



## Children and Young People Select Committee

### Children's Social Care Post Ofsted Report

**Date:** 14 January 2020

**Key decision:** No.

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:**

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### Outline and recommendations

Provide the CYP select committee with summary of the findings of the July 2019 Ofsted inspection of Children's Social Care and the service response to the recommendations made in the Ofsted feedback.

### Timeline of engagement and decision-making

Not applicable

# 1. Summary

- 1.1. In July 2019, Lewisham Children's Services was subject to an unannounced three week inspection under the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) framework. The inspection judgements sit under three headings:
  - The experiences and progress of children in need of help and protection
  - The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers
  - The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families
- 1.2. The inspectors judged that services 'required improvement' to be good across all three headings, this was in line with the council's own self-assessments in January and June 2019. The Ofsted report was published in August 2019 and can be found online at: <https://files.api.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50101634>
- 1.3. Lewisham was last subject to a full Ofsted inspection in November 2015. The judgements at that time were; leadership, management and services to children in need of help and protection required improvement. Services to children looked after and achieving permanence was good.
- 1.4. After the 2015 inspection, a range of changes were made in Children's Social Care (CSC), however a series of internal reviews conducted in spring 2018 identified the pace of change was too slow and the intended impact was not being realised. In response, through the summer of 2018 CSC reshaped its improvement programme.
- 1.5. In the 2019 inspection, there had been no change to the judgements on leadership, management or services to children in need of help and protection. While services to looked after children were deemed to have deteriorated. Despite this, inspectors recognised that "*widespread improvement activity and whole-system cultural change*" was underway and the "*pace of improvement had significantly accelerated*" since the improvement plan had been refreshed, the improvement board established and a new Director of CSC appointed.
- 1.6. The improvement programme will not be taking a different direction in response to the inspection. However, the Children's Services management team have reviewed and revised the strategic and operational plans, to ensure all the issues identified by Ofsted are addressed. The top twelve priority areas for phase two of the improvement plan are:
  1. Workforce development, so staff have the skills & tools to do their jobs effectively.
  2. Having clear, updated practice standards, policies and procedures.
  3. Recruitment & Retention of staff, to improve continuity for children and families.
  4. Strengthening targeted Early Help for vulnerable families.
  5. Providing a range of services and help for children living with Domestic Abuse.
  6. Safeguarding young people at risk of exploitation in the community.
  7. Increasing family support, to reduce the need for children to come into care.
  8. Good Corporate Parenting for looked after children and our care leavers.
  9. Placement sufficiency, for our looked after children and care leavers.
  10. Stable ICT to support practice, performance & financial management.
  11. Having reliable performance information to monitor practice and plan services.
  12. Enhanced Business Support, allowing social workers to spend time with families.
- 1.3. Actions have been completed, or are already underway since the inspection in August and the improvement plan sets out further change through 2020-21. These activities are summarised in the main body of this report along with the subsequent financial implications of providing consistently 'good' services to vulnerable children, young people and families in Lewisham.

## 2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are recommended to note and comment upon the contents of this report.

## 3. Policy Context

3.1 The Lewisham Children's Social Care post Ofsted improvement programme will contribute to the following key priority outcome of Lewisham's Corporate Strategy 2018-2022:

3.2 Giving children and young people the best start in life -every child has access to an outstanding and inspiring education and is given the support they need to keep them safe, well and able to achieve their full potential.

3.3 And specifically helps deliver against the following commitments:

- We will improve our children's social care services to provide support for families at the earliest opportunity.
- We will ensure that the children in our care are safe and supported to achieve the very best in life.
- We will work tirelessly with our partners to keep Lewisham's children and young people safe from exploitation, violence and serious youth crime.
- We will monitor the services we provide for children and young people to ensure they deliver the best outcomes and best value.
- We will ensure that families from our BAME communities have equal access to care and support.
- We will work with our partners to ensure that young people transitioning into adulthood achieve the best possible outcomes in relation to education, work, healthy lives and strong community connections.

3.4 From 2018 all Local Authority Children's Services in England and Wales are subject to a new inspection framework by the Ofsted regulatory body. i.e. Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS). Details of the framework can be found here: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/851935/Framework\\_evaluation\\_criteria\\_and\\_inspector\\_guidance\\_for\\_the\\_inspection\\_of\\_local\\_authority\\_children\\_s\\_services.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/851935/Framework_evaluation_criteria_and_inspector_guidance_for_the_inspection_of_local_authority_children_s_services.pdf)

## 4. Background

4.1 Lewisham was last subject to a full Ofsted inspection, under the former framework, in November 2015 (Report published January 2016). The overall judgement was:

- Services to children in need of help and protection required improvement.
- Services to children looked after and achieving permanence was good.
- Leadership management and governance required improvement.

