

Somerset County Council Children & Families Self Evaluation April 2019



Ofsted Improvement Plan

Workforce

Further progress has been achieved in securing a stable and committed senior management group to embed improving practice (R1, R2)

- 4 Permanent Heads of Service in post
- 93% of frontline Team Manager posts permanently filled
- Early Help Strategic Commissioner in post
- CSW role reviewed to facilitate increased support to NQSWs
- 22 senior leaders trained to lead systemically
- 51 first line managers trained – systemic supervision
- 61 supervisors trained – reflective supervision

Further progress has been made in consolidating our permanent social work force

- 85% permanent frontline social workers, up from 74% in June 2018
- 35 new NQSWs employed in the last year
- Reduced SW caseloads - 15.3 December18, down from 18 Jan 18
- Step up to SW programme and Frontline SW programme in place
- Reduced use of locums SWs and managers



Ofsted Improvement Plan Workforce

Changes to CSC Structure (R1, R2)

- Permanent appointments to all Heads of Service (HoS) roles allows move from 4 areas to an East – West structure.
- The HoS roles will move from being service to area based, whilst retaining strategic leads for Community Teams (Assessment and Safeguarding) and Children Looked After & Care Leavers.
- Provides increased opportunities to share good practice, improve consistency and more effectively deploy resources
- Increased capacity to support relationship-based and strengths-based practice with children and their families
- Reduce barriers created by transition points in the system and implement line management arrangements which mitigate against silo working at critical points in the child's journey.



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Early Help and Edge of Care Improvements (R7)

- We have invested in an expansion of level 3 support to adolescents in crisis/exploitation, with a rapid response team working overnight and at weekends.
- Working alongside health colleagues to divert acute paediatric admissions for children presenting with emotional crises - managing issues effectively in the community.
- Topaz - multi-professional approach across Somerset, led by the police working closely with CSC - supporting and diverting young people from exploitation (contextual safeguarding).
- Schools continue to invest £1.8 million per annum in the Parent and Family Support Advisers (level 2) and the Team Around the School model.
- £38k secured from the DWP Reducing Parental Conflict Programme and a £70k grant in 2019/20 for parenting work with youth offenders.

Ofsted Improvement Plan Quality of Social Work Practice

Practice Framework (R2, R3, R10)

- Update of practice framework to be launched April 2019
- Clear coherent practice model and associated support to staff
- Focus on relationship based, strengths based, systemic practice to support improving practice
- Training offer updated and re-commissioned to reflect priorities
- Includes Systemic, Strengths based, Relationship based approaches
- Aligned with the Family Safeguarding Model



Ofsted Improvement Plan Quality of Social Work Practice

Assessment and Planning (R5)

Focused areas of work have included:

- Identity – programme of group exercises with Team Managers to support improved understanding and recording of identity and diversity issues within assessments.
- Thresholds – dip reviews undertaken of strategy discussions and S47 investigations. Intervention with TMs to support consistency of threshold application and quality of practice. Rate of assessments per 10k reducing and assessment timescales improving (89% last 3 months). Conversion rates for S47 improving (70% last three months). Rate of 2nd CP plans 2nd lowest in the SW – 17%
- Multi agency work around strategies in progress, led by heath colleagues
- Education Safeguarding Team – new structure aimed to improve information available at strategy stage and provide a clearer focus n systemic education issues

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Quality of Social Work Practice

Assessment and Planning 2...(R5, R10)

- Proportionate and purposeful intervention - focus on relationship and strengths based practice via TMs group
- Implementation of the 'safe uncertainty' model to support social workers and partners to confidently manage risk.
- CPD sessions held on a weekly basis and incorporated issues above
- Growing focus on contextual safeguarding, including multi-agency SSCB conference in April 2019
- Partners in practice – conference to take place May 2019
- Use of FGCs is growing in impact – 241 children supported in the last year – 88% remain within family network



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Child Exploitation (R5)

- CE guidance and toolkit updated and shared via SSCB website to support our partners in better understanding the complexity of CE
- Screening tools have been redesigned through a series of partner workshops, shared via SSCB and mirrored on LCS and EHM
- A lead Social Worker for CE has been appointed, to support improving SW practice, to represent CSC within Topaz and provide a clear operational link with our commissioned partner, Barnardos, for CSE work
- The lead SW role is also supporting our L2 service in education (Team Around the School) to increase staff knowledge to ensure children are supported in the right way at the right time and at the right level of intervention
- We are now working on development of a MACE model, with both operational and strategic elements, to increase multi-agency engagement with CE work, include the links between CE and missing

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Quality of Social Work Practice

Missing Children (R5, R6)

- Staff capacity to complete MRIs recognised and integrated in to the developing T8 adolescent response
- Plans in place to move from a paper based system to LCS, required design of LCS forms and work flows allowing improved data (push / pull factors) to be drawn off
- Redesigned process trialled August – October 2018 and reviewed November 2018. Further changes to recording process made
- MISPER dashboard in development
- Work now commenced on MACE design for Somerset to better link missing to child exploitation
- Challenge – SW meaningful contact within 24 hours of safe and well check completed with an issue identified of where this is being recorded



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Quality of Social Work Practice

Front Door re-design principles (R5)

- Ensure a proportionate response with an appropriate escalation model as opposed to de-escalation
- Develop effective early triage, to prevent inappropriate escalation to the level 4 social work First Response team
- Maintain a swift response for the highest risk of harm cases with social work manager sign off across the levels of support
- Strengthen multi agency triage to ensure effective resource allocation and response to families through increased partner capacity at the front door to include health, police, education and Domestic Abuse services



