young people receive the right help and are seen at the right time so that their health and emotional wellbeing are always put first	D10, D11
Social work assessments are informed by careful consideration of family history and parental capacity, and will reflect children and young people's needs and changing circumstances.	D10, D11
A sufficient programme of both single and multi-agency audits provides effective scrutiny and evaluation of frontline practice.	D1, D4, D6
The quality assurance of work by middle and senior managers considers the quality of managerial decision-making, and the application of thresholds at all stages of a child's involvement with the authority.	D6, D13, D14, D15, D18
Care leavers are always placed in suitable accommodation arrangements that are conducive to leading independent lives.	D12
Return home interviews are always conducted after a child or young person goes missing, and any information gathered is used for planning ahead and reducing future risk.	D7, D9

7E – OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

7.45 Ensuring that children and young people achieve the best possible outcomes is a central aim which underpins the delivery of services across Tameside. Ofsted's judgement of Tameside's Children's Services as inadequate and the Tameside Safeguarding Children Board as requiring Improvement highlights that there are significant opportunities to improve outcomes for children and young people in Tameside across a range of services.

7.46 Tameside Council and its partners are committed to improving outcomes across the board with particular focus on the following areas:

- Timeliness of service delivered to support children and young people. (R9)
- Ensure that all care leavers have full information about their entitlements to support them into adult life.(R11)
- The use of single and multi-agency audits to evaluate the quality of practice and enable improvements to service delivery. (R16)
- Ensuring that all children leaving care have access to suitable accommodation, including ceasing using bed and breakfast accommodation for care leavers aged 18-25. (R13)
- Supporting children and young people to shape decision making and have a say in service improvement. (R7, R12, R19)
- Ensuring services promote the emotional health and well-being of children. (R9)

7.47 Initial Response

7.48 The following actions have been taken to ensure that services across Tameside are focused on achieving the best possible outcomes for children and young people in Tameside.

- Review and relaunch of the Tameside Pledge to Children in Care setting out the how partners will work together to deliver services which will meet the needs identified by children and young people
- Development of an outcomes focused performance framework to support leaders, managers and staff to understand progress towards improving outcomes for children and young people.
- Engagement with Tameside Safeguarding Children Board to develop joint approach to improving outcomes across Tameside in partnership with local agencies.
- Work with partners to achieve immediate improvement for children who are witnessing or suffering domestic abuse by eliminating delay
- Work with housing providers to ensure that our care leavers are placed in suitable accommodation

7.49 Key Actions

7.50 The section below contains the key actions that will support the achievement of positive outcomes for children and young people in Tameside.

- Development of 2BeUS to to gain effective representation of children of all ages and from children who are placed at a distance from Tameside.
- Work with schools colleges and employers in Tameside to increase the support, help support networks, advice and guidance available to looked after children and young people who are moving towards independence.
- Engagement with health partners to adress the health needs of vulnerable children with particular regard to mental health needs at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Coordinate with partners in the voluntary sector to provide care leavers with life skills, volunteering & mentoring opportunities for young people.
- Development of engagement strategy with children and young people that embeds the voice of the child within services that support vulnerable children and young people.

7.51 What Will Good Look Like?

- 7.52 The overall goal for children and young people in Tameside is that we want them to achieve the best possible outcomes and have a smooth transition to independence, where care leavers feel prepared to make the transition to adulthood. Children in care should have the same achievements and happiness as their peers who haven't been in care.
- 7.53 Pathway plans for children and young people are rigorous, up to date and are produced in a timely manner so that plans are carefully thought out and are suited to the young person's needs. Young people remain 'in touch' with their worker, who support them according to their needs. All care leavers will have access to suitable accommodation.
- 7.54 Young people will feel emotionally resilient and will be able to take on education, training or employment in their adulthood. This will be supported through the development of invest to save initiatives, such as From Care to Success, which would address the current issues of young people leaving care ill-equipped, and to ease the transition from semi-independent accommodation to complete independent living.
- 7.55 The following outcomes for children and young people will be achieved:
- Children and young people are supported to do well, be healthy both physically and emotionally, they feel safe from harm and their needs and wishes are listened to.
 - Children in need and their families receive good, multi-agency support based on their needs, so that children are helped to remain with their families where it is safe and appropriate to do so.
 - Children live healthy lifestyles and are enabled to do so by all professionals who know them
 - Children looked after are equipped to manage their emotional and mental health, and professionals refer them to the right care at the right time when concerns are identified.
 - Children in need of help and support are supported to attend and achieve at school, and any concerns such as missing lessons are identified and addressed by school and social work staff
 - Children looked after will not be held back at school by their personal backgrounds, or special educational needs or disabilities.
 - Care leavers will be supported and encouraged to be in education, training or employment as adults
 - Overall our children will be safe, happy, healthy, well-educated and prepared to make a positive contribution to society.

