

Accelerated Improvement Plan April 2021

Aim of the plan	To deliver consistently good services so children are safer, sooner	
Priorities	1.	To reduce the proportion of inadequate practice and increase the proportion of improving practice so that practice is consistently good or better.
	2.	To ensure full participation in Essentials and in-house Management and Leadership Programmes to deliver consistency, compliance and quality of practice and performance as quickly as possible.
	3.	To improve the quality and performance of social work practice in line with the Practice Fundamentals Tool, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Supervision and Management Oversight (to be regular, reflective and appropriately recorded in order to drive good practice outcomes) b) Visiting and Direct Work (to be timely, purposeful and champion the voice of the child - including MASH red RAG rated contacts) c) Assessment of needs, risks and circumstances (to reflect the Essentials 2.0 Programme 'Anchor' and 'Risk' principles) d) Planning and Reviewing (to be C-SMART, adaptive and effective) e) Case Recording (to be up to date, clear and comprehensive)
	4.	To communicate with Practitioners, Managers and Leaders and engage their 'hearts and minds' to deliver practice and performance improvements
	5.	To protect children through timely decisions and risk informed intervention and support that has a positive impact and improves outcomes
	6.	To achieve permanence for children at the earliest appropriate opportunity to improve their life chances and overall outcomes

DASHBOARD

Reporting period:	April 2021 data for Improvement Board on 26 May 2021				
	Progress made	Actions Status		Impact Status	
1. To reduce the proportion of inadequate practice and increase the proportion of improving practice so that practice is consistently good or better.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly case file audits – these have continued since June 2020 following a two-month suspension as a result of CV19. • Monthly QA performance ratings are reported against a target of no more than 12% for inadequate audit outcomes (by January 2021) and a target of no less than 40% for good or better audit outcomes (by February 2021). • The April 2021 monthly QA audit outcomes are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ 12% for inadequate audit ratings (this meets the 12% target) ➢ 33% for Good or better audit ratings (this has dropped since March and is 7% lower than the 40% target set for February 2021) • Audit performance has been affected by a reduction in Good and better practice this month and whilst this doesn't yet constitute a trend this will clearly be kept under review and re-evaluated as part of the 2021/22 first quarter report. • Following previous Board discussions, the Safeguarding Director has written to all staff to reiterate the expectations for ensuring that the completion of monthly audits remains a service priority. 	■ On target		■ On target	x
		◆ At risk		◆ At risk	
		▲ Compromised	x	▲ Compromised	
		● Completed		● Completed	

2. To ensure full participation in Essentials and in-house Management & Leadership Programmes to deliver consistency, compliance and quality of practice and performance as quickly as possible.

- **Social Work Academy training, learning and development** - As previously confirmed, the Social Work Academy training tracker has been refreshed and updated to remove leavers and to reflect the current workforce establishment. The tracker now includes Edge of Care staff as well as all new ASYEs, students and overseas social workers.
- **The Essentials 2.0 Programme** – Essentials 2.0 was suspended during the first CV19 lockdown but started again in September 2020 for all new starters, those who still need to complete all three modules and anyone needing a refresher. The updated Essential 2.0 Programme continues to offer capacity for 14 participants per session twice a week. The summary is as follows:
 - As of 06/05/21, **54%** of the eligible staff group had completed all 3 modules. The breakdown of data in relation to module completion is as follows:

No. of Modules Completed	No. of Staff	% of Eligible Staff Group
3	316	54%
2	50	9%
1	48	8%
0	168	29%

- **The Essentials 3.0 Programme** - the Essentials 3.0 thematic modules have been developed and are being delivered through a virtual classroom called 'Big Blue Button'. The summary is as follows:
 - **Relational Practice** - 72 staff have completed Relational Practice = 12%
 - **Domestic Abuse** - There are 4 sessions for this module and the final session is about to be delivered so no staff have attended all 4 yet; 18 staff have completed 3 sessions; 2 staff have completed 2 sessions; 4 staff have completed 1 session. As the sessions need to be completed in order the 6 staff who have not attended all sessions will need to re-book for the next round of delivery. Currently, 18 staff are due to complete this module week commencing 17 May2021 = 3%
- **NAAS** - GCC continues to be part of the National Assessment & Accreditation System (NAAS) Trailblazer Programme which commenced in December 2020. This enables children's social workers to develop skills and knowledge to improve outcomes for children and families. We have an identified group of trailblazer staff. The work on the NAAS/PQS development and endorsement processes is offering wider benefits in clarifying role profiles and progression routes for staff. This has had an initial benefit in qualifying the experience needed around the Senior Social Worker and Advanced Practitioner roles. As part of our NAAS pilot, we now have 3 cohorts of "NAAS trailblazers" with a total of 34 participants:
 - Of the 34 participants, 27 (80%) are undertaking the endorsement programme as part of our new senior social work progression route, which supports the development and retention of social workers. The evaluation process for the Management and Leadership programme will support the endorsement of our Team Managers.
- **Team Manager Management and Leadership Programme** - There are currently 43 team managers signed up to the Leadership and Management programme, which has been developed in line with the Practice Supervisor Post Qualifying Standards (PQS). So far, the Academy has delivered the Introduction, Quality Improvement (QI), Quality Control (QC) and Quality Assurance (QA) modules, and there has been 2 days of input on Systemic Leadership from the Institute of Family Therapy (IFT). To date:
 - 21 (**49%**) team managers have attended all 6 sessions
 - 7 managers have attended 5 sessions
 - 8 managers have attended 4 sessions
 - 5 managers have attended 3 sessions
 - 1 manager has attended 2 sessions

