



Development Plan 2019/20

"The Trust continues to have one focus: to deliver better services and better outcomes for the city's most vulnerable children, young people and families. This development plan describes the important work we need to focus on now, particularly strengthening the quality and consistency of practice across the Trust. We will do that by engaging and forging strong and purposeful collaboration with children, young people and families, with those we work with, with the Council as our commissioner, with our partners, and with our staff."

Andy Couldrick, Chief Executive, Birmingham Children's Trust

"This plan represents a vital next step in the City's journey towards providing high impact, purposeful support and care to all of Birmingham's vulnerable children and young people. The Trust has already made significant strides in that direction, and the City Council will continue to work closely, and well with the Trust to reach our next set of goals. I am committed to ensuring that all of our services work seamlessly together so that every child and young person receives high quality support, feels safe and achieves their potential."

Tim O'Neill, Corporate Director of Education and Skills/Director of Children's Services, Birmingham City Council

The vision of Birmingham Children's Trust is to build a service that provides excellent children's social work and social care services for the city's most vulnerable children, young people and families. We aim to always deliver services with compassion and with care, through positive relationships, building on strengths. We work in collaboration with children and young people, families and our partners. We strive to always listen to, involve and include children and their families in our work. We aim to achieve the best outcomes by supporting children to be healthy, happy and resilient.

The last full Ofsted inspection of children's services published in January 2019 found that services for children overall require improvement to be good. That is consistent with our self-assessment that overall we continue to **require improvement to be good**.

On the launch of the Trust we established a number of priorities that remain important today:

- We continue to be committed to engaging our partners and external agencies as we know that the partnership must work together to support and protect our children. The Trust are prominent members of the developing Children and Young People Strategic Partnership, including the chief executives of all key partner agencies.
- We continue to develop and sustain a skilled and confident workforce.
- We continue to build collaboration, understanding, and capacity within the Trust Board.
- We continue to develop and strengthen our regulated services to ensure that they provide good services to children.
- We are developing a practice response to children at risk of contextual harm.
- We continue to embed the relationship-based practice model to drive improving practice.

We have accepted the six areas that Ofsted have told us we need to improve, and they had been identified as such in the self-assessment produced prior to the inspection. The Development Plan is based around 8 strategic priorities the first 6 of which respond to Ofsted's findings:

- The quality, effectiveness and pace of partnership working with external agencies, including partner-led early help services.
- Trust and confidence between the courts and Birmingham Children's Trust.
- Effectiveness of the fostering service.

- Robust and timely focus on all permanence options for children.
- Alignment of the approach to contextual safeguarding.
- The impact of the virtual school in improving provision for children in care.
- Practice improvement.
- Workforce.

This plan will be monitored, reviewed and updated monthly. It will sit alongside the Trust's contractual key performance indicators, other quantitative and qualitative measures of performance, and quarterly updates of the Trust's self-assessment. In this way, at all times we will have a strong picture of the effectiveness of the services organised and delivered by the Trust. Detailed delivery plans underpin each of the strategic priorities described in this plan. It will be an iterative plan, and we will add new actions as new issues, risks and opportunities emerge during the year. Sponsors for the strategic priorities will be accountable to the Trust Board, through the Chief Executive, and the Trust will be accountable to the Council for progress.

In order to ensure effective delivery of this plan we are redesigning Assistant Director roles and responsibilities for implementation from 1 April 2019.

Looking ahead, the key elements of transformation will include:

- Care, edge of care and alternatives: strengthening and extending hours of the Edge of Care team; investment in family-based decision-making and in families' ability to find solutions and build plans for their children; releasing resource properly to support family plans.
- More generally, we will embed family meetings and family group conferences (FGCs) as a key plank of our decision-making and ensure resources are oriented around supporting family plans.
- Family placement transformation: recruitment and retention; fee structures; developing an innovative proposition for working in a regional adoption agency (RAA) model; exploring different strategic partnership models for delivering and supporting more Trust carers.
- Contextual safeguarding: implementing new models for delivering service to, and managing risks faced by, vulnerable adolescents at risk from exploitation, gangs, drugs, 'county lines'. We recognise traditional models are not fit for purpose and we are developing models with partners for a new and different approach.
- We will play a key role in building and strengthening strategic and operational partnerships working across the city.
- Transforming the children's judicial system in Birmingham: we have agreed with the senior District Judge a system review to support swifter and more effective decision-making in the courts. Trust and confidence between stakeholders needs to be rebuilt.
- A review of our structural arrangements. They have served improvement well since 2015-16, but we are stronger now and need to review these in the context of:
 - Exploring different management roles within the team structure.
 - Reducing the number of changes of social worker that children and families still experience.