7.56 Action Plan

STRATEGIC LEAD – Dominic Tumelty – Assistant Executive Director Children's Services				2016/17		2017/18			
Ref	Action / project	Rec	By who?	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
E1	Development and implementation of Children in Care Council 'Owl' campaign promoting designated safe places in Tameside. Full offer to be developed focusing initially on public buildings and those used by key partner organisations. work to be taken forward in partnership with the children in care Council	R12	Head of Service LAC Sheena Wooding			●	●		
E2	Agree, with partners (including housing providers), a sustainable model to ensure that appropriate placements are available and that Bed and Breakfast accommodation is not used for young people. Monitoring data to be included in key performance information to ensure that any cases where the use of bed and breakfast accommodation takes place are investigated thoroughly.	R13	DCS Stephanie Butterworth		●	●			
E3	Review complaints, children and young people's participation, and peer reviews and implement learning to inform strategic planning. To include multi-agency check and review to ensure that full considerations of impact on a range of agencies is understood.	R7, R16	Head of Service, Conference and Review Ged Sweeney	●	●	●			
E4	Implement engagement of children and young people at a strategic and operational level to embed the Voice of the child within all systems, and processes. Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in case planning • Structured audit and review process • Use of young people's views at a case level to inform the strategic planning process as well as the individual journey of young people. • Engagement of multiple agencies to broaden the mechanisms available to seek and gather the views of children and young people. • Engagement of children and young people inside and outside of the care system 	R7, R12, R19	AED Children's Services Dominic Tumelty		●	●	●	●	

	to support the improvement of preventative services.								
E5	Support 2BeUs so that there is effective representation of children of all ages and from children who are placed at a distance from Tameside	R7, R12	Head of Service LAC Sheena Wooding		●	●			
E6	<p>Work with schools, colleges and employers in Tameside to increase support, help support networks, advice and guidance available to looked after children and young people who are moving towards independence. Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of directory of support available to practitioners and young people • Communications campaign to increase support from local organisations in developing channels to support young people moving towards independence <p>(Supported by action F3)</p>	R9, R11, R14	<p>AED Education Bob Berry</p> <p>Head of Service LAC Sheena wooding</p>			●	●		
E7	<p>Engage with health partners to address the health needs of vulnerable children, with particular regard the consideration of mental health needs. Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of tools to support the recognition of mental health needs in children and young people • Revision of exiting arrangements through the Single Commissioning Function to develop increased capacity to provide support at the point of need • Implementation of revised services as appropriate dependant on identified need. 	R9, R11, R14	Hazel Chamberlain		●	●	●		
E8	Coordinate with partners in the voluntary sector to provide care leavers with skills, volunteering & mentoring opportunities for young people and provide information to services that enables access to support.	R7, R11	Head of Service LAC Sheena Wooding			●	●	●	●

7.57 Key Indicators

Indicator	Link to Action
Percentage of Personal Education Plans completed and reviewed	E6
Percentage Pathway Plans completed and reviewed	E4
School Readiness - percentage of pupils achieving a good level of development	E7
Percentage of Looked After Children achieving A*-C (9 to 4) in GCSE English and Maths	E6, E8
Percentage of Looked After Children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2	E6, E8
Percentage of looked after young people aged 16-18 in Education Employment or Training.	E6, E8
Percentage of health plans which identify transition to adult health services where required.	E7
Percentage of case audits with evidence of Child's voice recorded	E3, E4
Qualitative Indicators	Link to Action
Support of the Children in Care Council enables representation of the views of children of all ages, included those placed at a distance from the local authority.	E5
Children and young people are made aware of the pledge to children looked after and care leavers.	E4, E5
The views and wishes of children and young people of all ages are consistently recorded and taken into consideration when planning	E3, E4

7F – SUSTAINABILITY

7.58 We believe that long term sustainability is key to maintaining services that meet the needs and demands of children and young people in Tameside. Building sustainability must underpin the long term approach to services.