■ On target	x	■ On target	x
◆ At risk		◆ At risk	
▲ Compromised		▲ Compromised	
● Completed		● Completed	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 manager has attended 1 session ○ Delivery of the Power & Authority and Shaping & Improving the System sessions have commenced with each manager being invited to 2 sessions. The final module to be delivered by the Academy will be on Performance and Resources and we will externally commission the delivery of a Reflective Supervision module. ○ Feedback from managers attending the programme has been positive and the Academy have recently undertaken a review of the evaluation process to identify how best to measure the impact of the management and leadership programme in relation to practice. ○ The development of a Management and Leadership Programme for Service Managers has been commenced in collaboration with Service Managers with delivery planned for Autumn 2021, along with a second round of delivery for team managers. ● DfE grant – a grant of £521k, approved in November 2020, has continued to support a number of improvement and transformation initiatives. The DfE have confirmed continuation of the grant funding into 2021/22. ● Interim Assistant Director - the DfE grant has allowed for the engagement of an interim Assistant Director until 28.05.2021 when Philip Segurola completes his contract. A replacement interim AD is being recruited pending the implementation of the transformation remodelling which will appoint 4 x Area Assistant Directors (North, South, West and Central) in due course. ● Transformation Programme - The two transformation subject expert consultants, Jack Cordery and Clare Chamberlain, continue to lead on re-modelling and systemic practice as part of the Transformation Programme. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Remodelling - The area remodelling proposal has now been agreed by SLT, CLT and at Overview Board with the Leader of the Council. The Area remodelling is co-terminus with District Councils and Gloucestershire Police with the North Area (Cheltenham & Tewkesbury), South Area (Cotswold and Stroud) and West Area (Gloucester and Forest of Dean) plus a Central Area (for specialist and county wide services). More detailed planning is now underway and being led by Jack Cordery and a Project Team with input from all relevant Corporate Business Partners. HR have been consulted about the implementation of the Corporate Change Tool Kit which will result in formal consultation starting with Heads of Service. A decision has been taken to proceed with remodelling and pause consultation as and when the Ofsted inspection notification is received. To date, all indications suggest that the remodelling proposals are welcome and staff now just want to get on with the formal consultation and implementation process. ○ Systemic Practice – Progression of phase 3 of the Systemic Practice proposals has been waiting funding confirmation from the DfE. This has now been received save for formal ratification on 20 May 2021. This means that formal and accredited training will commence in June 2021 with the Centre for Systemic Social Work (CfSSW) focusing on an initial cohort of practitioners followed by practice supervisors/leaders. This is likely to be a 3 to 5-year programme and marks a significant milestone in the implementation programme. ● SLT 'Leadership Fundamentals' – This development work has now been completed in consultation with Claire Burgess, DfE Advisor, and Jack Cordery, transformation consultant. This sets out a leadership pledge for Children's Services vision, values and behaviours which underpins the continuing improvement journey and emerging transformation programme. This has been communicated to staff via an all staff communication and webinars and is now starting to be used to inform and underpin a range of improvement and transformation activities – please see attached 'Leadership Fundamentals'. ● SLT Leadership Programme - Planning is now underway with the Staff College to co-produce the SLT Leadership Programme and support the delivery of the Transformation Programme. This is scheduled to commence in September 2021 to coincide with the arrival of the new Director for Education. This initiative is funded by the DfE grant. 				
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff College Coaching Programme - The DfE grant is also funding a comprehensive coaching programme for all Team Managers, Service Managers and Heads of Service. Following completion of the three orientation sessions on 15, 16 and 22 March 2021 all managers have now been matched with a Staff College associate coach following a 'chemistry conversation' and individual coaching sessions are now starting to take place. Each manager will receive up to 6 coaching sessions over a six-month period. The programme will be evaluated0- • Service Manager Leadership and Management Programme - The DfE grant will also fund the delivery of a Management and Leadership Development Programme for Service Managers in 2021/22, This is being developed for delivery after conclusion of the Team Manager Management and Leadership Development Programme. • TIMOC - The DfE grant also allocated match funding to deliver the Trauma Informed Model of Care (TIMOC) training for Trevone House staff as part of a phase 1 pilot. The official Trevone House virtual launch took place on 11 March 2021 and all Trevone House staff are now TIMOC trained. A number of operational social work staff have also started their training which is targeted to prioritise social workers, team managers, service managers and Heads of Service who have young people already living in Trevone House or with agreed plans to transition into Trevone House. The TIMOC is led by Dr Ana Draper, from the Tavistock Clinic, and a pilot project report will be completed. 				
<p>3. To improve the quality and performance of social work practice in line with the Practice Fundamentals Tool:</p> <p>a) Supervision & Management Oversight</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision - There are three supervisory components including casework (about allocated children, young people and families), professional (about individual staff and professional issues) and reflective/clinical (focusing on a group approach to promoting professional curiosity, gaining a deeper appreciation of the relevant issues and problem solving): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Casework supervision performance has increased in April to 86% from 81% in March 2021, performance is however below target in April as the target have been reviewed. The new stretch target is 95% in 2021/22 up from 80% in 2020/21 The Interim Director of Safeguarding maintains on-going scrutiny of supervision performance with monthly compliance reporting. ○ Professional supervision performance for April 2021 remained high at 95%. ○ Reflective / clinical group supervision over the last 12 months this has continued but has been impacted by CV-19. Advanced Practitioners aim to facilitate these sessions on a remote and virtual basis although all teams report that they are looking forward to being able to undertake this on a face to face basis. Moving forward the plan is to use the reflective/clinical group supervision sessions to focus on the development of systemic practice. • The Team Improvement Project (TIP) – The TIP continues to be led by the lead improvement consultant and focuses on teams most likely, based on the past 6 months' evidence of weak QA ratings and performance, to produce inadequate practice. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A TIP review was convened on 12 March 2021 and this considered the progress of all teams within the initial cohort and other teams elsewhere in the service causing concern. ○ An adjusted TIP plan has removed 7 x teams out of the TIP as a result of the accelerated progress that has been made, to retain some other teams who require 	<p>■ On target</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>■ On target</p>	
		<p>◆ At risk</p>		<p>◆ At risk</p>	

