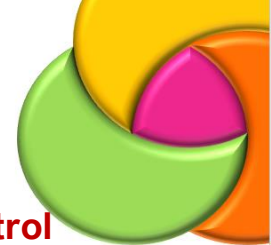


# Children and Families Directorate Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP)

July 2024





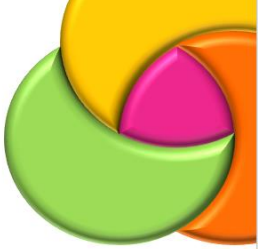
## 1. Directorate Continuous Improvement Plan 2024 (CIP) Version Control

Date Issued	Version	Document Status	Summary of Changes/Notes	Created By/Reviewed by
Various Dates across February, March and April 2024	0.1		Offline CSLT	Fayth Skeete
25/06/2024	0.1	Initial Draft	Draft CIP to Directorate Improvement Board	Fayth Skeete
	0.2	Final Draft	Financial Sustainability - Cross Cutting Theme added	Fayth Skeete

## 2. CIP Ratification

This document has been issued to the following people/forums for Review (R) Information (I) and Review and Approval (A).

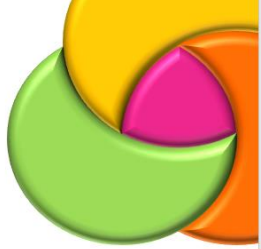
Date	Version	Position/Forum	R/I/A	Comments/Notes
TBC	0.2	Final Draft ~ CSLT	R	
w/c 22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2024	0.2	Final Draft Plan ~ Offline Ratification Improvement Board Members	A	
	0.2	Final Draft Plan ~ Offline Ratification. SH, HE, RB, AW and SK	A	Plan shared as two parts, outward facing CIP and a second inward facing version with all the project lines – this method supported by Board members
	0.2	Ratified Plan circulated to Members (and cascaded across the Directorate	I	



### 3. CIP Circulation

Date	Position/Team/Service Area

Better Outcomes for Children and Families



**Dr Sue Harrison**

Strategic Director of  
Children and Families  
(DCS), Birmingham City  
Council.

*“Welcome to the Children and Families Directorate Continuous Improvement Plan 2024 (CIP).*

*In Birmingham we want all children and young people in every part of the city to be healthy, safe, confident, included, happy, respected and connected to meaningful opportunities so that they can thrive as they prepare for adulthood. We recognise that we can only achieve this ambition through effective partnership with families and agencies including schools, social care, the health conglomerate, the police, and a variety of voluntary and community sector partners. The Directorate remains focussed and ambitious for our children and young people and stakeholders remain committed to ensuring that Birmingham is a great place to grow up and thrive.*

*We are exactly where we need to be at this point in our improvement journey. We are beginning to experience real meaningful traction across the partnership and ownership from partners of the inclusion agenda. However, we have still got a long way to go before we are consistently delivering a good service to everyone. The keys to this success are the continued appointment of high calibre experienced officers whilst drawing on existing expertise across the workforce, continuing to focus on our quality assurance frameworks driving assurance seeking practice and impact measurement across all that we do and continuing to work together to develop an INCLUSIVE CITY”.*

*Please take the time to read the CIP in its entirety, this plan will underpin all that we do together to secure better outcomes for children and families.*

# ABOUT BIRMINGHAM

## % OF PERSISTENT ABSENCE

(2020/21):



**13.70%**  
IN BIRMINGHAM  
(10.10% in 2019);  
ABOVE ENGLAND RATE  
**OF 8.80%**

## NOT IN EDUCATION EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING (NEET)



**2.5%**  
OF YOUNG PEOPLE  
(December 2022)  
– below National Average

## YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE DATA:

snapshot at end of Nov 2022  
(328 children and young people):