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Front Door Design principles....2 (R5)

- Maintain the principles of the MASH model but with increased flexibility and responsiveness
- Absorb the MARAC function into the MASH model and link with adults MASH.
- Ensure the SW response is appropriately deployed within the front door and for children and families, to support the movement to a family safeguarding model
- Reduce the potential number of touch points for children and families
- Promote increased use of consultation before making a formal request for support through embedding professional generosity – helping partners with their own decision making and effective threshold application

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Partnerships (R5)

- Resolving Professional Differences (RPD) protocol has been reviewed and updated, and engagement in this process is significantly improved
- Peer challenge undertaken with Wiltshire – Neglect. Evidenced improved practice at CP level but further work needed at CiN level
- Close working with Avon and Somerset Constabulary to embed the Lighthouse Safeguarding Unit – resulting in improved triage and reduced contacts from the Police - (420 in December, from a high of 847 in June)
- Neglect toolkit rolled out across the partnerships, downloaded 2600 times so far. Cascade training package also developed



Ofsted Improvement Plan Partnership Working

Partnerships...2 (R5)

- Education Safeguarding Team – new model to allow a greater focus and support on Safeguarding in Education settings – close links with First Response and the SSCB
- 100% of schools in Somerset signed up to TAS approach
- Successful multi-agency partnership conferences held in 2018, looking at the role of the lead practitioner
- Further conferences planned for 2019 – safe uncertainty
- Family A SCR completed – practitioner conference held for 167 attendees to share learning
- Close joint working with key partners to develop new safeguarding arrangements
- CDOP partnership agreed with Bournemouth Pool and Dorset

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Quality of Social Work Practice

Advocacy (R8, R9, R4)

- Route One Advocacy services now under the remit, of Service Manager – Quality Assurance
- Plans in place to expand the service via increased use of volunteers and utilisation of the Mind Of My Own app
- Improved recording of advocacy use via LCS
- Process in place to ensure that CSC are aware of all children in custody, on a daily basis
- Triage, appropriate adults and advice and support offered to young people in custody via Youth Offending Team
- Team 8 and Rapid response Team available to support where required
- 16 and 17 year old children are now appropriately advised of their entitlement to become looked after or supported as a CiN
- Age appropriate information is provided to homeless 16 and 17 years olds to ensure that they are fully informed of their rights
- Additional support provided to social workers to ensure that they are fully informed of Southwark Judgement guidance



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Quality of Social Work Practice

Placement Sufficiency (R11)

- Independent external review of the fostering service undertaken by Peopltoo to advise on process, efficiency and future planning
- Improved relationships with suppliers via closer commissioning links
- Joint working initiatives between commissioning and CSC Operations to streamline the placements application and Placement agreement process
- Placement support options improved via rapid response team and Team 8 – supporting placements, keeping children at home and reducing placement demand



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Focused Visit Front Door and Early Help January 2019

Key Messages

- Referral thresholds are appropriate, clear and consistent, including thresholds for entrance in to care
- Early Help Hub works well in supporting partners to understand thresholds and could be expanded to include partners within it to improve the partnership early help offer
- Good quality contributions noted from health agencies (including GPs) to strategy meetings with meaningful analysis and planning
- Improved single agency triage of low and medium risk contacts by Police noted, including developing analysis of need



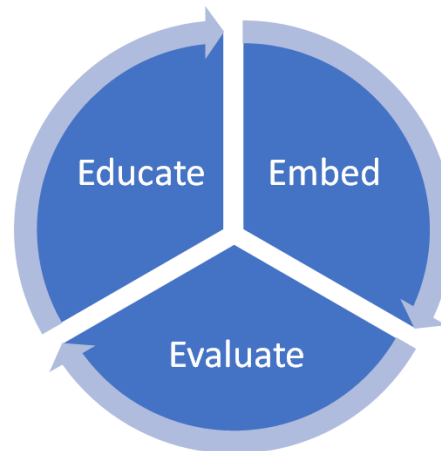
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The Next 12 months

Practice obsessions:

- Tenacity
- Curiosity
- Openness

Learning Loop



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The Next 12 months

Practice themes

- **Engaging with families**
 - role of the absent parent in children's lives
 - Understanding and addressing over-optimism in domestic abuse assessment
 - celebrating success with families

- **The importance of family connection**
 - skills in supporting teenagers at home
 - keeping children in care and care leavers connected with their families/ planning to go home

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The Next 12 months

Practice themes

- **Contextual safeguarding**
 - working with families and partner agencies to identify and reduce risks in communities.
- **Education for life**
 - championing access to appropriate education as a consistent element of social care assessment, support and partnerships.



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The Next 12 months

Glossary

CSW	Consultant Social Worker
CDOP	Child Death Overview Panel
CE	Child Exploitation
CiN	Child in Need
CP	Child Protection
CPD	Continued Professional Development
CSC	Children's Social Care
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
DWP	Department of Work and Pensions
EHM	Liquidlogic Early Help Module
FGC	Family Group Conference
LCS	Liquidlogic Children's System
MACE	Multi-Agency Child Exploitation
MARAC	Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference
MASH	Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub
MISPER	Missing Person
MRI	Missing Return Home Interview
NQSW	Newly Qualified Social Worker
S47	Section 47 Child Protection Enquiry
SCR	Serious Case Review
SSCB	Somerset Safeguarding Children Board
SW	Social Worker
T8	Team 8
TAS	Team Around the School
TM	Team Manager