- Exploring the introduction of allied professionals into social work teams: adult mental health, domestic abuse, substance Misuse: we see the impact this has had in CASS/MASH and want to exploit wider opportunities across the service.
 - Building stronger local connections with our partners in schools, health, police etc.
- We need to review and improve progression pathways for social workers, linking pay and non-pay rewards, the development of a social work academy with higher education (HE) partners, improving our learning and development/continuing professional development offer.
- We will be delivering a bespoke leadership and management development programme beginning in March 2019 for all practice leaders and senior leaders in the Trust. We will not get the traction we need through small numbers of managers gaining places on nationally accredited programmes.
- We will continue to work with the 'What Works' Centre on a number of significant projects including understanding the impact of first line management supervision on family outcomes and child protection decision making.

We continue to be ambitious for the Trust and we believe that the priorities set out in the Development Plan are the right ones to drive improvements further.

Jenny Turnross
Director of Practice
Birmingham Children's Trust

Development Plan 2019/20

	<u>Lead(s)</u>	Progress Update	Date to complete	RAG Status
Strategic Priority 1				
The quality, effectiveness and pace of partnership working with external agencies, including partner-led early help services				
Sponsor – Director of Practice, Birmingham Children's Trust				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board the revised Early Help Strategy is implemented and includes robust expectations across partner agencies which strengthen the Early Help Offer. There is improved collaborative work with West Midlands Police in respect of s47 investigations and resulting child protection processes. The step up/step down protocol across the Trust is strengthened. There is greater understanding across partners about city-wide early help services and partners are able to assure themselves that the partnership is responding to families in need of support effectively. 				
1. Develop bespoke training for 'Lead Practitioners' (across the partnership) and toolkit to support the role.	AD, Early Help and Youth Justice		April 2019	
2. Develop a web based portal and suite of documents (EHA, Plan, Impact tool) which will allow the registration and monitoring of assessments and plans onto the Trust case management data base via the portal.	AD, Early Help and Youth Justice		June 2019	
3. Development of e-learning Early Help Module.	AD, Early Help and Youth Justice		April 2019	
4. Review and strengthen step down arrangements to universal services across the Trust.	HoS, Think Family/Family Support		September 2019	



	<u>Lead(s)</u>	Progress Update	Date to complete	RAG Status
5. Think Family transformation across the City to focus partnership intervention on the most vulnerable families and capture progress overtime to meet Birmingham's outcomes for families.	AD, Early Help and Youth Justice		March 2020	
6. Present proposal for roll out of the 'Outcome Star' to the Early Help Safeguarding Partnership. This will support our understanding of the effectiveness of early help.	AD, Early Help and Youth Justice		March 2019	B
7. Practice Evaluation to focus on re-referrals February 2019, feedback from this will determine further actions, including policy and practice developments.	Area AD HoS, CASS		March 2019	G
8. Quarterly case auditing to ensure that agency checks are consistently completed when children are referred to the Trust.	Area AD HoS, ASTI East HoS, CASS		Commences February 2019	
9. Quarterly case auditing to review partner engagement.	Area AD		Commences February 2019	
10. Develop a protocol to review and escalate cases at critical milestones to ensure a robust reviewing system of child protection plans.	AD, Safeguarding		April 2019	
11. Extend the current step up/step down protocol to include universal services	HoS, Think Family/Family Support HoS, ASTI East		July 2019	
12. Quarterly case auditing programme to review cases that have stepped up/stepped down to ensure threshold has been applied appropriately.	HoS, Think Family/Family Support Acting HoS, Think Family/Family Support Acting HoS, ASTI South HoS, Safeguarding North, West & Central		Commences March 2019	
13. The Trust will undertake an audit programme of 30 children to determine where a decision to undertake a joint visit was followed through.	HoS, ASTI North, West & Central		April 2019	
14. Exercise to map out wider partnership offer across Birmingham and ensure this aligns with need, to include a review of the wider family support offer.	AD, Early Help and Youth Justice Area AD		July 2019	



Strategic Priority 2

Trust and confidence between the courts and Birmingham Children's Trust

Sponsor – Director of Finance and Resources

- Processes within Birmingham Children's Trust enable best practice to be achieved in respect of pre and court proceedings.
- Relationships between Birmingham Children's Trust, CAFCASS and the Judiciary reflect a collaborative case management approach.
- Birmingham Children's Trust staff have the necessary skills and expertise to effectively manage cases through the court process.

