

Decision Maker: EXECUTIVE

Date: For Pre-Decision Scrutiny by the Care Services Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee on 10th January 2017

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

Title: CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE AND PHASE THREE SPENDING PLAN

Contact Officer: Angela Buchanan, Head of Service for Planning and Development,
E-mail: angela.buchanan@bromley.gov.uk

Chief Officer: Ade Adetosoye, Deputy Chief Executive, ECHS Department

Ward: Borough-wide

1. Reason for report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress on the Children's Services Improvement Areas and to obtain approval to spend the phase 3 resources as outlined in Report CS17036 which was agreed by the Council's Executive on the 14th September 2016.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 The Care Services PDS Committee is asked to note and comment on the contents of this report prior to the Council's Executive being requested to:

- i) Agree that the Phase 3 additional funding of £141, 000 part year and £795k in a full year be drawn down as outlined in Section 6 of Report CS17089.
- ii) Agree one-off funding of £150k to be met from the Council's Technology Fund for the purchase of the laptops and other associated hardware for children's social care staff as set out in para 3.8 of Report CS17089.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Not Applicable
 2. BBB Priority: Children and Young People Excellent Council:
-

Financial

1. Cost of proposal: £141, 000 2016/17 FYE £795, 000
 2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable:
 3. Budget head/performance centre: New Funding being requested
 4. Total current budget for this head: £0
 5. Source of funding: Supplementary Estimate
-

Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 5 FTE (16/17) additional staff as detailed in section 6
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: N/A
-

Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement:
 2. Call-in: Applicable:
-

Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Approx. 300 CLA, 280 subject to a child protection plan and 2,000 children in need
-

Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments:

3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 This is the second progress report being made to the Care Services PDS; the previous report was presented at the meeting of the 6th December 2016.
- 3.2 Ofsted undertook the first monitoring visit in November where they identified that overall, the visit found very limited improvement in practice, although there is recent improvement in some areas, including work undertaken in the court team and improved quality assurance processes. It confirmed that the council is demonstrating commitment to improving services to children and families in Bromley by acknowledging the findings in the inspection and taking some decisive corporate action to address the deficits identified. Nevertheless, many of the improvements required are too recent or not yet in place to improve outcomes for children and their families. The changes required need to be considerably accelerated.
- 3.3 It is against this backdrop that the new Deputy Chief Executive has injected pace and rigour into the improvement actions. Since joining Bromley at the beginning of December he has met with over 120 children's social care staff, refocussed the improvement framework to ensure that Group Managers and Heads of Service are delivering the actions relevant to their teams. Time has also been spent in organising key events and supporting materials to ensure that improving practice is at the heart of everything we do.
- 3.4 Progress on the following areas is detailed within this report:
- A review of team structures;
 - Recruitment to key posts;
 - New process for authorising placements has been developed;
 - Further development of the Quality Assurance Framework;
 - Continued reduction of Caseloads;
 - Development of the CSE and Missing unit;
 - Training Plan for Qualified Social Workers and other professionals (Jan – Mar 2017);

3.5 Progress made against Children's Services Improvement Plan

3.5.1 Leadership and Management Oversight

- a) A review of team structures has commenced to identify where capacity needs to be increased so that caseloads can be reduced to ensure safe practice (Ofsted recommendations 1, 3 and 4). This work has identified that further qualified social worker posts are required. This will be achieved through re-prioritising, re-designating and diverting resources from within current budgets (see paras 6.2 and 6.3 below). These additional posts will enable average caseloads to reduce significantly.
- b) Recruitment to key posts is underway including permanently filling the Head of Service for Quality Improvement and Head of Service for Safeguarding and Care Planning. In order to achieve a clear line of sight for children who are looked after (Ofsted recommendation 1) an additional Head of Service for CLA has been included as part of the phase 3 spending plan (para 6.2)
- c) From January a new process for authorising placements will be introduced led by the Director for Children's Social Care, these measures will reduce spend and monitor quality;
- d) Further development of the Quality Assurance Framework as outlined in the last report now includes Independent Case Audits that track the key decision points in active cases to ensure consistency of practice and management oversight (Ofsted recommendation 2). The plan is to extend this audit activity further between January and March and is outlined in the phase 3 spending plan (para 6.2).

