



Ofsted High Level Improvement Plan 2020 - 21

Southampton Children and Families Service

A city of opportunity where everyone thrives

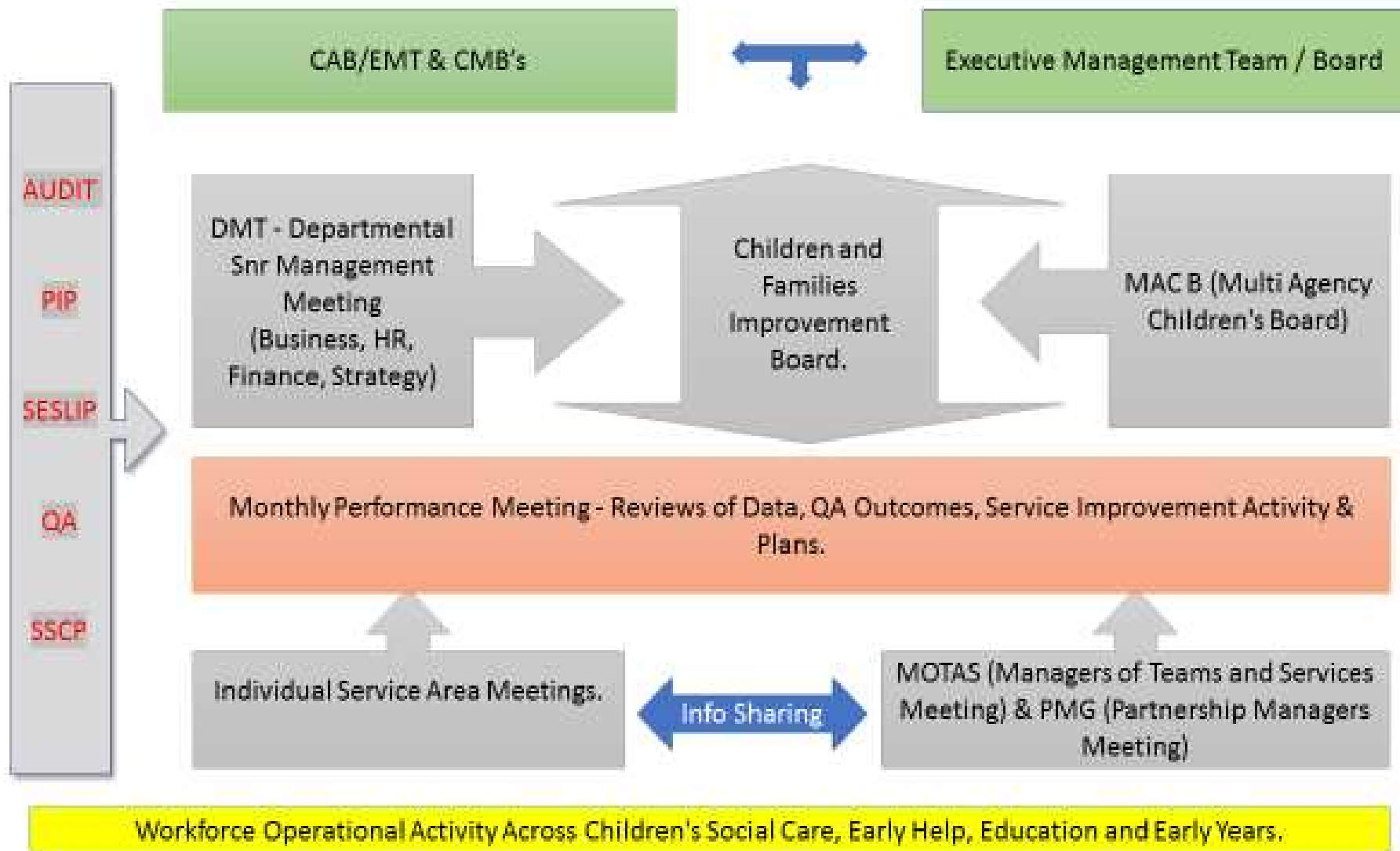
Children and Young People Strategy 2017-2020



We will achieve these outcomes by:

- Working together, taking a whole family approach, targeting reducing resources and focusing on prevention and early help.
- Developing our service focus on Restorative Practice.
- Delivering joined up services that offer support proportionate to need.
- Improving educational attainment and aspiration.
- Reducing the number of children who are in the care of the council.
- Taking action in the first 1,000 days of a child's life, as we know this has the greatest impact on their life chances.
- Addressing the impact of inequalities and child poverty through the city's strategies and policies to improve outcomes for children and their families.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



Service RAG and Update

Executive Summary

- RAG ratings have not changed; pending the review of the plan through the Partners in Practice process.
- Despite continued social distancing measures, the service can evidence progress this month against a range of priorities:

Covid 19 Practice Response

- Regarding the Covid 19 response: focus on direct work has increased the level of contact with children subject to child protection planning. Work has been undertaken with the data and Paris teams to update case note recording to give a more accurate picture of contact with children across the service.
- Audit activity has continued across MASH, assessment and PACT.
- We have produced a Covid 19 resource for children accessing our contact centres. This is being shared with Ofsted and Coram Voice.



Improvement achievements:

- Early help managers have met with the data team to finalise the Early Help Scorecard.
- Managers from PACT and QA have met to agree how we will work together to support (virtual) learning circles in that area. This approach will be rolled out across EH, assessment and LAC.
- We have successfully rolled out 11 virtual reflective group sessions across the service; facilitated by our seconded Ofsted inspector and reaching >70 colleagues.
- The Learning and Improvement Panel has met virtually to receive performance updates from across Children's Social Care.
- The first round of Year of the Child audits were completed. This is included virtual contact with social workers and young people where it was possible to do so.

Service RAG and Update

Executive Summary

- The Looked after Child Annual report, Fostering Annual report, Recruitment Strategy and Statement of Purpose have been reviewed for presentation at the Corporate Parenting Committee.
- The Restorative Practice guidance has been started, with input from the Work with Families Project group and Managers of Teams and Services (MOTAS).
- The restorative practice training offer has been developed with L30 Relational Systems. This includes face to face and virtual training options for Autumn 2020.
- There have been two virtual sessions with Elia (Signs of Safety) to prepare for project work in June to examine if Signs of Safety can align with Care Director.
- The Youth Offending Service can evidence an increase in ETE engagement and is only one of two YOTs nationally to have achieved Arts mark Gold accreditation.



- A further Partners in Practice meeting is scheduled for 30/06/20. SCC and HCC QA Unit Managers are liaising regarding the review of the Improvement Plan and SCC are drafted a questionnaire for managers to feed into coaching / improvement activity.
- The data team have been unable to address the remaining data requirements due to prioritisation of the DfE Covid 19 returns and related reports. The following areas will be reportable for the July Board: % of Strategy Discussions held within 1 WD of the Referral outcome being progress to CP Strategy Discussion; % children allocated within 48 hours of referral; % of Children have a long term placement plan by their 2nd review; for care leavers, number of placement stability meetings.

Service Summary

LEADERSHIP



Overall RAG remains amber. Service is being supported by adult Executive Director and senior management team are working cohesively. despite current challenges; evidenced through Covid-19 report to Improvement Board in April. Covid activity is being prioritised but, the service has not lost sight of 'business as usual' activity; evidenced by key milestones being met for strategic corporate parenting & learning and improvement. Key risk is around the absence of a DCS, particularly given recent grievance and resultant scrutiny and pending serious case reviews; alongside Covid 19 pressures.

STABILITY



Overall RAG remains amber. Sickness absence has increased slightly. % for social work turnover has increased, but is expected to decrease next month as this is a rolling % and there were no leavers in May 2020. Service is working with HR, finance and the project team to review vacancies and service structure and there has been traction in recruitment in PACT as a critical area. Key risk is that if this work does not move with pace the necessary improvements to quality of work will not be achieved. Covid 19 pressures on case numbers is also a risk; for example, the service is already addressing an increase in child protection plans.

QUALITY ASSURANCE



Overall RAG remains amber. PiP activity has started. QA unit is coordinating audits across the service (YOTC) and Covid 19 assurance activity. Improvement work has started with PACT to feed audit findings into learning circles. Progress is also evident against Restorative Practice and Signs of Safety work. Key risk is around service capacity to engage with quality assurance framework; particularly the audit programme.