	<p>continuing support and identify other teams to join the TIP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Director of Safeguarding and Care continues to review the monthly Social Worker and Team Performance Tracker populated with a number of key performance indicators by the Performance Team. ○ Based on the most recent Tracker (March 2021), there is evidence of a more positive trajectory with only 2 x social workers RAG rated Amber and 16 x Teams with 9 x rated Amber and 7 x rated Red. These have all been considered as part of the TIP review. ○ A further review of the TIP and Tracker has identified 4 priority teams/service areas where specific concerns about practice and performance in Forest of Dean, Tewkesbury and the 11-25 Teams in Cheltenham and Gloucester. The Safeguarding Director and Lead Improvement Consultant are now meeting with the relevant Heads of Service to discuss recovery plans, further and more formal action where required. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Advanced Practitioner (AP) – The AP role profile was refreshed in December 2020 and implemented in February 2021. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The AP role now includes supervisory and managerial responsibilities for up to a total of three personnel, including any combination of a Trainee Social Worker on placement, a newly qualified social workers in their first assessed and supported year in employment (NQSW/ASYE) or overseas social workers. ○ This development aims to further improve supervision and management oversight within teams, provide additional support for Team Managers and establish a clear professional pathway to support future succession planning so that APs can demonstrate appropriate supervision and management skills when applying for Team Manager roles. ○ The Social Work Academy has completed a knowledge, skills and training needs analysis with APs who are being offered additional information, focused training and development, including reflective practice learning sets and opportunities for peer to peer learning to help support and strengthen oversight within teams. ○ This has led to a review of existing supervision training with a plan for this to be developed and refreshed in line with Systemic Practice principles as we move forward. ● The Practice Fundamentals Tool was developed and launched in May 2020 and is aimed at controlling the quality of practice and promoting individual and collective professional accountability for achieving and maintaining consistently good standards of practice. A Practice Fundamentals dip sampling tool was developed by staff and launched in August 2020 to test the impact of this approach. The dip sampling schedule now runs alongside the monthly case file auditing and evidence to date indicates that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dip sampling expertise is improving ○ There is more consistency between dip sampling judgements and moderation outcomes ○ The Practice Fundamentals are being used within teams to inform and shape practice ○ There is evidence of positive practice within the system ○ More work is required to ensure consistent standards across all teams 	▲ Compromised		▲ Compromised	x
		● Completed		● Completed	
<p>3.To improve the quality and performance of social work practice in line with the Practice Fundamentals Tool:</p> <p>b) Visits and Direct Work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Visits to children continues to remain mostly positive and the visiting standards continue to promote face to face visiting as the service moves from response to recovery: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ The overall 12-month position for children seen within timescale for initial visits following contact was 85% in April 2021 (s47 enquiries was 96% and s17 was 83%). ➢ The percentage of children subject to a Child Protection Plan seen within timescale was 91% in April 2021, ➢ The percentage of Children in Need seen within timescale was 92% in April, ➢ The percentage of Children in Care receiving statutory visits within timescale was 92% in April 2021, ● The Principal Social Worker & Participation Champions - The PSW has established an updated and refreshed direct work tool kit and identified a network of Participation Champions across all teams who can act as a single point of contact to promote direct work. 	■ On target	x	■ On target	x
		◆ At risk		◆ At risk	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child's voice and diversity - A quality assurance initiative has been initiated to test the evidence base for the following and this is due to be concluded and reported in June 2021: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ The impact of the 'social graces' training to improve practice about difference and diversity ➢ Evidence best practice in respect of life story work to help children achieve a secure understanding about their past, present and future ➢ Evidence the impact of the 'Language that Cares' campaign in terms of the language that is used to speak with and about care experienced children and young people • Privacy Notices - operating procedures regarding consent, which have been reviewed by the Caldicott Guardian and the Corporate Information Management Service, have introduced privacy notices in line with GDPR standards and expectations. Following departmental implementation some partnership activity is on-going to ensure the recent updates and implications are shared with partnership colleagues. • On-going ICT issues – within the context of on-going ICT struggles dating back to the Sopra Steria security breach in October 2020, and despite a short honeymoon period at the end of the Sopra Steria contract when Children's Services was prioritised for implementation of the 'Connect to GCC' application, ICT difficulties during the past period have been extremely disruptive in respect of practice, performance and staff morale. Unchecked this poses a significant risk and at worst could impact on safeguarding, the continuation of the improvement journey and the Ofsted inspection. The DCS has escalated this matter to the Chief Executive and corporate leadership action is being taken to address the issues and manage the risk. 	▲ Compromised		▲ Compromised	
		● Completed		● Completed	
<p>3. To improve the quality and performance of social work practice in line with the Practice Fundamentals Tool:</p> <p>c) Assessments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership Contacts and Referrals – The Ofsted Focus Visit letter published on 20 November 2021 highlighted the comparatively high rate of contacts not satisfying the agreed levels of intervention for a statutory social work service. Inspectors queried whether this was because the partnership is risk averse and/or not understanding or complying with locally agreed thresholds. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In March 2021 a high proportion of contacts continued to result in 'No Further Action': <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ 405 of 1250 (41%) of all contacts received by Children's Social Care were closed with 'No Further Action' which is up from 33% on the same time in 2020. ➢ Two-thirds of contacts, 807 (65%), resulting in 'No Further Action' received information, advice or guidance. ➢ Of the 163 contacts relating to professional concerns about Neglect only 12 (7%) included a completed neglect toolkit checklist ○ Following the previous report to the Improvement Board about the continuing high number of contacts from Police, Health and Schools/Education to Children's Services that do not meet the threshold for statutory social work intervention a multi-agency audit has now been completed under the auspices of the GSCP. A draft headline report is due to be considered by the GSCE at the next Executive Meeting and further work is recommended with Health and the Police. • MASH - The timeliness of MASH decision making has continued to be adversely impacted by the fragility of the ICT system. Performance for red RAG rated contacts in the MASH in March increased to 96% (44 out of 46 contacts) but, largely due to the deployment of additional resources to counter the ICT issues, performance was 91% in April 2021. The overall 12-month position was 88% against a target of 90%. • Single Assessments - The majority of social work single assessments completed in March 2021 were within timescale (86%). Timeliness remained above target (85%) for the third month. Performance is also better than our peer comparators (84%, March 2020). • Legal Planning - Following the previous legal planning improvement work undertaken by the seconded Ofsted HMI during the first CV19 lockdown which ended at the end of August 2020, the Legal Planning Task and Finish Group has progressed all agreed areas. This has culminated in publication of new practice guidance, changes to operating protocols and re-design of the Liquid Logic legal workspace, including a Legal Planning Meeting recording template. The Liquid Logic functionality to develop a PLO pre-proceedings and court tracker has been progressed. The practice guidance has now been launched alongside a series of 	■ On target	x	■ On target	
		◆ At risk		◆ At risk	
		▲ Compromised		▲ Compromised	x
		● Completed		● Completed	