 **86%** MALE |  **14%** FEMALE

**67%** BLACK, ASIAN  
OR MIXED HERITAGE

**55%** EHCP OR  
LEARNING DIFFICULTY



**67%**  
EMOTIONAL WELLBEING  
OR MENTAL HEALTH CONCERN

# ABOUT BIRMINGHAM

## BIRMINGHAM

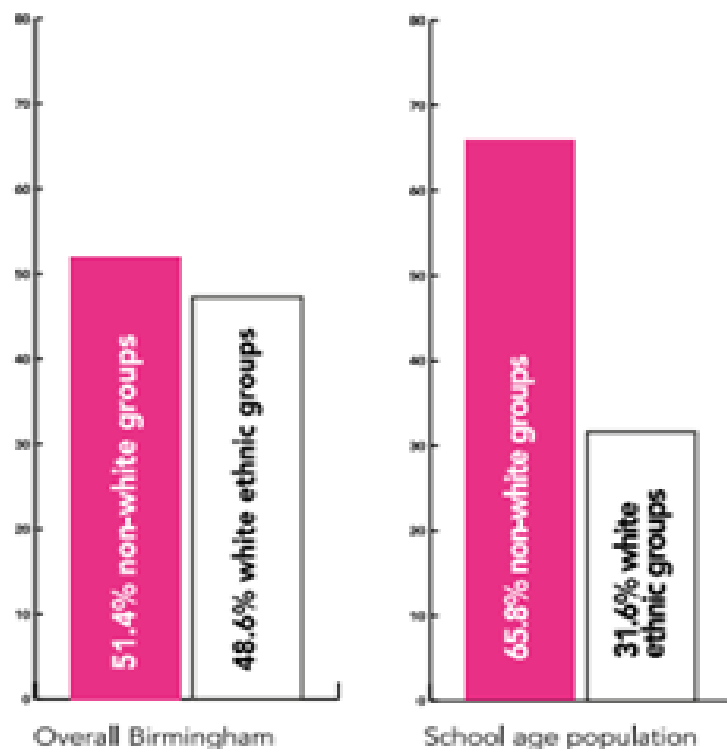


ONE OF THE  
YOUNGEST  
CITIES  
IN THE UK

36.6%  
AGED UNDER

25

## ETHNIC DIVERSITY



FREE SCHOOL MEALS  
– 2022 - BIRMINGHAM



37.3%

of pupils eligible for free school meals (England 23.1%)

## POVERTY

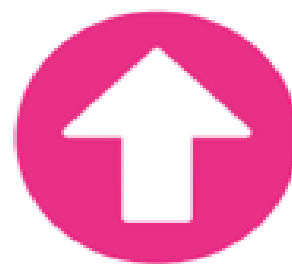
43%  
OF THE POPULATION  
ARE LIVING IN THE  
10%  
MOST DEPRIVED AREAS

51%  
OF CHILDREN  
(under 16's)  
LIVE IN THE  
10%  
MOST DEPRIVED AREAS



## PROPORTION OF PUPILS WITH EHCP

3.5%  
(Jan 2022)  
UP FROM  
3.2%  
IN 2019



(England average 4% in 2022)

PERMANENT  
EXCLUSIONS /  
SUSPENSIONS  
(2020/21):

- Higher permanent exclusions than national rate, especially in primary schools
- Higher suspensions than national average in primary schools
- Higher permanent exclusions and suspension rates for pupils from Black, White and Mixed ethnicities
- Higher permanent exclusions for children with EHCP and SEN Support, than national rates



## 4. Introduction

Birmingham City Council is on an unprecedented journey of growth and improvement. Our vision remains the same, Birmingham children and young people, are seen, safe, healthy, included, confident and achieving. We strive to ensure that children and young people living in Birmingham are able to **thrive**. We understand that to consistently achieve this we need to also invest in creating the right conditions for our workforce to succeed. We will continue to embed relational, strength-based practices to enable our principle of high support ~ high challenge to underpin our Directorate ways of working.