3.5.2 Practice Areas

- a) The additional posts added to within the phases 1 and 2 spending plan have continued to have an impact on reducing caseloads reduction of Caseloads; The table below shows the current average caseloads and those identified as part of the caseload promise.

Team	Oct 2016 Ave Caseloads	Nov 2016 Ave Caseloads	QSW Caseload Promise
Referral & Assessment	27	21	12 - 15
Safeguarding & Care Planning	21	20	12 - 15
Court Team	6	10	8 - 10
CLA Team	13	13	10 - 12

Members had requested information about the complexity and types of cases that are being supported by CSC, four case studies have been attached as appendix 1. These cases help demonstrate why caseload size is critical to achieving improved practice. Child A highlights the complexity of the cases that are being managed by the Safeguarding and Care Planning teams and Child D the initial work undertaken by the Referral and Assessment Team.

- b) Development of the CSE and Missing unit, recruitment to key posts is underway, existing posts have been identified both within children's social care and the police. The new CSE and missing unit will be in place from early January. New referral and tracking pathway has been developed and will be implemented at the same time. This means that the current central list will become electronic.

The existing commissioned services that support young people identified as at risk will also be part of the new unit. Child B and Child C case examples (in Appendix one) show the types of cases that this unit will be working with.

The phase 3 spending plan (para 6.2) requests that 2 posts be created to support the work of this unit – a Co-ordinator who will oversee the work and an analyst who will work with the police analysts and other services including Education Welfare, the Early Intervention service and the Youth Offending Service.

- c) The Training Plan for Qualified Social Workers and other professionals (Jan – Mar 2017) has been remodelled to include key practice areas that have been identified as weak. Courses cover general areas such as Core Principles of Good Practice and Child Protection Procedures and more specific areas including:
- Assessment Training - Basic Children and Family (not Risk Assessments)
 - Understanding Thresholds
 - Risk Identification & Analysis
 - Section 47 and Strategy Meetings
 - Writing Quality Plans
- All sessions are open to multi-agency partners where space is available.

- 3.6 One of the outcomes of the Ofsted Improvement Plan was to improve IT provision within children's social care. Effective ICT is key to enabling social care staff across the division to work efficiently, and to ensure accurate recording and monitoring. To this end the Council is investing and working with the social care systems provider OLM to develop a new children social care electronic case file, Eclipse, which will replace the current CareFirst early in the new 2017/18 financial year.

- 3.7 However, hardware limitations mean that staff are required to complete their recording either from their office desk or from their home computer, via a Citrix connection. Modern and efficient ways of working would support the allocation of mobile hardware that would allow social workers to undertake recording remotely directly into CareFirst. The new platform Eclipse has been built to fully support mobile working.
- 3.8 The provision of lightweight laptops would also have the added benefit of keeping staff out in the field and reducing down time whereby practitioners currently have to return to the office to access IT. Funding of £150k is requested for the purchase of the laptops and other associated hardware for children's social care staff (for 226 staff including installation and IT build costs). The utilisation of funding from the Council's Technology Fund will require the approval of the Executive. The ongoing costs will be met from within the ECHS departmental budgets.

3.9 Next Steps

- 3.9.1 A schedule of weekly meetings has been set chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive to ensure that actions within the plan are delivered. These meetings include key Children Social Care Officers, Housing, Education and Legal team senior officers and partners from the Police and Bromley CCG (Safeguarding lead, CLA Nurse/ Doctor leads). The aim of these meetings is to ensure that pace is maintained in the improvement of children's services as laid out in the 2016/ 17 improvement plan. Progress against these actions will be reported monthly to the Officer Group (Children's Services Improvement Board) and the Overarching CS Improvement Governance Board.
- 3.9.2 The date of the second monitoring visit is Wednesday 22 and Thursday 23 February 2017. Ofsted intend to use the same inspection team used in the first monitoring visit for consistency.
- 3.9.3 Refinement of the "Risk Management Matrix" that underpins the Children's Services Improvement Plan to enable reporting of key performance indicators to members. This will be supported by a series of sessions for members of this PDS committee (commencing 12th January) on children's social care data.

4. IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN

- 4.1 The full content of this report impacts on needs of vulnerable children and the required actions necessary to improve the services delivered.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 All actions within the draft improvement action plan are set in the context of the Building a Better Bromley Key Priorities for 2016—2018 by being ambitious for all our children and young people through:

- Fulfilling our duty of care to ensure the health, wellbeing and achievements of our vulnerable children.
- Provide the best possible service to deliver appropriate support to all children and young people.

By ensuring the best possible future for the children and young people of Bromley, with a clear focus on supporting the most vulnerable through:

- Safeguarding children and young people within schools and the community.
- Listening to the views of children and young people to influence the decisions that are made about them.
- Encouraging excellent educational opportunities from the early years through to further and higher education for all Bromley children and young people including those with Special Educational Needs.

5.2 These aims are covered by the both the Care Services and Education Portfolio Plans which are reported to the relevant PDS committees for approval (September/ October 2016) and monitoring January / March 2017.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 At the meeting on 14th September the Executive agreed that Council be recommended to agree to release up to a further £141k in 2016/17 and a further £795k in a full year for Phase Three, with any utilisation of the monies being subject to approval by the Executive following an appropriate level of scrutiny. The initial spending plan agreed by the Executive is detailed below for reference.

EXPENDITURE AS A RESULT OF OFSTED

	<u>Action Plan ID</u>	<u>FTE</u>	<u>2016/17</u> <u>£'000</u>	<u>2017/18</u> <u>£'000</u>	<u>Full year</u> <u>£'000</u>	<u>Comment</u>
PHASE ONE						
Children's Social Care						
Director ECHS	1.1	1	83	200	200	From Nov 16
Head of service (QI)	1.2.1	1	60	90	90	
Safeguarding and Care Planning						
DM Post Posts (court team)	1.2.1	1	34	52	52	
6 Advanced Practitioner Posts (court team)	1.2.1	6	207	310	310	
Referral and Assessment						
2 Senior Practitioner Posts	1.2.1	2	64	96	96	
Care and Resources						
Group Manager Leaving Care team (management capacity)	1.2.1	1	43	64	64	
Group Manager Special Guardianship	5.5.1	1	43	64	64	
Group Manager Adoption (management capacity)	7	1	43	64	64	
2 Social Work Assistant (Special Guardianship)	5.5.1	2	49	74	74	
Quality Improvement Team						
Administrator (CSE, Missing & Gangs)	8	1	20	30	30	
Strategic and business support (Policies and Procedures)	2.9.1	1	32	48	-	18 mth post
Child Protection / IRO Minute Taker (Risk assessments/ escalations)	5.2.3	1	16	24	24	
Child Protection Independent Chair	5.2.3	1	37	55	55	
TOTAL PHASE ONE RESOURCES REQUESTED		20	731	1,171	1,123	
PHASE TWO						
6 Senior Practitioner roles	1.2.1	6	158	288	288	From May 16
Quality Audit Manager	2.4, 2.6	1	60	60	60	From Sept 16
TOTAL PHASE TWO RESOURCES REQUESTED		7	218	348	348	

PHASE THREE

Head of service (Safeguarding & Care Planning)	1.2.1	1	60	90	90	From Jan 2017
Safeguarding and care planning - DM Post	1.2.1	1	13	52	52	From Jan 2017
Safeguarding and care planning - 3 social workers	1.2.1	3	10	123	123	From Jan 2017
Recruitment & retention of social workers from 2017/18	2.11		-	300	300	
Quality Audits	2.2.1		38	150	150	From Jan 2017
Commissioning - Placement Officer	9.7.3	1	10	40	40	From Jan 2017
Commissioning - Monitoring Officer	9.8.2	1	10	40	40	From Jan 2017
TOTAL PHASE THREE RESOURCES REQUESTED		7	141	795	795	
TOTAL RESOURCES REQUESTED		34	1,090	2,314	2,266	

6.2 The new Deputy Chief Executive has reviewed the initial phase 3 spending plan and has re-profiled the resource requirements to be funded from this phase 3 allocation the table below provides the breakdown of proposed expenditure both in 2016/17 (part year) and 2017/18 (full year).