	<p>workshops facilitated by the lead improvement advisor with all teams and services. This activity was timely and coincided with the launch of the PLO National Working Group final report and recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-referrals - There was a small reduction in re-referrals for the second month in March 2020, but increased to 29% in April against a target of 24% This remains a priority performance issue and was the focus of the March 2021 Strategic Performance Meeting. Monthly dip sample exercises of all re-referrals continue across all of the six Localities and this is evaluated and routinely reported by the interim Assistant Director to the interim Safeguarding Director. Some further diagnostic work is on-going to determine whether and to what extent the step-up process may have artificially elevated the re-referral rate. If it has the re-referrals rate could be re-adjusted. 				
<p>5.To improve the quality and performance of social work practice in line with the Practice Fundamentals Tool:</p> <p>d) Planning and Reviewing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C-SMART Planning - remains a priority across the whole service for children in need of support, protection, care and independence. Overall, the quality of plans is beginning to improve although not all are consistently good or better yet. • CIN Planning and Review - The recent changes to the CIN Planning and Review Protocol are being implemented and include increased oversight and intervention from the Team Managers are designed to increase the level of management oversight. Team Managers are however expected to chair the 1st CIN review 4 weeks after the conclusion of the Single Assessment, the CIN review due three months after that and then at six-monthly intervals thereafter. There were 817 Children in Need with a completed plan in April and 83.4% of these children had a timely review or were not yet due a review. 	<p>■ On target</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>■ On target</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) – timeliness of ICPCs had previously been a significant long-standing performance concern. As a result of targeted improvement activity across the whole system, performance improved significantly to 94% in December 2020 but fell in January 2021 to 65%. In February and March 2021 this improved to above the target of 80% to 88%. April 2021 performance was 91% against a stretch target of 93%. The proportion of children becoming subject to a protection plan in April who had a previous plan decreased to 29% in April, giving a 12-month position of 30% which is below target (25%). 	<p>◆ At risk</p>		<p>◆ At risk</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Child Protection Conferences (RCPCs) - The timeliness of RCPCs was extremely good (99.6%) again in March 2021 which is above target (95%) and significantly better than statistical neighbours (75.2%). • Child in Care Reviews - All child in care statutory reviews remained timely for the 12th consecutive month in March 2021 (100%) which is above target (98%). 	<p>▲ Compromised</p>		<p>▲ Compromised</p>	<p>x</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint safeguarding developments – There are currently several initiatives and activities to improve joint working across the children’s safeguarding partnership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Child Protection Strategy Discussions/Meetings – these are now convened by the relevant Locality, as opposed to the MASH, to ensure continuity of management oversight throughout the s47 child protection enquiry ○ Refreshed Child Protection Strategy Discussion / Meeting agenda – this has been refreshed and agreed between GSCP strategic executive leads for Children’s Social Care, Police and Health and will be distributed week commencing 24 May 2021. ○ Joint Police and Children’s Social Care workshops – these have been planned but have had to be rescheduled due to the third lockdown. ○ Exploitation – joint planning between the Safeguarding Director and Head of the Police Public Protection Service to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ streamline and coordinate shared Exploitation Team resources to target children who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering, significant harm as a result of child exploitation (sexual and criminal), including ‘county lines’, missing, trafficking and modern-day slavery. ➢ The emerging Strategy for Young People. ➢ An intelligence led exercise has been undertaken to explore the evidence base for any links between a serious and organised crime group and the exploitation of young people in Gloucestershire. 	<p>● Completed</p>		<p>● Completed</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Child Exploitation Raising Awareness Campaign – this campaign was launched under the auspices of the GSCP March / April 2021 ○ Managing Young People at Risk Outside of the Home Strategy – this GSCP partnership strategy is in the process of being completed with external challenge and support being provided by lead representatives from the National Working Group. The strategy completion deadline is September 2021. ○ Youth Endowment Fund – a 3-part partnership bid has just been developed submitted and if successful should provide additional funding to progress some targeted and specialist joint work to tackle exploitation. 				
<p>3.To improve the quality and performance of social work practice in line with the Practice Fundamentals Tool:</p> <p>e) Recording</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICT - The fragility of the ICT has continued to compromise the recording of practice and performance and has had a detrimental impact on staff morale. ICT difficulties date back to the Sopra Steria security breach in October 2021 and although the Sopra Steria contract has now ended there is no 'quick fix'. Whilst there was an initial honeymoon period most likely linked to the prioritisation of the 'Connect to GCC' the last 2 weeks have been particularly challenging. ICT is now considered to pose the highest risk to children's social care which is now impacting on business as usual and at worst may compromise the services ability to safeguard children and is now very to compromise the Ofsted ILACS. The reliance that Children's Social Care has on ICT for recording practice and performance, particularly in Liquid Logic, cannot be underestimated. The DCS has escalated this matter to the CEX. • Whilst most children's social care Liquid Logic records can usually be accessed and then navigated fairly easily, the ICT fragility has hampered efforts to achieve and maintain timely record keeping which has been an area the service has previously needed to address. Whilst staff make sterling efforts to overcome the ICT difficulties this is worrying. • Although Liquid Logic functionality has been developed and improved to support recording in a number of areas, including the following, the ICT fragility is hampering the anticipated impact of these developments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Recording child protection Strategy Discussion decisions and rationale ➢ Recording the progress and outcome of child protection enquiries and decision making ➢ Recording Step-Up and Step-Down arrangements ➢ Recording a new exploitation episode with an updated Screening Tool ➢ Recoding a revised and refreshed legal workspace 	<p>■ On target</p>		<p>■ On target</p>	
		<p>◆ At risk</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>◆ At risk</p>	
		<p>▲ Compromised</p>		<p>▲ Compromised</p>	<p>x</p>
		<p>● Completed</p>		<p>● Completed</p>	
<p>4.To communicate with Practitioners, Managers and Leaders and engage their 'hearts and minds' to deliver practice and performance improvements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce - During the past year of the CV19 pandemic, the Children's Social Care workforce has remained committed, but is tired and communication about the Children's Service road map has been very well received. Staff have worked tirelessly to maintain front line, face to face services whilst visiting the county's most vulnerable children and young people in their homes in the community and in placements, both in and outside of the county. This has been an unprecedented year and it is commendable what has been achieved, especially given the very limited use of permitted freedoms and flexibilities allowed under the Coronavirus Act 2020. • Duty of Care - It is essential that the organisation provides a duty of care for its staff and acts to counter the risks associated with professional dangerousness "whereby professionals involved in child protection work can behave in a way which either colludes with or increases the dangerous dynamics of the abusing family" (Morrison 1990). The return to offices, whilst continuing to be managed and subject to CV-19 risk assessments. Is providing a much-needed boost to staff morale. Staff numbers in offices will be limited to no more than 25%, operate on a 2 day / 3 day hybrid working patten each week and will adhere to social distancing, the wearing of face masks and focus on safely bringing staff together on a 1:1 basis for much needed 	<p>■ On target</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>■ On target</p>	<p>x</p>
		<p>◆ At risk</p>		<p>◆ At risk</p>	