4.2 In September 2018, Ofsted undertook a three day focused visit on the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and front door services, they made a number of recommendations for improvement. Details of both reports can be seen at: <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/80508>

- 4.3 A series of internal reviews conducted in spring 2018 identified the pace of change was too slow and the intended impact of changes were not being realised. In response Children's Social Care revisited its approach in summer 2018 and began reshaping its improvement programme. An improvement board was established chaired by the Lead Member for Children's Services to drive change forward and simultaneously a new Director of Children's Social Care (CSC) was appointed.
- 4.4. The improvement plan was approximately ten months into its programme of delivery, when Lewisham was subject to their unannounced inspection under the new Ofsted framework. The Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) was conducted over three weeks in July 2019. The inspection judgements sit under three headings:
- The experiences and progress of children in need of help and protection
  - The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers
  - The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families
- 4.5 The inspectors found that services 'required improvement' to be good across all three headings, in line with the council's own self-assessment in January 2019, updated in June 2019. The report was published in August 2019 and can be found online at: <https://files.api.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50101634>

## **5. A summary of the 2019 Ofsted findings.**

### **The experiences and progress of children in need of help and protection**

#### **5.1 What is going well:**

- At the front door/MASH most children receive a timely service and there have been improvements since Ofsted last visited in September 2018. The MASH is helped by the co-location of police, health and education partners.
- For the children at greatest risk, action is appropriate and timely.
- Children in Need and those children on Protection Plans are regularly visited and social workers know children well.
- Private fostering arrangements are well promoted and supported.
- Services for 16 to 17 year olds at risk of homelessness are effective.
- Support for disabled children is praised and as a result of the work of the team based at Kaleidoscope "*the lives of disabled children are improving*".
- When children and young people are identified as at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation, appropriate action is taken to reduce risk.
- Staff in the education team are tenacious in tracking and following through cases of children missing from education and monitoring arrangements for children electively home educated have improved.

#### **5.2 Issues that need to be addressed:**

- Early help services need to be better developed, with more capacity, better systems and stronger management oversight.
- For children at lower risk, decisions in the MASH can take too long.
- While domestic abuse is recognised promptly, the response is not sufficiently robust and options for support need to be clearer.
- The quality of assessments needs to be improved.
- Children's Plans need to be more detailed and better quality.
- Supervision and management oversight of social workers needs to improve.

## **The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers**

### **5.3 What is going well:**

- Unaccompanied asylum seeking children “receive an effective service and their individual needs are well considered”
- Children in care are “visited regularly by social workers who know them well”
- The ‘virtual school’ which oversees the education of looked after children is “a considerable strength” and is “led and managed very effectively”
- The “dream, achieve and believe” team (attached to the virtual school) is effective in supporting the mental health of looked after children
- The adoption service is effective and processes for recruitment and approval of adopters are timely
- Fostering services are improving and there is a clear strategy
- The care leavers’ service is improving, caseloads have been reduced and there is a clear plan in place
- Most care leavers live in suitable accommodation and numbers in education, employment and training, including higher education, are increasing

### **5.4 Issues that need to be addressed:**

- Fostering service improvements are recent and need to be maintained/accelerated
- Care leavers’ service improvements are recent and slow and need to accelerate
- The impact of Independent Reviewing Officers is limited and needs to be developed
- Permanence is not always secured in a timely way, so needs to be a focus for improvement.
- Life story work is underdeveloped and needs to be improved.