7.59 We are committed to fundamentally changing how our services are received by residents. We will work closely with our partners so that service meet the needs of people and are not delivered in silos and we will support children and their families to be successful. We will working together to support sustainability, reduce dependency and levels of need in our communities, and make the best use of our shared resources.

7.60 Key areas for improvement that have been highlighted that relate to increasing sustainability include:

- The quality and completion of pathway plans with particular regard to ensuring that plans are up to date and reflect their current needs and circumstances. (R11)
- Ensuring that services are in place that meet the needs of children and young people in a timely fashion, including making sure that services meet emotional health and well-bring needs. (R7)
- Development of services that reduce long term and underlying demand and seek to break the cycle of dependency. (R8)
- Ensure that looked after children are provided with timely services to make certain that their emotional health and well-being are promoted (R9)

7.61 Initial Response

7.62 The following actions have been taken which are aimed at increasing the long term sustainability of services through reducing demand and increasing long term sustainability:

- Implementation of invest to save proposals in the following area:
 - Family Group Conferencing – Working with extended families to identify options to secure permanence for children.
 - Edge of Care Service – Investing in supporting families to remain together where it is safe to do so.
 - From Care to Success – Effective transition planning for young people preparing for independence.
- Implement schemes with partner agencies such as New Charter Housing that support care leavers to have a smooth transition to independent living.
- Wider investment plan in place to map out a financially sustainable route to increasing the sustainability.
- Rolling recruitment programme targeted at increasing workforce stability in the medium to long term with targeted development aimed at ensuring long term skill develop helps to enable a responsive workforce.
- Effective transition of young people from children's health to adult's health services.

7.63 Key Actions

7.64 The section below highlights the actions that will be undertaken to support the development of sustainable services in Tameside that are shaped by and meet the needs of vulnerable children and young people.

- Implementation of a revised multi-agency quality assurance programme ensuring that action taken by social workers is always compliant with statutory guidance, that emotional health and wellbeing is always considered, the application of thresholds is appropriate, and interventions are timely so that the right help will support children and young people in the long run.
- Development of links between services that provide support and intervention relating to domestic abuse including development of a joined up approach to services provided to adults and children.
- Implementation of a revised early help model which builds on effective partnership working and interventions with families to support the delivery of services at the earliest point possible reducing long term need and demand.
- Closer working between the Children's Hub services and Integrated Neighbourhood Service teams to support demand reduction through an early help and prevention approach.
- Work through the Tameside Single Commissioning Function to reduce duplication and increase sustainability in planning services to improve health outcomes which meet the needs of children and young people and their families.

7.65 What Will Good Look Like?

7.66 The improvement process in children's services in Tameside must have sustainable outcomes if they are to be successful. Actions in the short term to medium term reduce demand in the long term, and help children and their families lead happier healthier lives.

7.67 Extensive research and evidence has shown that early intervention, specifically before the point of need, makes for a more long-term, sustainable alternative to children becoming looked after by the authority.

7.68 Children and young people will be involved in co-designing of services and have a clear voice at all levels of decision making.

7.69 The emotional health and well-being of children and young people is always considered in the delivery of services, intervention and care planning.

7.70 Action Plan

STRATEGIC LEAD – Ged Sweeney – Head of Service Conference and Review				2016/17		2017/18			
Ref	Action / project	Rec	By who?	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
F1	<p>Implementation of Family Group Conferencing Invest to Save Programme</p> <p>Increasing Family Group Conferencing in order to ensure that wherever possible Family Group Conferences are completed before the implementation of Care Proceedings.</p> <p>This approach will help to reduce delay and increase opportunities for alternatives to long term care that will provide the best care outcomes for children.</p>	R9	Head of Service Conference and Review Ged Sweeney		●	●	●	●	●
F2	<p>Implementation of Edge of Care Invest to Save Programme -</p> <p>Creation of an intensive, whole family response to children at the edge of care that will provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out-reach • In-reach • Family sessions • Short breaks residential provision where requested <p>The aim of this service is to better support families to remain together where safe.</p>	R9	Head of Service Referral and Assessment		●	●	●	●	●
F3	<p>Implementation of from Care to Success transition programme for Care Leavers Invest to Save Programme</p> <p>Extending on the existing transition planning model for disabled children to all children in care. This approach will equip young people with the skills they need to enter adulthood through a person centred approach.</p>	R11	Head of Service LAC Sheena wooding		●	●	●	●	●
F4	Implementation of revised foster carer payments scheme aimed at supporting the	R12, R14	Head of Service	●	●				