	<p>reflective supervision, whilst focusing on particularly vulnerable groups like NQSW/ASYE, overseas social workers and social work students on placements, for example.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupational Health – plans are in the process of being confirmed to partner each Head of Service with an Occupational Health Advisor to review staff needs as they return to offices and explore an extended offer to address health and wellbeing of the workforce. • CV19 Business Continuity Planning - arrangements continue with Head of Service catch up meetings each Monday morning, an extended Bronze Group and Leadership Team meeting each Wednesday morning, with Services Managers attending on a monthly basis, as well as a Head of Service peer to peer meeting each Friday. • Staff Absence Tracker - The daily staff tracker shows that overall sickness rates for children's social care staff continue to be lower than before the pandemic. Staff testing positive for CV-19 has been low overall comparatively speaking throughout the pandemic and there are currently no staff off sick with a CV-19 diagnosis. All front-line social workers have been vaccinated or are in the process of receiving their second vaccination. GCC foster carers have also been vaccinated as part of this programme. • Keeping in Touch with Staff - Managers continue to utilise formal and informal opportunities to stay in touch with staff and remain well connected. The gradual return to offices, as outlined in the Children's Services road map, and the prospect of moving from response to recovery is very welcome amongst the workforce. • Webinars - The DCS has recently concluded a further series of webinars with all Children's Services staff and a fresh round of Ofsted inspection preparation roadshows have recently been completed as well. • Staffing - The workforce strategy continues to be managed with the following initiatives being concluded for the 2020/21-year end: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ All Cohort 9 ASYEs moving into established positions within the structure ➢ All Cohort 10 ASYE first round interviews completed with offer to new graduates. ➢ Overseas social workers moving into established positions within the staffing establishment ➢ Conversion of agency staff onto permanent contracts ➢ Beginning of the new Social Work Apprenticeship Scheme ➢ Refresh of the children's social care recruitment microsite underway • The Principal Social Worker (PSW) continues to progress targeted activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ The PSW has led the 2020/21 Annual Social Worker Health Check Survey (54% response rate) and 17 Focus Groups (with 80+ staff) and a final report has now been completed. The Health Check was largely positive and demonstrated a shift in workforce perception about engagement and participation with the improvement journey which is characterised by three key words: Improving, Supportive and Changing • Briefings - A significant number of CV-19 technical briefings have been produced and disseminated to all CSC staff, with additional updates as necessary and appropriate. • Ofsted Focus Visit letter was published on 20.11.2020. This stated that "The local authority's response to COVID-19 has been positive, proactive and well managed." Furthermore, Ofsted concluded that "...social workers have demonstrated considerable resilience during COVID-19, not least in adapting to the challenges associated with remote working. They say they feel, and are being, well supported." • ILACS - The most recent communication from Ofsted has stated that the next contact received from Ofsted will be for the full inspection, not a further monitoring visit, and this may be in June or July 2021 of the summer term or after the summer break in the Autumn term commencing in September 2021. 	<p>▲ Compromised</p>		<p>▲ Compromised</p>	
		<p>● Completed</p>		<p>● Completed</p>	