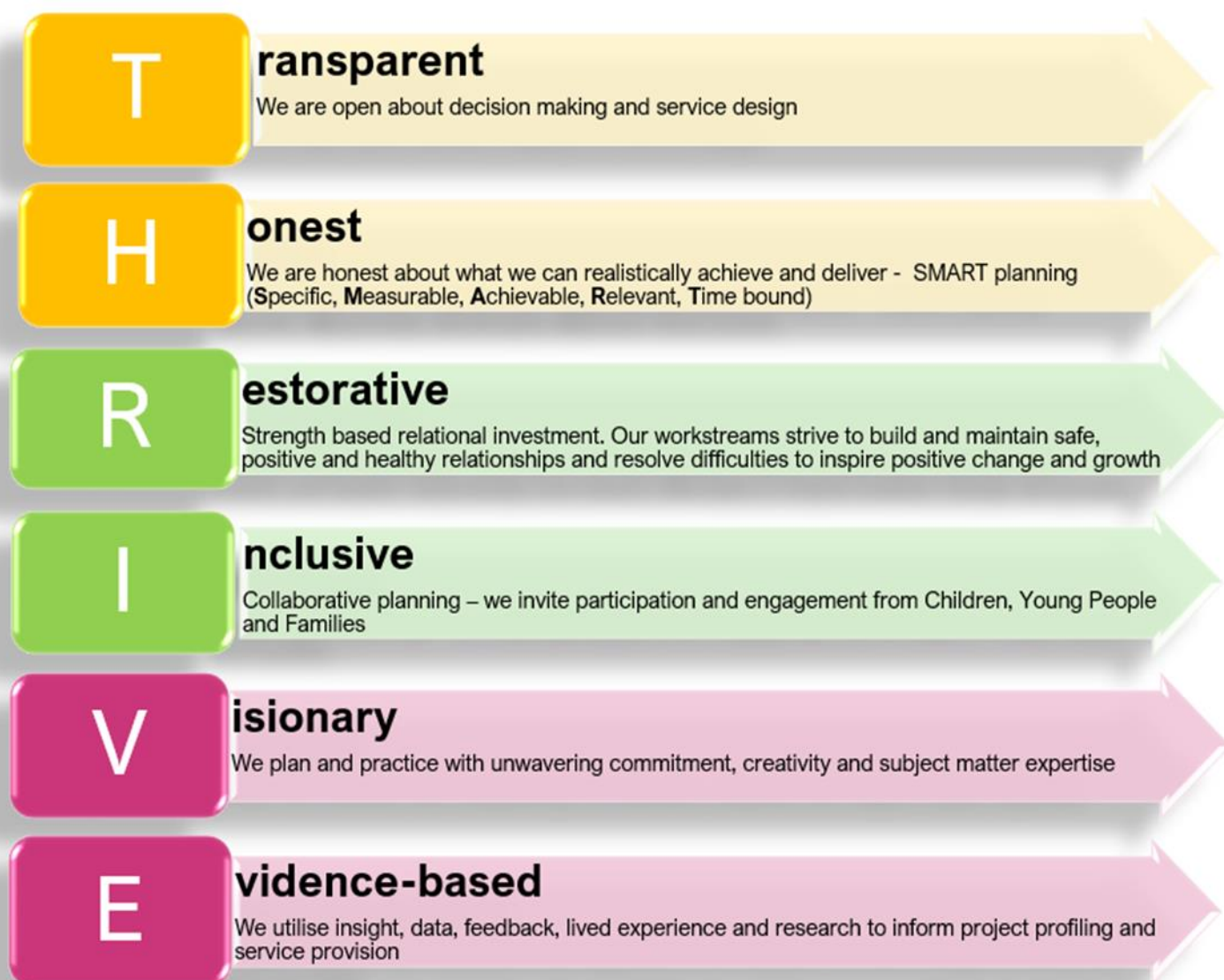
We have Council wide commitment to put children and young people at the heart of everything we do and the support of the Partnership in achieving our joint vision for children and young people. The Birmingham Children and Young People's Partnership is a collaboration between Birmingham City Council, Birmingham Children's Trust, Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board, West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, West Midlands Police, and the Birmingham Voluntary Services Council. The partnership works together as one, with a shared set of priorities and strategic vision. A real point of celebration is our strengthened arrangements resulting from meaningful collaboration between Birmingham City Council's Children and Families Directorate, the Trust and right across the partnership.

## 5. Securing Continuous Improvement – Building on Progress

Through extensive improvement activity, the Directorate is in a markedly improved position than it was in November 2022 at the time of launching our first Improvement Plan, Improving Services for Children, Young People and Families Plan.

The Directorate has secured continued growth, recruited to key roles, and continues to draw on the experience, skills, and knowledge of existing and incoming staff to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. The increased workforce and defined structure have allowed the Directorate to better adapt the chosen implementation of and approach to project and change management. Our approach to continuous improvement is to create conditions for success, by building our plan on our core improvement principles we aim to guarantee that our approach is always transparent, honest, restorative, inclusive, visionary and evidenced based.

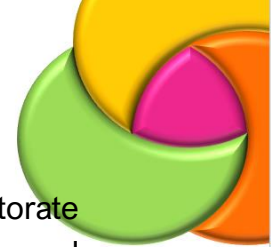




The CIP is everybody's business, an entire Directorate point of reference detailing our 'New Ways of Working', owned by the Children and Families workforce for the children, young people and families in Birmingham.

We seek to design services inclusively and creatively for children, young people and families. We value the opportunity to consult with families and our partners to make sure we get things right. The voices of children, young people, families, and communities are critical foundations of our approach to quality assurance and continuous improvement and making sure that we are getting it right. They help us to understand the difference we make and the complexities of need, decision making and service design and provision.





Prioritisation is based on evidence, triangulated assessment of Directorate performance and insight, the needs of our children, young people and families and current and projected outcomes. We carefully assess what will be the most fit for purpose methodology to deliver better outcomes in the most efficient and effective way.

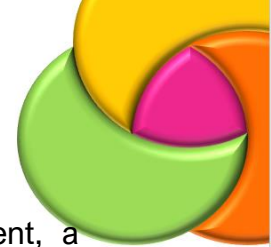
The CIP does not seek to detail improvement priorities and activity across SEND and Alternative Provision as this activity sits within the dedicated and robust SEND and AP Improvement Programme and associated programme management and governance arrangements as monitored by the SEND and AP Improvement Board Chaired by John Coughlan, DfE Commissioner.

