

HEREFORDSHIRE CHILDREN'S IMPROVEMENT BOARD

IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE – COVER REPORT JANUARY 2023

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The draft Children's Improvement Plan presented to the Improvement Board on 1 December 2022 was subsequently considered by the Council's Scrutiny Committee on 13 December 2022 and endorsed by Cabinet on 15 December 2022.

1.2 There was broad agreement and support for the draft Improvement Plan throughout the internal governance process and the final version of the Improvement Plan, which was sent to Ofsted on 20 December 2022, contained minor adjustments plus two additional high level actions.

1.3 The two additional high level actions recommended by the Scrutiny Committee and endorsed by Cabinet have been added to the Improvement Plan and are included below for ease of reference:

1.2 Introduce trauma awareness training as part of the Children's Service learning and development offer for all relevant staff and members of the council so they can be signposted when appropriate.	Service Director (Improvement)	April 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scoping of trauma awareness raising training options to be finalised for the end of January 2023• Short list of potential providers identified and contacted December 2022• Details to be included in the Social Care Academy Continual Professional Development offer for 2023/24
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6.3 Information for families with children subject to Public Law pre-proceedings will be added to the Council's website so that they are properly informed about Public Law pre-proceedings meetings and proceedings.	Service Director (Improvement)	January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Request made for links to the Family Rights Group website and information pages be added to the Council's website in January 2023• Further 'family friendly' information to be developed, shared and added to the Council's website
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2.0 Progress Updates

2.1 The Improvement Plan presented to the January 2023 Improvement Board includes the first progress updates and associated adjustments to the BRAG rating, where applicable. Moving forward, this process will be repeated for every Improvement Board.

2.2 The progress updates were shaped and informed by the Transformation Programme delivery dashboards and consultation with the Programme Managers and individual Service Leads, where required. All of this evidence and information is mapped against each of the ten practice improvement priorities, and associated high level actions identified through the Ofsted inspection and Local Government Association peer review for special educational needs and / or disabilities (SEND).

2.3 The BRAG ratings relate to the delivery status of the identified priority actions. Essentially, these ratings rely on an evaluation of the evidence about whether identified actions have been started, progressed in a timely manner and achieved.

2.4 The 'measures that matter' are a selected number of mostly quantitative performance indicators, with some qualitative indicators.

3.0 Summary and Conclusion

3.1 Overall, the completion of the progress updates for January 2023 provide proof of concept that the transformation delivery dashboards provide reliable evidence, with some additional consultation with Project Managers and Lead Officers, to record, track and report how priority actions are being progressed and achieved. Learning from this reporting cycle indicates that some early adjustments are needed regarding the specificity of some transformation delivery plans as they relate to partnership priorities and this issue is addressed later in this report at point XX

3.2 In summary, the first progress update reporting cycle for January 2023 presents a mostly positive direction of travel. This is despite the fact that the date for submission of the plan to Ofsted and the Christmas and New Year holiday compromised the full month reporting. This will be addressed moving forward as the February 2023 reporting will represent a full month cycle.

3.3 In summary, the BRAG ratings continue to provide a largely positive picture at this stage, although further improvement is required 'at pace'. Unsurprisingly, many of the current BRAG ratings remain the same as they were at the point the Improvement Plan was sent to Ofsted on 20 December. There is some movement however and this is set out below:

#	20 December 2022 BRAG rating	11 January 2023 BRAG rating	Direction of Travel
2.2	Yellow	Green	Improved
2.3	Yellow	Green	Improved
2.4	Red	Yellow	Improved
3.6	Yellow	Green	Improved
3.8	Green	Yellow	Deteriorated
4.3	Yellow	Green	Improved

4.5			Achieved
6.5			Improved
6.6			Improved
7.3			Improved
7.4			Improved
8.4			Improved
8.6			Deteriorated
9.1			Achieved
9.4			Improved
10.4			Achieved

3.4 The generally positive trend, including 3 improvement actions that have been achieved in this reporting period, is due to the impact of the following factors:

- Continued focus and coordination by existing officers
- Agreed priorities coming to fruition as planned
- Additional capacity and expertise as a result of new starters being in post

3.5 The notable exceptions to the above relate to improvement actions 3.8 and 8.6. In respect of improvement action 3.8 this highlights the partnership priority to review, relaunch and evaluate the multi-agency Neglect Strategy. This particular improvement action highlights a broader need to improve the specificity of planning and associated arrangements for achieving partnership deliverables to determine who is doing what, where, when and how to deliver on the following which require improved leadership engagement and collaboration:

- Herefordshire Children's Safeguarding Partnership priorities
- Herefordshire Children and Young People's Partnership priorities
- Health priorities as they relate to children in need of support, protection and care and children with special educational needs and / or disabilities

3.6 Priority action 8.6 relates to the re-launch of the Dispute Resolution Protocol (DRP) used by Independent Reviewing Officers to address the needs of children where there are concerns. This priority action has fallen foul of some late appointments of key staff which have squeezed the December 2022 delivery deadline. This matter has however been reviewed and there is confidence that the new appointees are addressing this and action is now being taken. Reporting for February 2023 will report an improved position as a result of the actions that are outlined in the progress updates outlined in the Improvement Plan.

3.7 In conclusion, the progress updates presented in the updated Improvement Plan for January 2023 set out a largely positive direction of travel, with improved BRAG ratings and some achievements. Further joint planning and decision making is required to address the partnership deliverables to clarify strategic leadership and associated arrangements for the HSCP, CYPP and with Health.

Gail Hancock, Service Director (Improvement)

05.01.2023.