## **The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families**

### **5.5 What is going well:**

- Ofsted recognises the impact since 2018 of the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services [Cllr Chris Barnham] and the CSC Improvement Board
- *“The pace of improvement has significantly accelerated since the appointment of the Director for Children’s Social Care [Lucie Heyes] in September 2018 and the establishment of the Improvement Board”*
- *“Corporate parenting has been reinvigorated”*
- There has been an improvement in management capacity, including the reinstatement of a layer of management (Service Group Managers)
- The decision to introduce a practice model (Signs of Safety) is having a positive impact
- Social workers feel well supported by their managers.
- Threshold decisions are generally accurate
- Additional social work capacity has reduced caseloads
- Newly qualified social workers are well supported

### **5.6 Issues that need to be addressed:**

- Casework audits are too positive and the quality assurance framework is not yet embedded
- Not all performance reports are reliable
- The Ofsted Team saw social workers experiencing significant IT (server) problems
- Commissioned services need to be improved, as has already been recognised
- Social worker caseloads are still too high in some areas
- Training and professional development of social workers has not had enough priority but this is changing

## 6. What we are doing in response to the Ofsted inspection.

- 6.1 Ofsted recognised “*widespread improvement activity and whole-system cultural change*” was underway and the “*pace of improvement had significantly accelerated*” which was beginning to have an impact. However, a number of the changes were still too recent to be embedded, or be making a significant difference to the experiences of children and families in Lewisham.
- 6.2 Ofsted’s findings largely mirrored that of Lewisham Children’s Services own self assessment which was initially completed in January 2019 and updated in June 2019. There was little in the Ofsted feedback that was not already being addressed through the CSC improvement plan. They did however emphasise one area which had not been identified as an explicit priority, namely services for domestic abuse.
- 6.3 The Children’s Services senior management team have reviewed and refreshed the strategic improvement plan and operational services plans to ensure all areas identified by Ofsted are addressed. It is important to note the change programme was recognised as working, therefore, the improvement plan will not be taking a different direction in response to the inspection. However entering the second phase of improvement, the change programme will look different to the first year. In summary, year one of the programme was rebuilding infrastructure, strengthening governance and putting practice basics back in place. The second and third years will look to embed year one changes and focus on workforce development, service re-design and culture/behaviour change.
- 6.4 **Top 12 priority areas for improvement through 2020/2021:**
1. Workforce development, so staff have the skills & tools to do their jobs effectively.
  2. Having clear, updated practice standards, policies and procedures.
  3. Recruitment & Retention of staff, to improve continuity for children and families.
  4. Strengthening targeted Early Help for vulnerable families.
  5. Providing a range of services and help for children living with Domestic Abuse.
  6. Safeguarding young people at risk of exploitation in the community.
  7. Increasing family support, to reduce the need for children to come into care.
  8. Good Corporate Parenting for looked after children and our care leavers.
  9. Placement sufficiency, for our looked after children and care leavers.
  10. Stable ICT to support practice, performance & financial management.
  11. Having reliable performance information to monitor practice and plan services.
  12. Enhanced Business Support, allowing social workers to spend time with families.
- 6.5 The tables on the following pages summarise the key issues that require improvement, and the action already taken through 2019. They set out plans for action through 2020/21, in order to provide consistently good services to children and families in Lewisham.
- 6.6 In the last week of January, CSC will undertake its bi-annual Listening & Learning week. This is a concentrated week of quality assurance and practice scrutiny, it is completed to inform the annual self assessment. The self assessment is an Ofsted requirement and was last completed in Lewisham in January 2019, with a brief update in June 2019.
- 6.7 In March, the CYP Select Committee will receive a separate report on the 2019 self assessment, which will detail the actions delivered throughout the improvement programme and the difference we believe it is making to the quality of practice, services and the impact on children, young people and families across CSC services.

**PRIORITIES 1 & 2: (1) Workforce development. (2) Practice Standards, Policies, Procedures.**

What are the issues	What have we done so far	What else we have planned through 2020
<p><b>Workforce development.</b> Ofsted said: <i>“Training and professional development of social workers has not had enough priority...”</i></p> <p>Phase two of the CSC improvement plan focuses on increasing the skills, tools and resources to support social workers and managers to deliver consistently good supervision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established a permanent senior Principal Social Worker and in-house training team. (May’19 &amp; Dec’19)</li> <li>• Training needs analysis completed and 2020 training programme developed. (Dec’19)</li> <li>• Core skills workshops delivered for all staff. (Nov’19 – Jan’20)</li> <li>• Individual coaching commissioned for frontline team and group managers. (Nov’19)</li> <li>• Signs of Safety practice leaders’ training delivered. (Nov ’19)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthened training offer for practitioners to achieve national social work KSS accreditation and have the skills to meet the needs of the service.</li> <li>• Managers development programmes (Starts Jan 2020)</li> <li>• Research in Practice subscription to be renewed in 2020.</li> <li>• New bi-annual group approach to recruiting and training NQSW’s.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Practice Standards, Policies, Procedures.</b></p> <p>Our self assessment identified the need to reduce inconsistency and improve the core basics. Ofsted said: <i>“the quality of social work practice is still too variable”</i></p> <p>Social work is heavily regulated, much of the legislation is national, but local policies and procedures need to be comprehensively updated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing a set of minimum standards (Bottom Lines). Aug’19</li> <li>• A comprehensive programme of staff engagement sessions from Nov’19 throughout 2020 to develop a portfolio of practice standards following the child’s pathway through services.</li> <li>• Key policies re-written e.g. case transfers, supervision.</li> <li>• Practice guides for core practice areas developed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice Standards engagement workshops to continue through 2020.</li> <li>• Additional improvement capacity agreed to write all local policies and procedures on Tri-X online system through 2020.</li> <li>• Development of Sharepoint site for social workers to access to research and practice tools, in development.</li> </ul>