15. Pre-Proceedings Improvement Project to ensure effective management oversight and progression.	Head of Legal Services Area AD AD, Practice Improvement		June 2019	
16. Review of the Legal Tracker Tool and reporting processes to monitor performance in respect of pre/court and post proceedings.	AD, Practice Improvement		February 2019	G
17. Project group to improve relationships between social care and legal teams.	Head of Legal Services Area AD AD, Practice Improvement		June 2019	
18. Review of Trust Legal Services structure and delivery model.	Head of Legal Services		June 2019	
19. Independent Review of Birmingham Court process (commenced) and implementation of revised working model.	AD, Practice Improvement		June 2019	
20. Project group to review practice delivery of the family and friends policy to ensure that assessments are completed appropriately.	Head of Legal Services AD, Practice Improvement		May 2019	
21. Implement programme of shared learning events with CAFCASS to improve relationships and performance.	Area AD AD, Practice Improvement		May 2019	
22. Ensure that any legacy delays in court care proceedings are addressed by the Trust, the judiciary and CAFCASS in order to come to a firm conclusion.	Area AD		June 2019	



Strategic Priority 3

Improve the effectiveness of the fostering service

Sponsor – Director of Commissioning and Corporate Parenting

- The fostering service has the capacity to deliver a robust and effective provision.
- The issues identified in the recent fostering inspection (published February 2019) are addressed.
- The fostering service functions as an Independent Fostering Service with a clear business model in place.
- The quality and sufficiency of foster carers, including the out of hours response to children who need care, are improved.

23. Review of the disruption process and protocol to ensure learning and improvements in practice.	AD, Practice Improvement AD, Placements		May 2019	
24. Review the current structure and operating model for the Placement and Fostering Service (including recruitment of a range of carers, short term matching and assessments), and implement the new working model.	AD, Placements		May 2019	
25. Delivery of Fostering Action Plan in response to Ofsted Inspection January 2019.	AD, Placements		August 2019	
26. Review all policies and processes around long term fostering (planning, family finding and matching).	AD, Placements		May 2019	
27. Redesign the Emergency Duty Team Edge of Care Service to ensure an effective out of hours response to children needing care.	AD, Placements		February 2019	G
28. Review the quality of and response to family and friends placements to ensure that children can safely live within their extended families where appropriate.	AD, Placements		February 2019	G
29. Ensure that the Fostering Service has a comprehensive service delivery plan.	AD, Placements		April 2019	
30. Develop and implement the Placements Strategy.	AD, Placements		April 2019	
31. Review our residential offer to ensure that services are contemporary and available to children who will benefit.	AD, Placements		Commences May 2019	



Strategic Priority 4

Ensure a robust and timely focus on all permanence options for children

Sponsor – Director of Practice

- All children achieve permanence at the earliest opportunity.
- Processes within Birmingham Children's Trust enable permanence to be achieved at the earliest opportunity.
- Birmingham Children's Trust workforce has the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out best practice around permanence planning.

32. Review Eclipse training guidance around uploading direct work to ensure this is appropriate and available to the workforce.	AD, Practice Improvement		June 2019	
33. Trust Practice Hub to review the resources and delivery of direct work across the Trust.	AD, Practice Improvement		June 2019	
34. Review the policy for the escalation of cases if a permanence plan is not progressing to ensure that all children's plans are progressed in a timely way.	AD, Practice Improvement AD, Safeguarding		June 2019	
35. Review the current delivery and effectiveness of life story work across the Trust.	AD, Practice Improvement		June 2019	
36. Review of current process around advocacy resources and delivery.	Head of Participation & Engagement AD, Safeguarding Head of Legal Services		May 2019	
37. Launch of Trust Permanence policy, procedures and strategy guidance, including effective care planning, followed by a number of events to ensure that the concept of permanence is fully embedded in practice.	AD, Practice Improvement		May 2019	
38. Review the current Family Group Conferencing structure to determine capability to deliver an effective service.	AD, Practice Improvement		March 2019	B



Strategic Priority 5

Align the approach to Contextual Safeguarding

Sponsor – Director of Practice

- An effective multi-agency approach to Contextual Safeguarding is delivered through a specialised centre for practice.

