

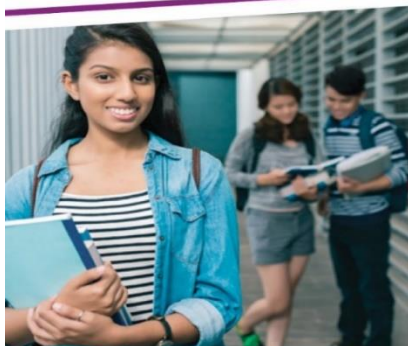
# Children's Continuous Improvement Plan 2021-24

July 2021

**be the change**

for children and young people in Croydon

#bethechangecroydon



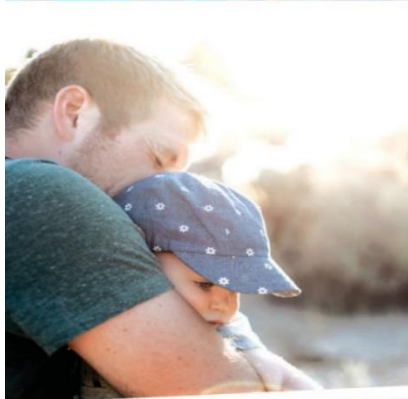
OUR DESTINATION



OUR PRINCIPLES



OUR PRACTICE  
FRAMEWORK



Delivering for Croydon

**CROYDON**  
[www.croydon.gov.uk](http://www.croydon.gov.uk)

## Introduction

In the inspection report of Croydon's children's social care services published in March 2020 Ofsted recognised that services for children in need of help and protection were now good, and services for children in care and care leavers were improving well. Overall children's social care services were judged as good.

## Croydon's Challenge

Croydon Council faces serious governance, financial and operational challenges. Resolving this crisis requires one of the most significant change programmes in local government. The service transformation that lifted children's services from an inadequate to good was underpinned by significant investment, and whilst some of the additional investment has been removed children's services are still higher cost compared to other council services judged as good overall.

We must now review how we deliver children's services in Croydon to reduce the cost and work within the council's available resources whilst retaining the quality and effectiveness that children and families in Croydon deserve.

## Planning for continued improvement

This Continuous Improvement Plan 2021-24 brings together:

- The savings and growth planned over 2021-24 across early help, children's social care and education as the departmental contribution to the Council's Medium Term Finance Strategy (MTFS) – Section 1.
- The practice improvement priorities for early help and children's social care including actions to address the recommendations in the 2020 Ofsted inspection – Section 2.

The majority of the MTFS savings impact on the practice improvement priorities, and there is a direct read across for many of the priorities and actions. However, there are areas that are specific to each section. More details on the background and rationale for the MTFS savings are set out in the CFE Delivery Plan, March 2021.<sup>1</sup>

The plan will help the council achieve the overall reduction in spend required and put children's services in Croydon on a sustainable financial footing. We know that we cannot afford to be complacent to sustain the improvements made and build on them. We also know we will need to adjust to emerging needs and themes including the longer term effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic on our children and young people.