	development of foster carers including a payments structure focused on the needs of individual children and skills of foster carers.		LAC Sheena Wooding						
F5	Investment in the development of residential care homes in Tameside to reduce reliance on external placements for children who are looked after in residential settings.	R12, R14	Head of Service LAC Sheena Wooding			●	●	●	●
F6	Revise and relaunch of Tameside Councils Early Help service to ensure that staff and partners are clear about the provision available and able to access services effectively. To include review of information provided to support access to services available through other channels such as the Voluntary and Community Sector. (Read across to B10)	R8	Head of Service Early Help Sally Dickin		●	●	●		
F7	Development of links between services that provide support and intervention relating to domestic abuse including development of a joined up approach to services provided to Adults and Children across partner agencies.	R8	DCS Stephanie Butterworth	●	●	●			
F8	Develop resources which highlight and champions best practice and facilitates two way discussion of practice between partners to support the continual improvement.	R5, R8, R14	Head of Service QA and Consultant Social Worker Katherine Mackay				●	●	●
F9	Close working between the Children's Hub and Integrated Neighbourhood Service teams to support demand reduction through an early help and prevention approach.	R2, R4, R8	Head of Service Referral and Assessment AED Stronger Communities			●	●	●	

			Emma Varnam						
F10	Implementation of the revised quality assurance programme ensuring that action taken by social workers is always compliant with statutory guidance, that emotional health and wellbeing is always considered, the application of thresholds is appropriate, and interventions are timely.	R2, R8	Head of Service QA Katherine Mackay		●	●	●		

7.71 Key Indicators

Indicator	Link to Action
Reduction in demand at all levels in the service	F1, F2, F3, F4, F5
Reduction in rate of children subject to a Child Protection Plan	F1, F2, F3, F4, F5
Qualitative Indicator	Link to Action
Implementation of Invest to Save Programmes. New models like Family Group Conferencing, Edge of Care Service and From Care to Success will create better, earlier support that reduces need for court intervention and allows families greater agency in care plans. It will also promote a smoother transition for care leavers into adulthood.	F1, F2, F3, F4, F5
Action taken by practitioners that work with children and young people is always compliant with statutory guidance, the application of thresholds appropriate, and interventions are timely so that the right help will support children in the long run.	F6, F7, F8, F9, F10

8 – PERFORMANCE SCORECARD

- 8.1 Achievement of the aims of our Improvement Plan, and progress towards those aims, will be measured in a number of ways. Our performance framework will enable a clear assessment of progress towards improved quality of life.
- 8.2 The action plan within the Improvement Plan will have milestones that will measure and report progress towards implementation. But it is important to have the performance scorecard alongside this to assess achievement of tangible outcomes for children and families. The scorecard will not just be indicators it will include quantitative and qualitative information such as outcomes from critical friend reviews of practice, service user feedback etc. The service has developed a new performance framework, team self-assessment process and improvement planning approach which will be monitored through regular performance clinics (a two-way process between managers & staff).
- 8.3 Performance against the framework outline below will be used to inform the ongoing planning process at every level from the day to day planning of services through to strategic development of multi-agency working to support children, young people and their families.
- 8.4 The feedback from children and families, improving performance data, better measurable outcomes for children, the outputs from quality audits and the feedback from peer reviews and critical friend assessments will be the benchmark by which we will be able to say our Improvement Plan has made a difference.
- 8.5 Below are the headline performance indicators against which we will measure progress and success.