The Improving Service for Children and Families Board will continue to receive a quarterly update report from the SEND and AP Improvement Board to ensure robust triangulation and co-production across Directorate wide improvement activity.

## 6. Plan Structure

The CIP has been branded for easy identification, to support easy identification of all associated documents and activity, to help raise the profile of the plan and to encourage ownership.





The CIP is centred on the premise of coordinated continuous improvement, a commitment to continuous proactive analysis of the Directorate's performance. This is supported by embedded systematic arrangements that will provide ongoing insight into the outcomes and impact of the services that we provide. The CIP reflects a pledge to ensuring that the Directorate is positioned to respond to findings and identify opportunities to improve outcomes.

The CIP key workstreams and activities are presented across four areas of priority, with Financial Sustainability as a cross-cutting theme:



The CIP captures key activities across our four priority areas, with financial sustainability as a cross-cutting theme, the golden thread. It is essential that continuous improvement activity is underpinned by the Directorate's ability to maintain financial stability.

The Directorate Continuous Improvement Project Pipeline:

- ✓ Council's Improvement Recovery Plan (IRP) (16 programmes)
- ✓ Governance Board associated programmes (TBC)
- ✓ Delivery of Saving Proposals (19 programmes)
- ✓ Directorate Priority Projects (Fluid)
- ✓ Remaining objectives from the 2022 – 24 Improving Services for Children and Young People Plan
- ✓ Emerging Transformation Saving Opportunities (Fluid)



The granular detail of the CIP is captured within an internal CIP pipeline and further outlined within respective project plans. The project plan for each priority details action owners, timelines and all the Directorate wide activity, KPI's, milestones, risks, mitigations, possible efficiencies and benefits realisation in relation to the respective priority alongside any project interdependencies, this to include across the entire CIP plan, Directorate and Council.