What are the issues	What have we done so far	What else we have planned through 2020
<p><b>Recruitment and Retention.</b>                      Attracting good practitioners to Lewisham and retaining experienced staff in a competitive market is a challenge. Many neighbouring boroughs pay more and at the last benchmarking Lewisham was in the bottom quartile in London on social worker pay.</p> <p>Ofsted said: <i>caseloads were too high in the assessment service.</i> This is a significant factor in social work retention.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSC staffing establishment revised to maximise capacity, target services to best effect and manage caseloads. (Nov'19)</li> <li>• Strengthened the recruitment / selection methodology to raise standards (Aug'19)</li> <li>• Permanent recruitment of management positions (Aug - Sept'19).</li> <li>• Creation of additional 20 Advanced Practitioner (AP) posts. (converting existing Senior Social Worker posts)</li> </ul>	<p>Concerted recruitment campaigns for all levels from Team Managers to Business Support. Starting Jan'20</p> <p>Workforce Development Strategy to be completed by March 2020. This will cover all aspects of future staffing structure, recruitment and retention, benchmarking pay, succession planning, career progression, workforce development.</p>
<p><b>Enhanced Business Support</b>                      It is estimated that social workers (nationally) only spend 25-30% of their time directly with families, a significant reason for this is bureaucracy. Some administrative activity can be appropriately delegated to business support. A key factor in social work retention is having sufficient administrative support.</p>	<p>Business support capacity, roles and responsibilities reviewed (Through 2019) new enhanced arrangements are being introduced starting in Jan'20.</p>	<p>Implementation of enhanced Business Support across CSC.</p>

**PRIORITIES 4 & 5: (4) Early Help**

**(5) Domestic Abuse**

What are the issues	What have we done so far	What else we have planned through 2020
<p><b>Early Help.</b> Ofsted said</p> <p>Ofsted said: <i>Early help services need to be better developed, with more capacity, better systems and stronger management oversight.</i></p>	<p>Action was taken through Aug'19 to resolve the 'waiting list' for targeted family support and improve the pathway for families 'stepping down' from CSC.</p> <p>The commissioned offer of targeted family support, provided by Core Assets Ltd, amended to be more flexible and responsive to the level and breadth of need of families to match families individual needs.</p> <p>An interim Assistant Director for Children's Joint Commissioning and Early Help has been appointed (started Nov'19) to lead.</p>	<p>We are investigating alternative delivery model for targeted early help. Community stakeholder sessions are planned for the last week of Jan and first week of February. This will provide valuable service user feedback to inform the direction of travel.</p> <p>We will be developing a strategic vision to incorporate the Early Help offer within Lewisham in order to create a more accessible service.</p>
<p><b>Domestic Abuse</b></p> <p>Ofsted identified referral pathways for, and services to families where domestic abuse as a key feature requiring improvement. It is estimated that for approximately 80% of families receiving CSC services, domestic abuse is a feature. Despite this our services and specialist knowledge of how to work with domestic abuse is far too limited</p>	<p>We are reviewing the current Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy with the intention of creating alternative approaches to addressing domestic abuse. This will include services for perpetrators and children affected by domestic abuse.</p>	<p>We will be reviewing the provision of existing services for families alongside colleagues in commissioning and community safety</p> <p>Recruit specialist Domestic Abuse consultant social worker post, to raise skills and standards across CSC.</p> <p>We are looking at cross service delivery, including adult social worker and commissioned services, to test a "Family approach" to domestic abuse.</p>