Contacts

Ref	Measure
1	Number of contacts received by Children's Services: a) Total number of contacts received by Children's Services b) Number of contacts received via the Children's Hub c) Number of contacts received from other teams
2	Number of contacts by outcome: a) Number of contacts referred into children's social care b) Number of contacts referred to early help c) Number of contacts where no further action is required d) Number of contacts where information/advise is provided e) Number of contacts referred to another agency
3	Percentage of contacts with a decision made within 1 working day: a) Percentage of contacts with a decision made within 1 working day for Children's Services b) Percentage of contacts with a decision made within 1 working day for the Children's Hub

	c) Percentage of contacts with a decision made within 1 working day for other teams
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Referrals

Ref	Measure
4	Total number of referrals received
5	Number and percentage of referrals where a decision was made within 24 hours
6	Number and percentage of re-referrals within 12 months of a previous referral
7	Number of referrals by source (top 5)

Assessment

Ref	Measure
8	Number and percentage of Children and Families Assessments completed within 15 working days
9	Number and percentage of Children and Families Assessments completed within 30 working days
10	Number and percentage of Children and Families Assessments completed within 45 working days

Caseloads

Ref	Measure
11	Children's Services caseloads: a) Total number of open cases b) Number of looked after children c) Number of children who are the subject of a Child Protection Plan d) Number of children in need cases (excluding LAC and CP)
12	Number of children stepping up and stepping down from the service by: a) LAC b) CP c) Children in need

Child protection

Ref	Measure
13	Number of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC)
14	Percentage of children whose ICPC was held within 15 working days of strategy discussion
15	Number of children who become the subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time in the last two years
16	Total number of child protection reviews held
17	Percentage of conferences held within the timescale

Looked after children (LAC)

Ref	Measure

18	Percentage of looked after children aged between 3 and 15 with a current PEP
19	LAC reviews: a) Total number of reviews due b) Total number of reviews undertaken c) Number of reviews held with statutory timescale d) Percentage of review held within statutory timescale
20	Educational attainment of LAC: a) Percentage of LAC achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at KS2 b) Percentage of LAC achieving A*-C (9 to 4) in English and Maths
21	Health of LAC: a) Percentage of LAC with an annual health assessment completed b) Percentage of LAC with an annual dental check completed c) Percentage of Initial Health Assessments completed
22	LAC Placements: a) Percentage of LAC with 3 or more placements during the year b) Percentage of have been in the same placement for at least 2 years or placed for adoption c) Percentage of children looked after who are placed for adoption within 12 months of the decision that the child should be placed for adoption

Care leavers

Ref	Measure
23	In touch with care leavers: a) % of care leavers the service is in touch with b) Number and percentage of care leavers who are NEET c) Number and percentage of care leavers who are in suitable accommodation d) Health passports completed for children and young people
24	Pathway Plan reviews for care leavers: a) Number of reviews held within timescale set on ICS b) Percentage of reviews held within timescale set on ICS
25	Percentage of young people participating at Pathway Plan review

Early help

Ref	Measure
26	School Readiness - % of pupils achieving a good level of development
27	Increase in uptake of Early Help Assessments
28	Reduction in the number of referrals to the Contact Centre that require either an Early Help offer or no further action from Social Care.
29	Increase in the number of young carers identified, assessed and their families supported
30	Reduction in the number of children not 'school ready' using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile
31	Reduction in the number of children in need requiring statutory intervention

Staff

Ref	Measure
25	Average social work caseload
26	Percentage of LAC or CP children with 3 or more changes of social workers in the previous 12 months
27	Average caseload for none social work practitioners
28	Average caseload of Newly Qualified Social Workers
29	Number of permanent Social Work staff

Voice of the child

Ref	Measure
30	The proportion of children in care who report that they feel supported and listened to.
31	% of case audits with evidence of Child's voice recorded
32	Number of return home interviews completed
33	Percentage of case audits with evidence of Child's voice recorded

Other

Ref	Measure
34	Number of episodes of children missing from home

9 – OFSTED RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Ofsted made 20 recommendations in their inspection report published on 9 December 2016 which are list below. The full report can be found on the Ofsted website at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/tameside>
- 9.2 Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers.