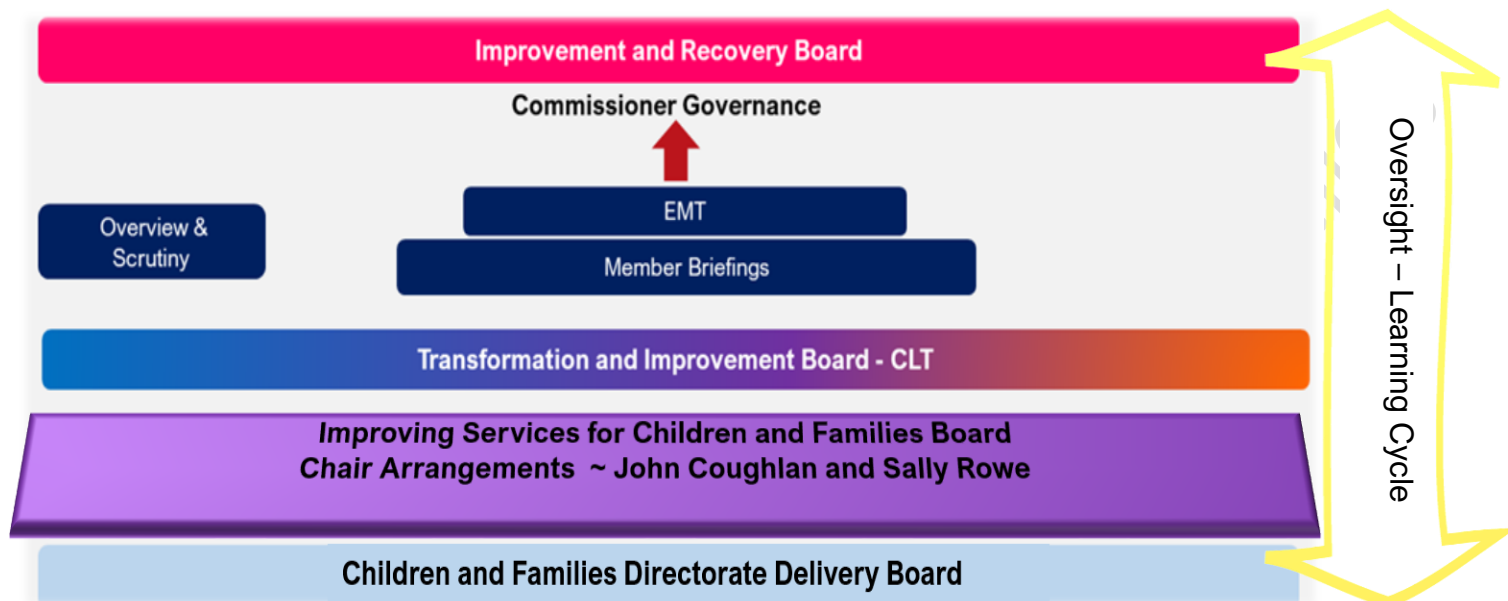
CIP Pipeline



Strategic Priority	Key Activities	Key Deliverables	Key Milestones	Key Risks	Key Benefits
Strategic Priority 1	Review and refresh of the Birmingham City Council's Strategic Plan for Children and Families (2021-2026) to ensure it remains relevant and ambitious in the context of the current environment.	Strategic Plan for Children and Families (2021-2026)	2021	2026	Improved outcomes for children and families.
Strategic Priority 2	Review and refresh of the Birmingham City Council's Strategic Plan for Children and Families (2021-2026) to ensure it remains relevant and ambitious in the context of the current environment.	Strategic Plan for Children and Families (2021-2026)	2021	2026	Improved outcomes for children and families.
Strategic Priority 3	Review and refresh of the Birmingham City Council's Strategic Plan for Children and Families (2021-2026) to ensure it remains relevant and ambitious in the context of the current environment.	Strategic Plan for Children and Families (2021-2026)	2021	2026	Improved outcomes for children and families.