Service Summary

EARLY HELP

Early Help

Overall RAG rating remains green. Performance data for timeliness of response has improved again. Audit activity underway as planned. Meeting with data team took place in May 2020, which will benefit reporting position overall. Key risk is Covid 19 impact. There has been a small variation (decrease) to numbers of children working with the service. This should be monitored – and also opportunities for further step down / direct referral activity explored. TM has been allocated to assist with this area of the service.

MASH / EDT / LADO

MASH /
EDT / LADO

Overall rating remains amber. Covid 19 activity has provided good assurance of quality of decision making in the MASH. There are outstanding actions regarding the review of thresholds with partners. This is a key risk, because ultimately we do need to evidence the effectiveness of the partnership response to the Ofsted findings and improving outcomes for children and families. The Service Manager now has oversight of this area and assessment; so, the plan for improvement work and the lead needs to be considered carefully.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment

Overall rating remains red. Favourable performance in respect of sec.47. Audit programme undertaken to understand quality of practice. Key risk is in respect of quality of practice. Advance Practitioner from QA Unit allocated to service area to support improvement plan.

Service Summary

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Overall rating remains green. YOTC and SSCP audit completed. Service review now scheduled.



ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

Overall RAG remains green. Service reports are now been shared with QA unit as BAU. Numbers overall have increased slightly since March 2020; but the service reports show a good focus on vulnerable groups. Key risk is around potential impact of Covid on home-schooling. The service has confirmed that virtual contact is being made with vulnerable families; but, service will need to monitor broader impact closely.



SEND

Overall RAG remains amber. Review of education provision scheduled to take place prior to July 2021. Risk identified in respect of Covid 19 impact upon transitions work. In the immediate term, CWD manager and adult PSW have liaised regarding easements to ASC statutory responsibilities.



PACT

Overall RAG remains red. However, there is evidence of service and team manager focus on reducing caseloads. Advanced practitioners across PACT and QA are working together to support consistent focus on practice. The service story board this month provides more detail. The risks previously identified around the traction of recruitment and retention activity and impact of Covid 19 are particularly relevant in this area.



Service Summary

MET



Overall RAG remains green. Continued strong performance in respect of young people receiving an offer of Return Home Interview. Risk is in relation to non-compliance with 72 hour RHI guidance; which has been raised with safeguarding partners.

CHILDREN'S RESOURCE SERVICE



Overall RAG remains green. No significant change in performance and continued statistical evidence that service is having an impact. There is a risk in inspect of the delay in production of case studies due to Covid-19

YOS



Overall RAG remains red. Educational attainment has improved and progress has been made against some staffing priorities. Service reports challenges in respect of planning and out of court assessments; although improvement plan (reported to Youth Justice Management Board in May 2020) outlines service responses. Key risk appears to be around effective governance; plans have been delayed due to Covid 19 and may need to be implemented virtually.

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN



Overall RAG remains red. The service can evidence traction around strengthening partnership support for looked after children through the Corporate Parenting Committee structure; but, the focus on consistently good practice needs to increase. Key risk is around ensuring traction against key elements of plan (direct work, training and development, partnership work) whilst social distancing measures are in place.

Service Summary

CARE LEAVERS



Overall RAG remains green. Improving picture. Accommodation and health outcomes have improved. Strong planning performance, not quite meeting target set. Although not meeting the 90% target, there is a consistent cohort of 'good' audits. ETE outcomes are the key risk; with the task and finish group activity from CPC requiring grip and pace.

FOSTERING



Overall RAG remains amber. Service Manager has submitted annual fostering report, recruitment strategy and statement of purpose to Corporate Parenting Committee. Resource for specialist fostering provision secured. Task and finish group reporting to Corporate Parenting Committee. The key risk is traction against the recruitment plan, as numbers of foster carers have reduced.

ADOPTION



Overall RAG remains green The service has provided up to date data for life story work and is sending through case studies to show the impact of work for children. Data and supporting information is regularly sent through by the RAA. Key risk is impact upon Court activity, affecting adoption numbers.

LSCP



Overall RAG remains green. Deadlines amended; Neglect practitioners' survey has been put back to July 2020 due to Covid 19 impact. Training plan deadline has been put back to enable SSCP annual report to be presented to full partnership meeting in September. Key risk is around impact of Covid 19 across safeguarding partners.