1	Ensure that all areas of service have sufficient staff of a suitable level of qualification and experience for the role that they are required to undertake and that their workloads are manageable.
2	Ensure that action taken by social workers is compliant with statutory guidance and that the application of thresholds in casework with children and families is appropriate.
3	Ensure that social work assessments include an effective consideration of history and parenting capacity that informs thorough analysis of risk and ensures that assessments are updated regularly to reflect children's changing needs and circumstances.
4	Ensure that the quality assurance of work by senior and middle managers routinely considers the quality of managerial decision making and the application of thresholds at all stages of a child's involvement with the local authority, including contacts within the Children's Hub.
5	Improve the quality of performance management reporting to senior leaders and elected members, so that they have sufficient information to benchmark improvement against clear, good practice standards.
6	Ensure that all staff receive high-quality supervision and managerial oversight at a frequency that reflects their skills and levels of experience and agree levels of external support for newly qualified staff on the assessed and supported year in employment programme.
7	Ensure that children's views and wishes are consistently gathered, recorded on files and used to inform planning.
8	Work with partners to ensure coordinated early help for a wider group of children through increased use of early help assessment and plans via the common assessment framework, and implement an effective quality assurance framework to monitor and improve the quality of work done in early help.
9	Ensure that children looked after are provided with timely services to make certain that their emotional health and well-being are promoted.
10	Ensure that when children go missing from home or care, the information gathered at return home interviews is used to inform planning effectively and reduce future risk.
11	Care Leavers - Ensure that all care leavers have an up-to-date and good-quality pathway plan that reflects their current needs and circumstances and that they have full information about their entitlements to support them into adult life.

12	Ensure that support to the Children in Care Council enables effective representation of the views of children of all ages and those placed at a distance from the local authority. This should include work to ensure that the pledge to children looked after and care leavers is refreshed and communicated effectively to all children and young people.
13	Ensure that the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for care leavers aged 18 to 25 ceases.
14	Review and update the corporate parenting strategy to give clarity to the work of the board and ensure that this is shared across the partnership, so that external scrutiny can support improvement in services for children looked after.

Review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

15	Undertake an urgent review of Tameside Safeguarding Children Board (TSCB) priorities and update its business plan to include concerns about frontline practice and service delivery at all levels of need, and ensure that an evaluation of the impact of safeguarding practice upon children's well-being and safety is undertaken and included in the board's annual report.
16	Establish a programme of sufficient multi-agency and single-agency audits to enable effective scrutiny and evaluation of the quality of frontline practice and service provided to children.
17	Ensure that the board is able to evaluate whether the application of thresholds across the partnership is effective and is resulting in timely and appropriate intervention for children.
18	Improve understanding and informed challenge of safeguarding practice in Tameside by regular critical analysis of accurate and up-to-date performance information from all partners. This is to include the development of an integrated multi-agency data set concerning children at risk of child sexual exploitation, ensuring that the prevalence is accurately captured and enabling an evaluation of the effectiveness of the current strategy.
19	Re-establish effective methods of ensuring that the views of children and young people influence the service planning needed to deliver TSCB priorities and plans.
20	Establish effective links with the corporate parenting strategic group and family justice board to ensure that the TSCB has appropriate oversight of outcomes for children looked after and those who are the subject of care proceedings.

10 - GLOSSARY

Term	Meaning
Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)	This is a newly qualified social worker's (NQSW) 12 month programme designed to support the development of their skills, knowledge and capability through regular support during this time.
Child in Need (CIN)	According to Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, a child who, without the provision of local authority services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development - Whose health or development is likely to be significantly impaired; or - Who is disabled Not all children will necessarily require social work intervention.
Children's Hub	The 'front door' of Children's Services. This team is the recipient of contacts raising concerns about the welfare of a child or young person.
Child & Family Assessment	Addresses the most important aspects of the needs of a child or young person, and the capacity of their parents to respond appropriately to these needs. The conclusion of the assessment should provide analysis leading to a clear understanding of need, which will inform care planning. C&F Assessments should contain input from other professionals.
Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)	A type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, power or status.
Child subject to a Child Protection Plan (CPP)	A child will become subject to a Child Protection Plan if they have been assessed as being at risk of harm following an Initial Child Protection Conference. Children's Services have the lead responsibility for ensure the CPP is in place but professionals from all agencies involved with the child have an active role.
Common Assessment Framework (CAF)	The CAF is a shared assessment and planning framework for use across all Children's Services in England. It aims to help the early identification of children and young people's additional needs and promote coordinated service provision to meet them.
Contact	A 'contact' is the term used to describe all incoming information to Children's Services via any form, irrespective of whether or not the information meets the threshold for statutory intervention.
Corporate Parenting	The term Corporate Parent refers to the collective statutory responsibility of the local authority once a child becomes looked after. The Council, elected members, employees and partner agencies who are involved in or interact with looked after children are all corporate parents to a child who is in residential care, foster care, kinship care or are looked after at home.