**PRIORITIES 6 & 7: (6) Young People at risk of exploitation. (7) Family support and edge of care services.**

What are the issues	What have we done so far	What else we have planned through 2020
<p><b>Young People at risk of exploitation.</b>            An area of increasing demand in volume and complexity, which manifests in the seriousness of the risks, in the co-ordination of a wide range of partner agencies. Challenges in this area include: - CSC's limited authority and capacity to manage risk in the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engaging young people with the 'authorities'</li> <li>- Housing pressures</li> <li>- Limited access to emotional wellbeing/mental health services, especially transitioning to adult services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe Space Team established (Aug'19) to work closely with the recently established Concern Hub, to co-ordinate multi-agency responses to children being exploited.</li> <li>• Expansion of staffing in Safe Space team agreed (Nov'19)</li> <li>• Contract for Return Home Interviews for missing children expired and responsibilities returned in-house. (Nov'19)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LSCP Concern Hub strategic board to refresh strategic multi-agency approach to exploitation.</li> <li>• Develop a practice framework for the Safe Space team.</li> <li>• Review and revise the Missing from home and care procedures.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Family support and edge of care services.</b>            Lewisham has a looked after children rate of 69 per 10,000 of the child population, compared to a national rate of 65. To help keep children safely with their families, reduce the number and rate of children and young people needing to come into care, to be comparable with our neighbours, we have to expand and strengthen the quality of our edge of care family support services.</p>	<p>Successful bid for Department of Education innovation money to introduce a Family Group Conference (FGC) service in 2020.</p> <p>Initial exploration to map existing commissioned family support services.</p>	<p>A feasibility review will be undertaken to examine all existing commissioned family support services, to explore the establishment of an in-house service. Includes: Introducing a FGC service, exploring PAUSE &amp; reviewing other locations for delivery of services, as an alternative to the Meliot centre.</p> <p>Housing project to develop clear practice and pathways for 16/17 year olds at risk of homelessness and care leavers.</p>

**PRIORITIES 8 & 9 : (8) Corporate Parenting and Care Leavers. (9) Fostering Sufficiency and Placements of Looked After Children.**

What are the issues	What have we done so far	What else we have planned through 2020
<p><b>Corporate Parenting and Care Leavers.</b> Ofsted said: <i>“Services to children in care had deteriorated since the previous inspection in 2015”</i> and <i>“Care leavers’ service improvements are recent and slow and need to accelerate”</i>.</p> <p>The Corporate Parenting Strategy expired in 2018 and the service experienced a number of staffing changes through 2019.</p> <p>Responsibilities for adopters have transferred to Regional Adoption Agencies (RAA).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Parenting Board refresh (Q3’19)</li> <li>• Child in Care Council refresh (Q3’19)</li> <li>• Transferred responsibilities for adopters to Adopt London South RAA.</li> <li>• Permanence tracking exercise for looked after children completed. (Aug/Sep’19)</li> <li>• Independent Reviewing Officer’s introduce new approach to review meetings for looked after children (Jul’19)</li> <li>• Care Leavers team established (Mar’19) and expanded in Dec’19.</li> <li>• Care Leavers financial entitlements reviewed (Dec’19)</li> </ul>	<p>The Corporate Parenting Strategy scheduled for refresh through Q4, which will provide direction for Lewisham Council and partners will improve our approach to looking after our children in care and care leavers.</p> <p>Creation of specialist UASC team as part of the Care Leavers Service.</p> <p>Conversion of Bromley Road location for Care Leavers Service.</p>
<p><b>Fostering &amp; Placement Sufficiency</b> Lewisham has 470 children in care. 70% live in fostering households, 29% of these are with in-house Lewisham foster carers. 41% are placed in Independent Fostering arrangements (IFA). We want to increase the numbers of looked after children living locally, with Lewisham in-house foster carers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Fostering Strategy (Date) is making gradual progress to expand our pool of in-house foster carers. Campaign in Jun’19.</li> <li>• Best Care panel monitoring high cost placements reviewed and refreshed (Dec’19)</li> </ul>	<p>To continue with our fostering recruitment strategy. We will also be launching our specialist fostering and supported lodging schemes.</p> <p>See all details in the Sufficiency Strategy, updated in Jan’20</p>