Description	Amount Required Part Year 2016/17	Amount Required Full Year 2017/18
Head of Service	25,000	100,000
Head of Service	0	100,000
Quality Audits - 2 practice development managers	40,000	150,000
Placement Officer 1.0 FTE	0	40,000
CSE Coordinator 1.0 FTE	20,000	60,000
CSE Analyst 1.0 FTE	16,000	35,000
1 Deputy Manager	0	50,000
Legal Post	0	60,000
5 QSW (3.5 R&A and 1.5 CLA)	40,000	200,00
Total Phase 3	141,000	795,000

- 6.3 It is essential that the effectiveness of the use of these additional resources are continuously reviewed to ensure the required outcomes are achieved.
- 6.4 In addition to the posts outlined above, additional resources (10 -15 social worker posts) will be needed in the short to medium term to ensure caseloads are manageable and the service is working as efficiently and effectively as possible, which in the longer term will enable savings to be made around the placements budget. As caseloads reduce, it will allow better decision making and ensure more effective gatekeeping.
- 6.5 To fund these additional social worker posts existing resources from within ECHS departmental budgets will be re-diverted, along with asking BSCB Partners to contribute to the new Board posts. A review is also being undertaken to free up funding in running costs and where possible a cash limit will be applied.
- 6.6 At the end of 2017/18 a review will be undertaken to ensure these resources are still required and for how long.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The Secretary of State has extensive powers under the provisions of Section 497 A where a local authorities performance in the delivery of Children`s services is deemed to be inadequate. The Secretary of State has issued a new Direction under this provision appointing a Commissioner who is charged among other things to make recommendations for the improvement of children`s services at Bromley and the provision of children`s services and recommending to the Secretary of State whether those services should continue to be provided by the Council.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Human Resources is working well with a number of employment agencies and in particular the Council`s agency link contractor (Adecco) to improve the speed and quality of applicants/candidates for qualified/experienced children`s social care staff. The Council`s Recruitment and Retention package for children`s social care staff is being further reviewed and benchmarked to ensure Bromley Council remains competitive in the labour market and the preferred destination for suitably qualified social workers.

8.2 Unarguably, staff retention is equally as important as attracting the right number of qualified social workers to the right roles at the right time. Hence, HR is working with managers to improve the retention rate. For example, there is a `No Quit Policy` aimed at persuading quality staff from leaving the Council. Some of the push factors such as caseloads, motivation etc are being addressed. Better exit data and feedback from leavers is being analysed and shared with management to improve the retention rate.

8.4 Additionally, on the job support is being developed including coaching and mentoring support for qualified social workers to improve their motivation and quality of practice/decision-making. Ultimately, all qualified staff in the service at every level, from the Director to frontline staff will have a Career Development Plan, based on the nationally agreed competencies clustered around the following:

- Value-based competencies i.e. what is our vision for children and young people in the Borough?
- Leadership competencies i.e. ability to lead and manager.
- Functional/operational competencies i.e. the non-negotiable core skills for individual roles.

8.5 In summary, the recruitment and retention of qualified staff remains a real challenge but HR is working well with Children`s Social Care managers and employment agencies to improve the recruitment and retention rates.

Non-Applicable Sections:	N/A
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	OFSTED INSPECTION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES 14 TH SEPTEMBER 2016 OFSTED IMPROVEMENT PLAN Q2 PROGRESS 6 TH DECEMBER 2016

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE CASE EXAMPLES FROM RECENT AUDIT ACTIVITY

CASE ONE: Child A**Known risk factors: neglect, removal of previous child, alcohol abuse****Case Summary:**

Family have been known to both Bromley CSC and East Sussex CSC since 2004 (Bromley is the most recently involved authority). A summary on file shows CSC have been involved with mother of Child A prior to their birth due to concerns about drug and alcohol use, and of mother being in a previous relationship characterised by domestic violence with a partner who misused drugs as well. Alcohol misuse remains a risk factor throughout our intervention and known to be a risk factor within the wider family network. Maternal grandmother is known to misuse alcohol resulting in Child A's mother and maternal aunt being placed with a family member due to concerns of inadequate parenting.

Mother of Child A (at age of 15 years) gave birth to her first child in 2009, records indicate she had difficulty parenting this child, given her drug and alcohol misuse. East Sussex CSC removed Child A from her care in April 2011 placing them with an extended family member. The family member was later granted a Special Guardianship Order in February 2012.