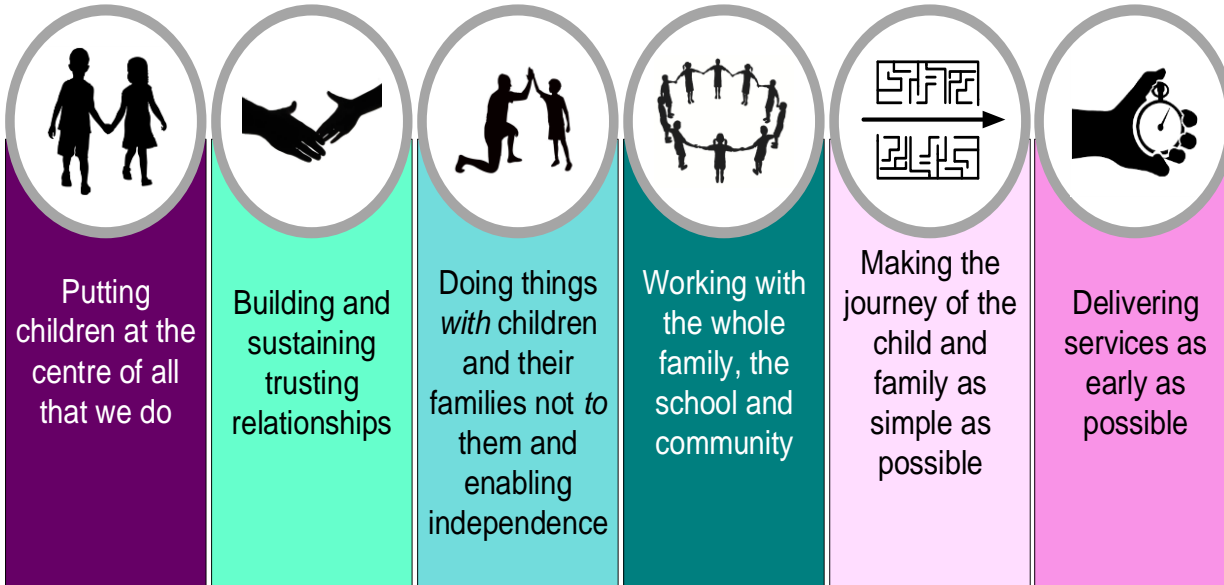
### **Our values, our principles**

throughout the planning and making changes across education and children's social care we aim to sustain the service offer to children, families and schools at reduced cost whilst continuing to meet statutory responsibilities. We will retain our commitment to the following:

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<sup>1</sup> Croydon CFE Delivery Plan, February 2021 <https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/documents/s28951/Appendix%201%20-Draft%20CFE%20Delivery%20Plan.pdf>

## Our Values



## Our principles

- We will support families to keep children and young people safely at home, and make sound decisions to bring children into our care when we need to;
- We will develop local provision so more children with SEND attend Croydon schools, keeping close to their friends and community and relieving the pressure on the Dedicated Schools Grant;
- We will get the best possible value for the Croydon pound for placements and packages of care for children and young people, commissioning for cost and quality;
- We will continuously challenge ourselves to improve efficiency and reduce the cost of services, improving the business systems and processes needed to enable us to understand spend and accurately benchmark ourselves against others locally, regionally and nationally.
- We will focus on tackling ingrained inequality and poverty in the borough. We will follow the evidence to tackle the underlying causes of inequality and hardship, like structural racism, environmental injustice and economic injustice

## Oversight and Review

The Continuous Children's Improvement Board (CCIB), through its partnership lens with service experts and an independent Chair, is well placed to monitor sustained practice improvements whilst also providing constructive scrutiny on the impact of the savings, keeping at the heart of discussions the need to ensure vulnerable children and young people are kept safe.

The Scrutiny Children and Young People sub-Committee has a vital role in scrutinising the duties and functions of children's social care, and through its public meetings is able to bring these issues to a wide audience.

The MTFS projects set out in the plan are reported through the governance arrangements set out in the Croydon Renewal Plan. The Children Families and Education (CFE) Delivery Plan sets out the projects in more detail.

The Children's Continuous Improvement Board will take the MTFS projects set out in this plan at its meetings in order to monitor service impact and progress on making the savings. Financial updates will continue to come to the Board on a bi-monthly basis to keep the Board informed of financial progress and risk against all CFE MTFS projects.

Service performance and quality is reviewed and challenged through the cycle of meetings set out in the Windows into Practice early help & children's social care quality assurance framework. The Children's Continuous Improvement Board will receive the bi-monthly reports on Quality of Practice and monthly performance reports. These will underpin the Practice priorities in the Plan.

Quarterly reports on progress and risk against the actions in both sections of the plan will be reported to and challenged by the Scrutiny Children and Young People sub-Committee to provide robust oversight. Work will continue to ensure the forward plans and work programmes of the two formal meetings are co-ordinated and aligned to provide whole-system assurance on the progress and impact.

It is proposed that the Children's Continuous Improvement Plan is reviewed annually by the CCIB.

## **Delivery targets**

The Croydon Renewal Improvement Plan performance framework is being developed to include targets for each of the MTFS savings. As these are finalised and agreed they will be included in this plan to ensure there is a single version of the truth for delivery.

It may be that through the course of its business, the CCIB identifies the need for a further subsets of performance indicators in order to enable it to monitor a particular activity, and this can be developed with the Performance Team.

## Equalities and Diversity

In order to deliver safe, quality, value for money services, it is crucial that children's services tackles inequalities experienced by children and young people in our borough. It will do this by using evidence to assess the issues and outcomes and then by putting plans in place to effect change and embed a consistent equalities-focused approach across all our services. Consequently, an additional principle, as set out in the Croydon Renewal Plan, has now been included in the set of principles set out above.