**PRIORITIES 10 & 11: (10) ICT – LCS, EMH and ControCC. (11) Performance reporting and quality assurance**

What are the issues	What have we done so far	What else we have planned
<p><b>ICT – LCS, EMH and ControCC</b></p> <p>The Ofsted Team experienced significant IT (server) problems during the inspection. The social work case-work (EHM &amp; LCS) and finance (ControCC) systems also needed comprehensive re-design.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• System outage issues experienced by Ofsted diagnosed &amp; fix installed (Oct'19)</li> <li>• LCS/EHM system maintenance team enhanced, supported by a board and stronger governance. (Dec'19)</li> <li>• Approx.70% of the EHM/LCS forms and pathways re-designed and streamlined.</li> <li>• ControCC finance system for client payments re-design programme agreed and procured. (Dec'19)</li> </ul>	<p>Contract with Liquidlogic (EHM/LCS suppliers) reviewed and renewed, with governance boards in place to improve management.</p> <p>EHM/LCS re-design phase two, commenced Nov'19</p> <p>ControCC re-design, commence Jan'20</p>
<p><b>Performance reporting/quality assurance</b></p> <p>Ofsted said: <i>“Not all performance reports are reliable” and “Casework audits are too positive and the quality assurance framework is not yet embedded”</i></p> <p>A key aim for the improvement plan is to d quality assurance mechanisms, expand the breadth, depth and reliability of data, analyse and make intelligent use of the information for management oversight and service planning.</p>	<p>Data strategy put in place through 2019 to increase the breadth, depth, reliability of performance data and use by managers.</p> <p>Quality Assurance Framework revised in Jan'19 and continues to embed. An audit moderation process was introduced in Jun'19 to ensure an accurate picture of practice.</p>	<p>Data strategy continues; expanding data, improving reliability, presentation, analytics. Embed use of performance data by managers.</p> <p>Listening &amp; learning week scheduled for Jan'20. Self assessment to be updated following this.</p> <p>Participation strategy to be launched in Q4 19/20. Strengthening the use of service user feedback as part of quality assuring services.</p>

## **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1 The Children's Social Care budget has been increased in 2020/21 by £800,000 to provide sufficient staff to maintain reasonable caseloads and management oversight. A further £600,000 has been committed to fund one off development activity to maintain the pace of change in the improvement programme. These additional funds for 2020/21 are being met from within the Children and Young People's Directorate.
- 7.2 The 2021/22 financial position will need to be reviewed again in Quarter 2 of 2020/21, following the completion of the Workforce Development Strategy (WD) and the Family Support Feasibility Review (FSF). The first WD strategy will examine whether additional pressures emerge in the staffing budget as a result of reviewing and benchmarking social worker pay. The second FSF review will identify whether there is sufficient existing resource to develop an in-house Family Support Service, to strengthen Edge of Care provision to prevent children becoming looked after unnecessarily, or whether an invest to save business case is required.

## **8. Legal implications**

Not applicable

## **9. Crime and disorder implications**

Investment in the Safe Space, Leaving Care and additional Domestic Violence services are specifically aimed at reducing rates of crime and violence in the community.

## **10. Equalities implications**

- 10.1 The Council's Comprehensive Equality Scheme for 2016-20 provides an overarching framework and focus for the Council's work on equalities and helps ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
- 10.2 Social work recruitment activity is subject to Human Resources equalities legislation and processes. Foster carer and adopter recruitment activity is actively seeking to diversify our pool of carers and placements in line with the profile of our looked after children.
- 10.3 Working with unconscious bias is included in workforce development plans ensure services are providing culturally sensitive and equitable services.

## **11. Health and Wellbeing implications**

Retention initiatives to support staff welfare aim to reduce sickness levels.

## **12. Background Papers**

The Ofsted report was published in August 2019: <https://files.api.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50101634>

## **13. Report Author and Contact**

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## **14 Appendices**

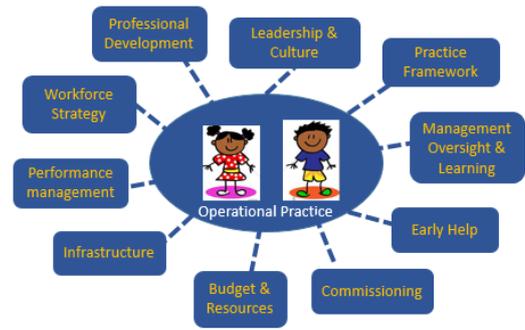
Appendix 1 - Vision for good children's social work in Lewisham.