## 7. Governance, Assurance, Monitoring and Reporting



Overall Strategic accountability for the delivery of the CIP is the responsibility of the Strategic Director of Children and Families (DCS), the appointed Senior Responsible Officer (SRO). It is the responsibility of the Head of Strategic Governance, Planning and Improvement as Responsible Delivery Lead (RDL), to maintain robust arrangements fit to facilitate effective monitoring and measuring of impact.

Assurance seeking is undertaken through the Improving Services for Children and Families Board. The role of the Board is to monitor and enable progress and hold accountability for the overall progress and impact of the CIP. The Board consists of senior leaders from across the Council, with representation from Birmingham Children's Trust, to ensure a whole system focus is maintained. The Board is co-Chaired by John Coughlan, Commissioner and our existing Independent Chair, Sally Rowe.

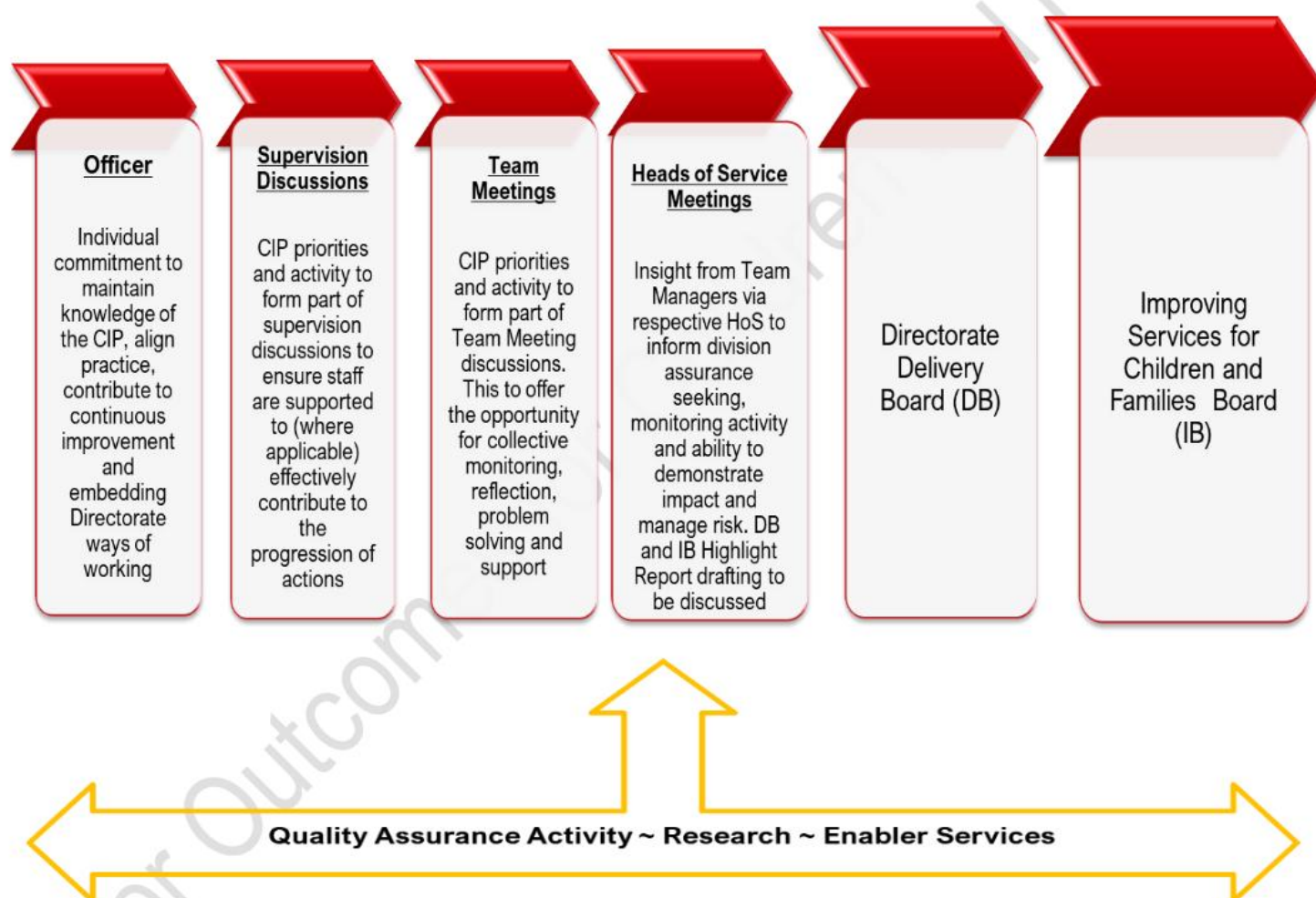
## 8. Directorate Monitoring and Assurance Seeking Arrangements