Child A was been subject to 2 CIN plans and they have previously been subject to a Child Protection (CP) plan. An initial child protection conference (ICPC) was held in March 2016 where they were not made subject to a CP Plan, a further ICPC was held in May 2016 and they were made subject to a CP plan.

Action: Case continues to be monitored by social care staff to ensure the CP plan actions are being met.

CASE TWO: Child B**Known risk factors: substance misuse, CSE - missing****Case Summary:**

An initial assessment was completed in May 2009 following the father of Child B being arrested for drunk driving. At that point they had been looking after their three children with the help of their own mother for a period of 6 years after the mother of the children left. Child B and two siblings were on a Residence Order to father as mother was reported to have abandoned the children and to have substance misuse problems.

A core assessment was completed in February 2010. Child B was reported to have been involved in shop lifting. Recommendation at the time was to close the file. In April 2012 An initial assessment was started and not completed and at this point paternal grandmother was more involved in the day to day care of the children. There are reports of Child B going missing from home dated January 2013 at which point Child B would have been aged 13 years.

Child B and sibling were accommodated in March 2013. Child B remained in placement until it broke down in November 2013. The sibling remains with the foster carer. Since the placement broke down Child B has had a number of subsequent placement moves. Child B has continued to have episodes of missing throughout their period in care, there has also been concerns raised regarding being subject to risk of CSE. Child B has been subject to a MAP meeting (June 2016) and has been discussed at MASE. Child B was made subject to a Secure Order between June - September 2016.

Child B has now been placed in a therapeutic unit. The risk of CSE remains present and the placement plan addresses this. Barnardo's assessment indicated that there are strong pre-disposing factors to CSE. A comprehensive support package has been provided.

Action: Case continues to be monitored by social care staff to ensure that the placement plan actions are being met and risks are being minimised.

CASE FOUR: Child C

Known risk factors: inter - familial sexual abuse, neglect, CSE

Case Summary:

There is a documented history of involvement dating back many years relating to concerns around unproven allegations of inter familial sexual abuse by Child C's parent. There were allegations that the parent sexually assaulted relatives. Over the succeeding years both Child C and sibling presented at the GP with a range of conditions associated with sexual abuse. In 2009 Child C and siblings were made subject to child protection plans (sexual abuse and neglect). The case was closed at the Review Child Protection Conference in 2011.

A legal planning meeting was held in early 2014 when it was advised that the threshold for proceedings was not met. In 2015 Child C presented at an A & E department and was found to be pregnant, a concern was that she had conceived at 15, her boyfriend was 19 and known to another Local Authority as an adult with high support needs. Child C has a Statement of Special Education Needs for behavioural and emotional difficulties.

It was decided that due to continued concerns of sexual abuse in the family network and Child C's limited or non-engagement with professionals, an ICPC should be convened. In early 2016 Child C was made subject to a Child Protection Plan, under the categories of Sexual Abuse and Neglect.

Throughout her pregnancy Child C and her mother refused to engage with Social Care.

Child C gave birth this summer. She was placed in a residential assessment unit so that a parenting assessment could be undertaken. However, because of her vulnerability she is also accommodated under S20. Child C and baby are subject to child protection plans. Care proceedings have been initiated in respect of baby, who is currently on an Interim Care Order.

Action: All cases in statutory intervention are required to be allocated to a qualified social worker. This applies during and post care proceedings.

CASE THREE: Child D

Known risk factors: domestic abuse, substance misuse

Case Summary:

Involvement stems with concerns escalated around parental capacity in keeping children safe due to the domestic violence which had taken place in their relationship as well as significant substance misuse issues. Father also has an extensive history of involvement in criminal behaviour. The current involvement arises from a referral in September 2015 from the children's school. Referral highlighted children had not been collected from school and there were difficulties in contacting parents.

Child D and her sibling were made subject to a child protection plan December 2015 under the category of neglect; the agreement being both Child D and sibling had been subject to exposure of their parental substance misuse and domestic violence, which impacted on the care they received. Mother did not engage with services or take steps to address her substance misuse issues. Both children were placed with a relative in December 2015.

Action: Case continues to be monitored by social care staff to ensure the CP plan actions are being met.