39. Design and develop a project brief for a specialised HUB to deliver an effective multi-agency approach to contextual safeguarding.	AD, Early Help and Youth Justice Area AD		February 2019	G
40. Trust Contextual Safeguarding Hub launch.	AD, Early Help and Youth Justice Area AD		September 2019	
41. Review of current practice and delivery of return home interviews.	Team Manager, Exploitations and Missing		May 2019	



Strategic Priority 6

The impact of the virtual school in improving provision for children in care

Sponsor – Director of Children's Services Birmingham City Council

- The attainment gap is narrowed for children in care at all key stages through the setting of individualised targets.
- The integrated monitoring tracking system within the ePEP secures improved pupil progress and outcomes.
- Strengthened governance of the Virtual School ensures the needs of vulnerable pupils are being met.

42. Ensure all children in care at pre-school, reception and all key stages have termly PEPs which are at least good or outstanding.	AD Education and Early Help Head of Virtual School		September 2019	
43. Strengthen cohort overview data for Year 6 OC2 cohort which supports the identification of individual and groups of children in care and improves the targeting of resources to secure appropriate outcomes.	AD Education and Early Help Head of Virtual School		April 2019	
44. Strengthen the targeted approach of the Year 11 cohort to secure recognised qualifications in English and Maths. Ensure Virtual School workers set Maths/English targets for these young people at each of their ePEP meetings and update secondary phase group on the progress of these targets throughout the year.	AD Education and Early Help Head of Virtual School		April 2019	
45. Develop the baseline management tool of the ePEP and embed the ePEP reports in the review system across the service.	AD Education and Early Help Head of Virtual School		April 2019	
46. Develop attendance surgeries with children in care teams across the city.	AD Education and Early Help Head of Virtual School		July 2019	
47. Embed regular evaluation of the Virtual School through its governance arrangements to ensure intended outcomes are being achieved and to inform future planning.	AD Education and Early Help Head of Virtual School		March 2019	G



**Strategic Priority 7
Practice Improvement**

Sponsor - Director of Practice

- A focus on evaluating practice and applying learning across all Trust services secures consistent delivery and standards.

48. Launch of 2019/20 Practice Evaluation Programme (focus on targeted themes including planning and decision making).	AD, Practice Improvement HoS, Practice Improvement		Commences May 2019	
49. Launch of 2019/20 Principal Social Work Programme to improve performance and practice.	AD, Practice Improvement Acting HoS, Practice Improvement		March 2020	
50. Learning from Practice Weeks and Practice Evaluations to be distributed within the agreed frequency, in a variety of formats to improve practice development.	AD, Practice Improvement		Commences April 2019	
51. Review of Tri.x manual to ensure this is aligned to Trust culture, language and procedures.	AD, Practice Improvement		Commences April 2019	
52. Review and relaunch of Quality Assurance Framework.	AD, Practice Improvement		April 2019	
53. Launch of 2019/20 Performance and Intelligence delivery programme to ensure data and intelligence are consistently used effectively to improve practice development.	AD, Practice Improvement Performance and Intelligence Manager		May 2019	
54. Review of the child's journey and the workflow arrangements to support consistent social work practice.	AD, Practice Improvement		March 2020	
55. Review of service structures beginning with a refresh of assistant director roles to ensure that staff are well deployed and services are targeted.	Director of Practice		Commences February 2019	
56. Introduce multi-disciplinary teams to area teams to ensure that children and families receive the support they need.	Area AD		Commences April 2019	



Strategic Priority 8
Workforce

Co-Sponsors - Director of Practice (learning and development) and Director of Finance and Resources (HR)

- There is high quality recruitment and retention of staff underpinned by coherent and effective policies and learning and development.

57. To ensure an effective approach to recruitment which delivers to the Trust's objectives and People Strategy.	Head of HR		May 2019	
58. Ensure there is a robust induction process at all levels.	Head of HR Learning & Development Manager		May 2019	
59. To deliver a clear and transparent pay offer and attractive non-pay rewards package which improves retention and supports our recruitment aim.	Head of HR		August 2019	
60. To review HR policies and procedures across a number of priority areas including absence management, disciplinary, capability, grievance (September), and agile working (December).	Head of HR		September/ December 2019	
61. A review of the Learning & Development Strategy to underpin the Practice Hub and promote excellence in practice.	AD, Practice Improvement Learning & Development Manager		July 2019	
62. To implement a Social Worker Academy and a Trust (Leadership and Management) Academy to maintain and develop skills across the Trust.	AD, Practice Improvement		June 2019	
63. To re-launch the appraisal process to all staff	Head of HR		May 2019	