Continued progress and impact across the CIP are a Directorate wide responsibility. The CIP is a live evolving document, and the design and continuous profiling of CIP activity interlinks with service design and planning activity across each Directorate Division. Each Division Service Plan will inform the respective Division led improvement which will also consider CIP associated activity required of the Division to support the Directorate to meet CIP milestones.



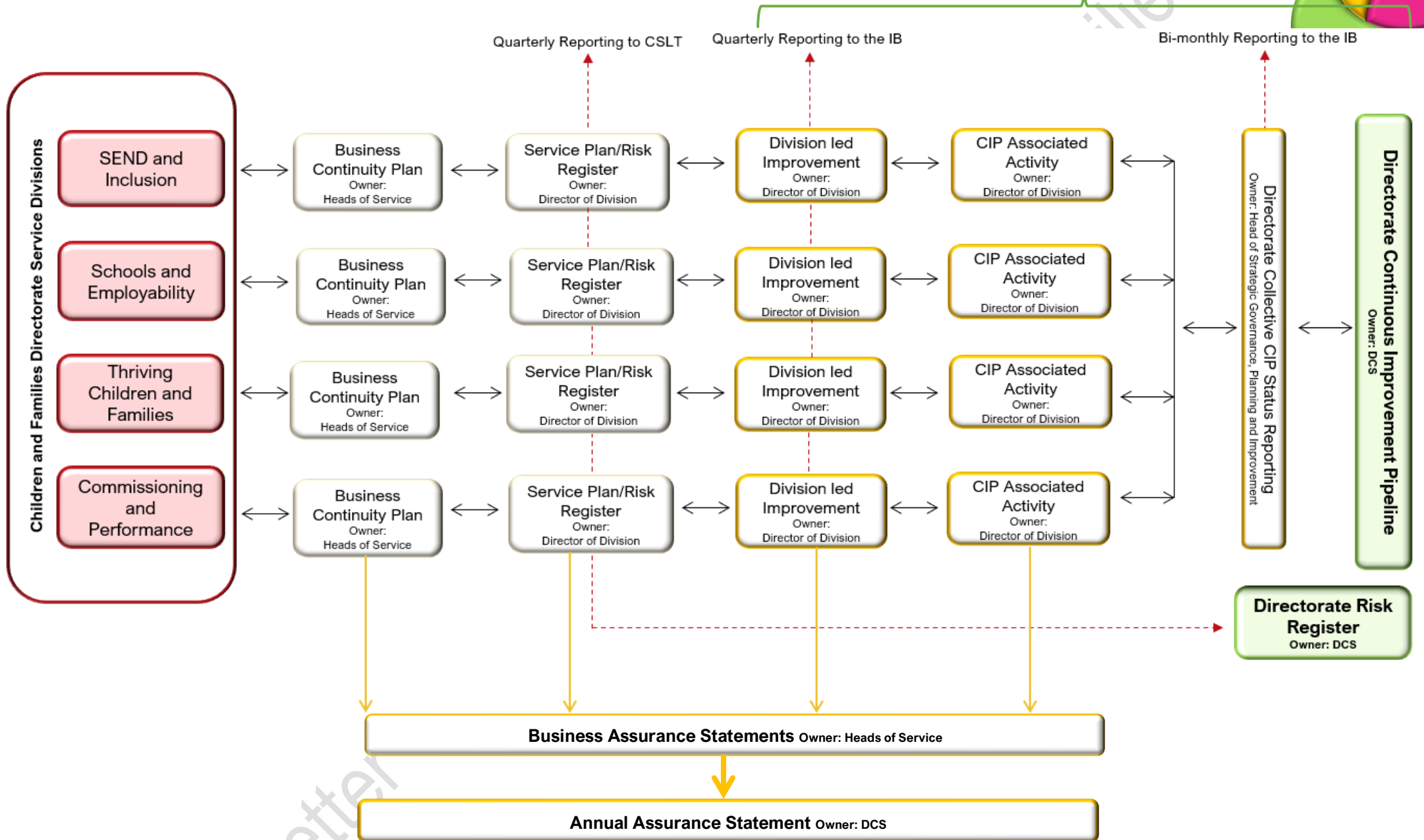


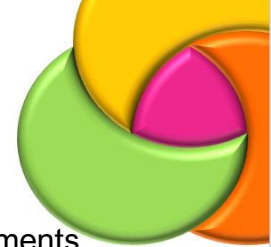
Robust monitoring activity will continue across the Directorate through internal assurance seeking mechanisms including 121 meetings, Team meetings, audits/deep dive activity and Division Heads of Service (HoS) meetings held monthly by Division Directors. This will ensure that staff will be kept abreast of all CIP developments and supported to ensure that they understand their role in contributing to continuous improvement. This triangulation will support to strengthen the Directorate's learning culture and maximise the opportunities to gain insight and knowledge to consistently inform practice and decision making.



All activity contributes to the Directorate's ability to improve, test our outputs and evaluate our position. All staff will contribute and inform all that we do, the engagement and participation of staff is essential, and the Directorate's 'New Ways of Working' will support staff to confidently contribute and drive our improvement. There are aspects of Division/Directorate business as usual that form fundamental components of systematic maintainable improvement.







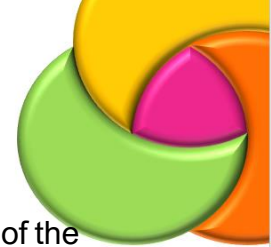
## 9. Directorate 'New Ways of Working'

New Ways of Working, is the term that we will use to refer to new arrangements introduced and implemented through the CIP. It describes in part the detail held within the CIP alongside our joint values, Directorate culture and our commitment to creating conditions for success, safe, inclusive and empowering conditions for the workforce to thrive. This to include (not exhaustive list):

- ✓ Strengthened governance and defined approval and report clearance protocols
- ✓ Short, Medium, and long term planning
- ✓ The launch of our new Directorate wide 121 Supervision Framework – Valuing Individual Performance (VIP) centred on continuous support and discussion, building reflective practice and our ability to prioritise
- ✓ Learning Needs Analysis ~ to support staff to identify points of practice to celebrate and to identify professional development opportunities
- ✓ The launch of our new Quality Assurance and Compliance Framework
- ✓ Structured Team Meetings and Division touch points
- ✓ Increased communication, engagement and opportunities to participate
- ✓ Competency Framework, support staff to understand expectations of roles, teams and Directorate structure
- ✓ Maximising existing expertise, knowledge, skills, and experience
- ✓ Cultural Curiosity ~ meaningful effort to celebrate diversity and individuality of contribution
- ✓ Increased opportunities to meet and work alongside your team and teams across the Directorate

## 10. Reporting Cycles

Monitoring of progress will be ongoing, preparation for each Improving Services for Children and Families Board will be supported by a dedicated Project Manager for each CIP priority area, suitably skilled to support the project management of each priority areas workstreams in a technical project management space utilising tailored methodology. Project Directors (PD) will be supported within this arrangement to chair monthly project meetings and populate respective Highlight Reports in readiness for the monthly Delivery Board meetings and Bi-monthly Improvement Board meetings in line with the governance measures detailed in section 7 of this document. Project meetings will be attended by key operational colleagues from across the Directorate and wider Council, this to include colleagues from HR, Finance and where applicable Procurement and Commissioning.



Highlight reporting and the detail/narrative reported will remain the responsibility of the respective PD. Highlight Reports will document key priority activity, risks, issues and mitigations along with escalations. The information reported will need to demonstrate a grip of continuous improvement and Directorate wide impact and interdependencies.

## **11. Learning Culture**

We continue to strive to cultivate a learning culture that affords everyone the opportunity to learn, develop, aspire and feel empowered. CIP activity supports the implementation of a systematic approach to learning through consistent and embedded quality assurance activity, performance data, reviews, learning from practice, research, feedback and communication, engagement and participation.

## **12. Review of the CIP**

The CIP is a live document and open for continuous review, any anticipated significant changes for example to incorporate and respond to relevant national government policy changes, will be ratified by the Improving Services for Children and Families Board.