<p>5.To protect children through timely and consistent risk informed intervention and support that has a positive impact and improves outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ofsted Focus Visit - Following the Ofsted Focus Visit in October 2020, the feedback and learning was used to refresh the improvement and development activity. A number of these issues affect practice with children in need of support and protection in respect of the use and tracking of PLO Pre-Proceedings • PLO Pre-Proceedings and Court Recovery Plan care proceedings - Children’s Social Care has taken back responsibility for managing the PLO pre-proceedings and care proceedings tracker from Legal Services and has dedicated staff to achieve and maintain the tracker. The revised Liquid Logic legal workspace required further attention to improve functionality for electronic reporting and this has now been completed and will help to achieve and maintain managerial ‘grip and pace’. The interim Assistant Director chairs a monthly review meeting with the Case Professional Officers, relevant Heads of Service and Legal Services before reporting to the Director of Safeguarding and Care. • Public Law Outline (PLO) Pre-proceedings - activity, especially children subject to pre-proceedings for longer than 26 weeks, was highlighted in the Ofsted Focus Visit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The most recent monthly data report covering the period from 01.04.2021 to 30.04.2021 shows that there were 80 family groups (not individual children) subject to PLO pre-proceedings. ○ There were 17 family groups that were over 26 weeks including several that were due to step down or due to be issued in court. ○ There were some continuing delays due to Legal Service’s capacity and following escalation additional legal capacity has been commissioned from Warwickshire County Council’s Legal Service which has resolved these immediate pressures. ○ Some placement search pressures have also delayed the issuing of proceedings and some other delays have been as a result of staff turn-over in children’s social care and legal services. ○ Some of the previous concerns regarding the identification of external therapeutic experts and progress of therapeutic intervention during the pandemic have eased although not been totally eradicated yet. ○ Other delays relate to family members applying for Special Guardianship Orders. ○ The Safeguarding Director has written to all relevant Heads of Service to ensure there is an updated management oversight on the child/ren’s electronic record to confirm that appropriate safety plans are in place for children, remedial action is being taken and timescales are in place to address all identified delays. This position is due to be reviewed again week concluding 28.05.2021. • The Court Recovery Plan – in addition to the PLO pre-proceedings activity, there continues to be an on-going focus to progress the court recovery plan in partnership with Cafcass and the Judiciary to ensure children receive timely legal protection when required. The impact of the pandemic has severely impacted judicial capacity. The latest court recovery plan report indicates that between 01.04.2021 to 30.04.2021 there were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 128 care proceedings and 80 pre-proceeding, of which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 24 x sets of pre-proceedings were awaiting issue ○ A total of 115 x sets of proceedings were issued during the pandemic ○ A total of 13 x sets of proceedings were initiated prior to the start of the pandemic and all remain in excess of 26 weeks duration ○ 11 x sets of proceedings were allocated to Warwickshire Legal Services the remainder were allocated to GCC Legal Services ○ 5 x sets of proceedings were proceedings managed though the Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) ○ 15 x new sets of proceedings were issued in April ○ 17 x sets of proceedings were concluded in April • Virtual Courts – The use of the 8 x Virtual Courts in Cheltenham and Gloucester continues. The previous concerns expressed by the judiciary about GCC’s fragile ICT has largely been managed with the use of tablets, although WiFi issues in the Cheltenham Locality meant virtual court hearings were transferred to Gloucester during week of 17 May 2021. The Judiciary have 	<p>■ On target</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>■ On target</p>	<p>x</p>
		<p>◆ At risk</p>		<p>◆ At risk</p>	
		<p>▲ Compromised</p>		<p>▲ Compromised</p>	
		<p>● Completed</p>		<p>● Completed</p>	