## 15. Glossary

Term	Definition
ILACS	Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services. Details of the framework for inspection can be found here: <a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government</a>
MASH Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub,	The multi-professional team based in Children's Services that provides a referral point for all professionals and members of the public requesting services for vulnerable children.
CSC Children's Social Care.	The service area of Children's Services that provides statutory social work services to children in need, including those with complex disabilities, children in need of protection, children who are looked after (in care) and young people who her previously been in care.
Corporate Parenting	The term that describes the Local Authority's responsibilities towards children who are looked after, in the care of the council.
FGC Family Group Conference	A meeting of the extended family and friends to make decisions and plans for resolving problems around a child or young person. More information can be found here: <a href="http://www.daybreakfgc.org.uk/what-is-an-fgc">http://www.daybreakfgc.org.uk/what-is-an-fgc</a>
Signs of Safety	The practice framework for children's social work that guides a particular approach to working with families. More information can be found here: <a href="https://www.signsofsafety.net/signs-of-safety/">https://www.signsofsafety.net/signs-of-safety/</a>
KSS Knowledge & Skills Statements	The children's social work national standards set by the Department of Education. <a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government</a>
Tri – X	Internet based online procedures manual, used by a number of Local Authorities to host all practice procedures.
LSCP Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership	Replacing the former Local Safeguarding Children's Board in 2019. The partnership ensures member agencies work together to keep children and young people safe, hold one another to account and ensure that safeguarding remains a priority. More information can be found here: <a href="https://www.safeguardinglewisham.org.uk/lscp/lscp">https://www.safeguardinglewisham.org.uk/lscp/lscp</a>
PAUSE	A evidence based intensive programme to support women who have experienced, or are at risk of, repeated pregnancies that result in children needing to be removed from their care. PAUSE aims to give women the opportunity to pause and take control and break a destructive cycle. More information can be found here: <a href="https://www.pause.org.uk/">https://www.pause.org.uk/</a>
RAA Regional Adoption Agency	A service that recruits, assesses, matches and supports prospective adopters, operating on behalf of; Lewisham Richmond, Kingston, Sutton, Merton, Croydon, Wandsworth, Lambeth and Southwark. More information can be found here: <a href="https://www.first4adoption.org.uk/agency/adopt-london-south/">https://www.first4adoption.org.uk/agency/adopt-london-south/</a>
EHM/LCS ControCC	EHM/LCS - Electronic case file recording and management system for Children's Social Care. Provided by Liquidlogic suppliers. ControCC – Electronic Finance management system linked to LCS



# Our Vision



## What good children's social work looks like in Lewisham

### **Families will tell us they understand why we are involved, the reasons for our decisions and the actions we take**

We will make sure children/young people, parents, carers and others are clear about why we are involved, what needs to change and what we are doing to help. We will work 'with' families and support everyone to participate by listening to their views and encouraging them to find their own solutions. We will always respect that families are all different and they know themselves best, we will be balanced and recognise their strengths, seeking to build on what is working well to help change happen.

### **Children & young people will tell us their social worker spent time getting to know them and has made a difference to their lives**

We will always make sure we spend enough time with the child/young person so we understand their experiences and what is important to them. The child/young person will always know that we are looking out for them, that we care about what is happening to them and that their wellbeing and safety is our top priority. We will explain to children and young people what we are doing and why, in a language they will understand and will encourage them to participate and help them make good choices to shape their own experience and futures.

### **Families are respected and supported to stay together whenever there is enough safety**

Through building trust and relationships, families will be helped to find their own solutions and become more resilient. We will always recognise the importance of the child and young person's network and strengthen support for families to stay together wherever it is safe to do so. We will always look for care for children and young people in the naturally occurring network as the first option. We will work with families, their communities and other agencies to help young people navigate the challenges they face to keep safe in their homes, schools and in the community.

### **Children and young people who are in our care know we care and we won't give up on them**

When a child or young person comes into our care we will do everything we can to make them safe and secure. We will talk with them about their life story, to help them understand and make sense of the difficulties they may have experienced. We will keep them connected to their family, culture and community. We will always champion their interests, celebrate their achievements and have high aspirations for them, to help them grow and to do the best they can in their lives.

### **Young people who have been in our care feel confident about themselves and their future**

The young adults who have been in our care will be provided with the tools and support they need to build their knowledge, skills and confidence to lead successful, independent lives. We will help them access services and keep connected in their culture and communities. We will encourage and support them to realise and achieve their hopes and ambitions. We will ensure they always have someone to turn to if they need advice or help.