## **13. Risk Management**

Risks associated with the delivery of the plan will be tracked and monitored by PD's and the RDL and reported to the Improving Services for Children and Families Board through the programme Highlight Report.

## 14. Directorate Objectives, Focus and Benefit Realisation Overview

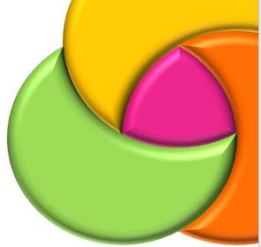


Directorate Wide Shared Priorities

SRO: Strategic Director of Children and Families (DCS)		
Objective	Focus	Benefits Realisation
<p><b>Priority A</b></p> <p>Embed a culture of continuous improvement across all Children and Young People's services with outcomes for Children and Young People at the heart of everything we do</p> <p><b>PD: Director of Commissioning and Performance</b></p>	<p>To secure arrangements positioned to mobilise the Directorate's commitment to continuous improvement and proactive analysis of the Directorate's performance. This supported by embedded systematic arrangements that will provide ongoing insight into the outcomes and impact of the services provided and opportunities to build in efficiencies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Delivery of Directorate Savings Programme</b></li> <li>• Financial Sustainability</li> <li>• Embedded proactive efficiency analysis</li> <li>• Value for Money across all services</li> <li>• Identified opportunities to reduce cost whilst maintaining or improving quality</li> <li>• Proficiency across the identification of interdependencies</li> <li>• Robust management of the Directorate's Project Pipeline</li> <li>• Strengthened triangulation of project pipeline milestones and Directorate and Council wide interdependencies</li> <li>• Robust and embedded performance culture</li> <li>• Progressive and responsive digital systems</li> </ul>
<p><b>Priority B</b></p> <p>Embed a culture of assurance and accountability</p> <p><b>PD: Director of Schools and Employability</b></p>	<p>To embed a Directorate wide systematic approach to assurance seeking, professional challenge and accountability. For every element of Directorate outputs, an embedded methodology to test and measure effectiveness and impact. Clear lines of responsibility and accountability to strengthen the Directorate's ability to respond to findings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce Schemes of Delegation</li> <li>• Embedded governance and reporting cycles</li> <li>• Embedded Quality Assurance and Compliance Framework equipped to respond to the nuances of each service area</li> <li>• Clear Directorate Target Operating Model ~ practice/postholder competencies, expectations and standards</li> <li>• Robust Division and Directorate Forward Plans and KPI's</li> </ul>

RDL: Head of Strategic Governance, Planning and Improvement





## SRO: Strategic Director of Children and Families (DCS)

### Directorate Wide Shared Priorities

Objective	Focus	Benefits Realisation
<p><b>Priority C</b></p> <p>Reinforce the Directorate's approach to cultivating a professionally curious, strength – based practice environment</p> <p><b>PD: Director of Thriving Children and Families</b></p>	<p>Enhance the workforce approach to practice by encouraging and facilitating reflective practice and professional curiosity. A workforce that proactively engages in research and emerging developments across respective areas of expertise. This to also increase workforce capacity to lead as subject matter experts and strengthen strategic thinking whilst modelling what good looks like.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systematic approach to workforce communication, engagement and participation</li> <li>• Well supported workforce that consistently feels valued, included, consulted, heard and seen</li> <li>• Comprehensive Workforce Development Strategy underpinned by Directorate core principles and practice model</li> <li>• Directorate practice model woven throughout Directorate key policies, ways of working and workforce expected behaviours</li> <li>• Embedded workspace arrangements</li> </ul>
<p><b>Priority D</b></p> <p>Ensure services are credible, compliant and collaborative</p> <p><b>PD: Director of SEND and Inclusion</b></p>	<p>To continue to strengthen the design and provision of services through multi-discipline and multi-agency collaboration. Utilising our joint performance and insight to support decision making by ensuring that Children, Young People and Families are consulted, and opportunities for them to engage and participate with the Directorate, are embedded across our practice. Build capacity to ensure that our service design and provision reflects and responds to the Children, Young People and Families in Birmingham</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embedded design and decision-making processes that reflect meaningful steps to engage and participate with Children, Young People and Families and mechanisms to demonstrably input and utilise feedback and insight</li> <li>• Embedded Participation Strategy</li> <li>• Embedded Risk Management Protocols</li> <li>• Embedded Policy Review Protocol</li> <li>• Improved experience of Children, Young People and Families</li> <li>• Improved experience of the Directorate workforce</li> <li>• Impact exemplified across quality assurance and compliance activity</li> <li>• Improved Inspection outcomes</li> </ul>

RDL: Head of Strategic Governance, Planning and Improvement