	<p>confirmed that there are no current concerns about GCC's ICT currently.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GCC Legal Services – Legal Services have faced considerable pressures and demand arising from volume and complexity of court care proceedings. Legal Services have managed to employ new staff and have also secured additional capacity from Warwickshire Legal Services. There is a corporate response to ensure GCC Legal Services continues to be able to meet demand. • National Public Law Working Group (PLWG) - on 9 March 2021 the PLWG launched its final report, 'Recommendations to achieve best practice in the child protection and family justice systems' (March 2021), and includes 47 recommendations for immediate implementation, along with best practice guidance and templates. The launch event proposed a "recalibration" rather than a radical change and focuses on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support for and work with families prior to court proceedings ○ The application ○ Case management ○ Supervision Orders ○ Section 20 Accommodation <p>The implementation of the recommendations has started to come on stream with the implementation of the new Social Work Evidence Templates (SWETs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Conferences - In April the timeliness of Initial Child Protection Conferences was 91% • Repeat Child Protection Planning - The proportion of children becoming subject to a protection plan who had previously had a child protection plan decreased in April to 29% but remains below our target of 25%. • Duration of Child Protection Plans - 19 x children were subject to a plan for more than two years (2.7%) in April. This is in line with our Peer Group comparators (2.8% March 2020) but marginally off our own target (2%). 16 of the 19 children are also subject to pre-proceedings (11) or court care proceedings (5). 				
<p>6.To provide care and achieve permanence for children at the earliest appropriate opportunity to improve their life chances and overall outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ofsted Focus Visit - the key practice and performance priorities coming out of the Ofsted Focus Visit in October 2020 in respect of children in care included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Edge of Care - Service for children and families at the Edge of Care ➢ Placement Sufficiency - Number and choice of suitable placements to meet children's needs and reduce disruption ➢ Personal Education Plans - to improve the quality to be more ambitious, specific and have measurable targets • Edge of Care - The emergence of the new Edge of Care Service, now comprising of former IRIS staff and existing DPST staff, is integral to the transformation remodelling and is being progressed as part of the project work led by Jack Cordery. As part of the planned staff engagement and formal consultation process the intention is to adopt the Intensive Family Preservation Service approach which is an evidence-based approach to help families continue to look after their children and avoid the need for them to come into local authority care. The focus of the Edge of Care Service is diversion from care, support in care and reunification home from care. Some specialist learning and development about the IFPS model is being sourced and it is anticipated that a bespoke programme will be initiated with relevant managers in the first instance so joint collaboration can take place with managers co-facilitating the training with the rest of the service. • Admission to Care - The new Admission to Care Panel has been operating on a weekly basis every Wednesday afternoon and the first 3-month review report is due week commencing 31.04.2021. The purpose of the Panel is to address Ofsted's comments about what inspectors called the 'second front door' in order to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improve overall planning and decision making by practitioners and managers ○ Reduce same day replacement requests to in-house Fostering and the Placement 	<p>■ On target</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>■ On target</p>	
		<p>◆ At risk</p>		<p>◆ At risk</p>	
		<p>▲ Compromised</p>		<p>▲ Compromised</p>	<p>x</p>

- Commissioning Team from social work teams
 - Improve placement searching and matching opportunities
 - Achieve the 'right placement first time' for children
 - Reduce placement instability and disruptions for children
- **Increase in children in care numbers** – the number of children in care is increasing and having previously plateaued around 750 recent admissions have accelerated to 804 and is expected to rise again based on analysis of the PLO pre-proceedings tracker and evidence from the Admission to Care Panel. A quick review of the Admission to Care Panel activity over the last 3 months has revealed:
 - 126 children and young people from 95 families have been presented and considered
 - In respect of 11 presentations the panel did not agree admission to care or a package of diversionary support via Edge of Care. The vast majority of these involve older 16/17-year old young people
 - In respect of all other presentations, the panel agreed with admission to care either as a result of retrospective / emergency panning or planned decision making, including as an outcome of PLO pre-proceedings
- **Permanence Project** – this been led by the interim Assistant Director. Phases one and two are now complete and phase three will be completed at the end of May 2021. The service is currently in the process of repeating a number of review permanence panels and activities targeting specific cohorts of children where further work had been identified in the first Permanence Review Panels as detailed in the 14-point Permanence Action Plan. A summary report is being produced for week ending 28 May 2021 and highlights from this will be reflected in the next month's AIP refresh.
- **Placement Sufficiency** – The Board has previously received a detailed report from the Integrated Commissioner in January 2021. Since this time:
 - Trevone House was launched on 11 March 2021 – young people are now resident and more are at various stages of transition into Trevone House.
 - The next phase of the capital programme is being presented to Cabinet in July 2021 and this sets out an ambitious programme of activity to develop additional placement provision over the next 3 – 5 years
- **In-house Fostering** - the March 2020 Improvement Board heard from Karen Simmons, an independent consultant, about the findings and recommendations from the comprehensive review she undertook in respect of the in-house Fostering Service. Karen Simmons has now been retained to provide on-going support to deliver on the review recommendations. An outline programme will be prepared for the end of May 2021 to propose how to progress 'quick wins', progress priority improvement activities and the delivery of developmental initiatives. This activity will commence with a whole service event led by the Safeguarding Director, relevant Head of Service and Karen Simmons. One of the critical issues for the in-house Fostering Service is the marketing campaign to recruit new foster carers and to promote GCC as the local fostering agency of choice. The other critical issue is to ensure that approved GCC foster carers are supported and retained to provide a consistently high standard
- **Placement stability (long and short term)** - performance has decreased in April. In respect of short-term placement stability, 18.5% of children in care had 3 or more placements over the last 12 months across all periods of care. Long-term stability has slightly declined to 59.9% which is now 5% below target (65%) and 8% below statistical neighbours (68%).
- **Section 20** - Of all children in care 25.4% were accommodated under a Section 20 arrangement in April 2021. This represents an improvement since December and performance is within tolerance of our target (25%).
- **Care Leaver's Pathway Planning Quarterly Review** - Performance for care leavers with an up-to-date Pathway Plan is at 75% in April, this remains below target (90%). The most recent Pathway Planning quarterly review focused solely on care leaver's pathway plans and the headlines are as follows. The final report is due week commencing 31 May 2021:

● Completed

● Completed

April 2021	GREEN	AMBER	RED
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	Care Leaver's PWP's	6 (15%)	24 (61%)	9 (23%)				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care Leaver's Accommodation - A high proportion of care leavers continue to live in suitable accommodation (93%) which is an improvement from August (87%). Tracking and reporting continues for care leavers who experience actual or likely risk homelessness. They continue to be reviewed on a weekly basis during the CV-19 pandemic to ensure continuity of support and intervention as necessary and appropriate. • Care Leavers not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) - 50% of Care Leavers (aged 19 – 21) were in education, employment or training (EET) in March 2021. Performance is slightly better than our peer group (49.8%, March 2020) but remains lower than the previous target (55%). Following representation from Ambassadors the 2021/22 target has been stretched to 75% to reflect the necessary aspiration that they want to see. The pandemic has had an adverse impact on young people and EET will be a key priority moving forward. The Director for Safeguarding has been Working with the Strategic Lead for Inclusive Employment and other key stakeholders, and the Ambassadors will provide the Improvement Board with a thematic presentation focusing on employment at the next Improvement Board. It is anticipated that this will reflect the recent developments that are now being managed as part of the Forwards Steering Group. 							

Key Actions, Owners, Impact on Objectives and Timescales, with associated Metrics:

The second part of the Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP) is being updated and refreshed for the June 2021 Improvement Board. This part of the AIP has not been updated for a very long time, pre-dating the interim Director for Safeguarding and Care. In light of practice and performance during the pandemic and evidence of the distance that has been travelled, there are a number of practice and performance themes and issues requiring further improvement and development. It is proposed that the AIP refresh will take account of the 2020/21 end of year position, which has recently been discussed as part of the Strategic Performance Meeting, to provide an undated and more targeted approach to key actions moving forward. It is proposed that the June 2021 AIP refresh for the Improvement Board is updated to focus on more targeted quality and performance themes and issues that need to be maintained, improved and developed. The proposed framework for this update is as follows and, if agreed, this will inform an 'AIP MUST DO' review for the children's social care workforce and annual employee appraisal objectives for 2021/22:

Quality:

- **Inadequate monthly audit findings** - to be consistently 12% or less
- **Good and Outstanding monthly audit findings** - to be consistently 40% or more
- **Monthly audit completion rate** – to be consistently 90% or more
- **Monthly audit user voice** – the inclusion and impact of service user feedback
- **Audit responses** – the timeliness and impact of remedial action in response to audit findings
- **Audit accuracy** – impact of moderation
- **Practice Fundamentals dip sampling** – evidence of quality control in relation to management oversight, visiting and direct work, assessment, planning and review and recording.

Performance:

- **Volume and Repeat activity:**
 - **Number, trend and triage outcome for new contacts/referrals**
 - **Number and trend for Children in Need of Support, Protection, Care and young people leaving care**
 - **Re-referrals**
 - **Repeat Child Protection Planning**
 - **Admission and Re-admission to Care**
- **Timeliness:**
 - **Decision making**
 - **Initial response** to Children in Need of Support and Protection
 - **Completion of assessments**
 - **Timeliness of planning** for Children in Need of Support, Protection, Care and Independence
 - **Timeliness of reviewing** for Children in Need of Support, Protection, Care and Independence
 - **Duration of children subject to a Child Protection Plan** for 2 years or more
 - **Return Interviews** with missing children

- **Engaging and supporting vulnerable children, young people with parents and carers:**
 - **Visiting Children in Need of Support, Protection and Care and young people leaving care**, specifically highlighting;
 - Seeing children aged 5+ years subject to a child protection plan on their own
 - Completion of the 'My Views' consultation with young people subject to a Child Protection Conference
 - Visiting younger and older care experienced young people
 - **Missing episodes**
 - **Placement stability** (short and long term)
 - **PLO Pre-proceedings** and court care proceedings** (26 weeks)
 - Permanency – securing legal, placement and emotional permanence

- **Corporate Parenting:**
 - **Children in Care and Education**, specifically;
 - Personal Education Planning (PEP)**
 - Absence
 - Fixed term exclusions
 - NEET
 - **Children in Care and Care Leaver's Health**, specifically:
 - Health Assessments (initial and Review)
 - Dental Checks
 - Care Leaver Health Passports
 - **Placement Sufficiency****, specifically capacity, choice and suitability;
 - In-house Fostering Service – recruitment, capacity and foster carer supervision
 - Placement Commissioning Service (external residential providers and independent fostering agencies)
 - Suitable accommodation (Housing)
 - Out of County placements

- **Workforce:**
 - Case Supervision
 - Social Worker caseloads - 18 or fewer and 25 or fewer
 - Recruitment and Retention (Students, Apprenticeships, NQSWs/ASYEs, Overseas Social Workers, agency and permanent staff)
 - Turnover, including Children in Care with fewer than 3 Social Workers in 6 months and in 12 months