Corporate Parenting Group	The Corporate Parenting Group co-ordinates and oversees the work undertaken with looked after children in Surrey to make sure that they are in appropriate placements and receive the same opportunities as their peers. The Corporate Parenting Strategy explains how this is done.
Early Help Assessment (EHA)	This is an assessment made to identify the needs of children, young people and their families and to make a plan to meet those needs. It is a tool used by multiple agencies who deliver early help. The aim is to provide a coordinated response to ensure that, where possible, prevent problems in families developing as they emerge and to target help before need for Children's Services to intervene is 'stepped up'.
Looked After Children (LAC)	This applies to children and young people currently looked after or accommodated by the local authority or health and social care trusts. It does not include children who have been permanently adopted.
ICS (Integrated Children's Systems)	The electronic system upon which all case information about a child is recorded. This is the key tool for case management, evidencing the voice of the child and recording vital information about a child's life.
Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)	All looked after children are appointed an IRO, who ensures the care plan set out for the child fully reflects the child's needs and that the actions and outcomes set in the plan are consistent with the local authority's legal responsibilities towards the child.
Open Case	An open case is defined as a case (child) where the decision at a referral has been that the child meets statutory criteria and it is agreed that further action is required.
Referral	A referral is defined as a request for services to be provided where it is considered that a child meets the threshold criteria for statutory intervention.
Return Home Interviews	These are in-depth conversations help with a child or young person who has gone missing from their placement or home. It should be led by an independent professional who the person trusts. The conversation should be used to understand why the child has gone missing, identify potential harm that may have occurred and actions to take to prevent further risks.
Section 47 Investigation	Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 gives the local authority a duty to make enquiries to decide whether to take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is either suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.
Statutory Visits	As part of supervising the welfare of a child, their responsible worker has a duty to visit the child wherever they are living. Visits form part of a broader framework for supervising the child's placement and ensuring their welfare is promoted. The content and outcome of every visit should be carefully recorded in a way that enables monitoring of progress of the child's placement.
Tameside Safeguarding Children Board	The statutory Local Safeguarding Board that coordinates. The TSCB is responsible for developing policies and procedures for safeguarding children; communicating the need to safeguard and encourage staff to carry out their safeguarding responsibilities and; conducting reviews of serious cases and advising Board partners on the lessons to be learned.

11 – CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

Concerned about a child?

Tameside Council

Tameside Council provide support to children and families. We always seek to offer preventative support to children and their families in partnership with parents to promote the child's welfare and ensure parents and where necessary the wider families, are able to meet their children's needs.

The Children Act 1989 lays a duty on the Local Authority to make enquiries into any allegations

We work together with children, young people and their families to ensure that we have a complete picture of the problem so that we can offer the right support. We aim to keep families together by providing back-up and support to prevent problems getting too big.

If you are concerned about the welfare of any child or young person please contact the Children's Hub on **0161 342 4101**.

The Children's Hub is open Monday to Wednesday 8.30am - 5.00pm, Thursday 8.30am - 4.30pm, Friday 8.30am - 4.00pm.

Outside of these hours please call Tameside Council Emergency control on **0161 342 2222**

If the situation is **immediately dangerous for the child** please call **999** and ask for the Police.

Tameside Safeguarding Children Board

Tameside Safeguarding Children board is the partnership responsible for making sure that children and young people are kept safe in Tameside. You can find further information about safeguarding children and young people in Tameside on the Boards website:

<https://www.tamesidesafeguardingchildren.org.uk>

If you require further information about Tameside Safeguarding Children Board please call **0161 342 4348**

Other Help and Support

The following organisations also provide support, advice and guidance in relation to safeguarding children and young people.

Childline - <https://www.childline.org.uk/> Phone – **0800 1111**

NSPCC - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/> Phone – **0808 800 5000**