In order to make this principle a reality, the CCIB will do the following:

### **(i) Children and Young People**

- Embed a focus on equalities into the MTFS savings projects, looking at the outcomes and impact of the service on different groups of children and young people, in order to assess where there may be inequality. Through this focus, enabling the service to develop measures to tackle the causes and monitor progress on an ongoing basis into a business as usual activity.
- Champion positive examples of where inequality has been tackled across the service, how this was done and what can be learned.

### **(ii) Workforce**

#### **Children's Services Race Equality Review Board and Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion Board**

Following the report and action plan of the CSRERB, it is proposed that the CCIB keeps a watching brief on next steps and takes a twice yearly updates on progress from the proposed Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion Board and/or Race Equalities Review Board in relation to the CFE Workforce.

### **(iii) Partners**

Partners will also be invited to present examples of where equalities gaps are being bridged in the offer to children and young people, and where there are known issues and gaps which need addressing.

# 1. Medium Term Financial Strategy Savings and Growth

This section of the plan focuses on key projects in the Croydon Renewal Plan to reduce spend and live within our means whilst sustaining improvements in children's services to deliver the Medium Term Financial Strategy savings, as set out in the CFE Delivery Plan

1	Reduce Early Help Project Manager: Iain Low	MTFS Ref: CFE SAV 02						
<b>Project description</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with partners to identify opportunities to enhance service delivery through multi-agency working, use of partners' settings and building on locality services</li> <li>Reduce the Early Help offer to a targeted service that continues to provide step down from statutory CSC and contribute with our partners towards early intervention where this will prevent, delay or reduce the need for statutory services, and where not to do so would lead to a direct increase in cost.</li> <li>Reconfigure as a centralised integrated offer operating with a local footprint, retaining current functions on a reduced footprint e.g. family key worker interventions, parenting workers, domestic abuse and substance misuse specialists.</li> </ul>		<b>Savings identified £000s</b> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2021/22</th><th>2022/23</th><th>2023/24</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>424</td><td>185</td><td>0</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <b>Croydon Renewal Plan performance measures</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of Early Help cases closed that were stepped up to CSC (EH 9)</li> <li>Percentage of CSC referrals that were stepped down from CSC into Early Help (EH 25)</li> </ul>	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	424	185	0
2021/22	2022/23	2023/24						
424	185	0						

Ref	Actions	Owner	By when	Progress
1.1	Remove vacant posts	IL	01/04/21	complete
1.2	Work across the partnership to develop a revised Early Help offer : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-establish the Early Help Partnership Board</li> <li>Recruit an Early Help Programme Manager to lead and facilitate activity across partners</li> <li>Develop options for change</li> </ul>	IL	01/04/21 31/07/21 31/10/21	Complete In progress
1.3	Launch reorganisation options	IL	01/12/21	Not started
1.4	Implement new structure	IL	01/04/22	Not started



<b>2.</b>	<b>Review of Children with Disabilities care packages 0-17</b> <b>Project Manager: Rodica Cobarzan</b>	<b>MTFS Ref: CFE SAV 04</b>						
<b>Project description</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve social care for children with disabilities and their transition to adulthood</li> <li>Develop and implement new commissioning frameworks for frequently used provision e.g. home care, family support reducing spot purchasing of care</li> <li>Introduce new governance arrangements for the recording of provider costs and enforcement of disciplines for accurate forecasting and financial management</li> </ul>		<b>Savings identified £000s</b> <table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>2021/22</b></td><td><b>2022/23</b></td><td><b>2023/24</b></td></tr> <tr> <td>126.4</td><td>126.4</td><td>126.4</td></tr> </table> <p><b>Croydon Renewal Plan performance measure</b> Percentage of Children in Need who had review on time (those allocated to CWD teams) (CIN 7)</p>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	126.4	126.4	126.4
<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>						
126.4	126.4	126.4						

Ref	Actions	Owner	By when	Progress
<b>2.1</b>	Establish a review team led by a Head of Service to systematically and rapidly review all open cases 0-25	RB	01/04/21	complete
<b>2.2</b>	Repeat exercise in 2.1 in 2021/22	RC	30/09/2021 and 31/03/22	Not started
<b>2.3</b>	Update Policies and Protocols Review and update the following: a. Eligibility Criteria 0-17 and 18-25 b. Short Breaks Statement and Policy c. Family Support Strategy d. Transition Protocol	RC, OC	June 2021	Completed
<b>2.4</b>	Review Calleydown Respite Unit to ensure it is offering quality and value for money- Transformation funding agreed.	RC	01/08/2021	In progress



2.5	Recommission value for money Family Support Services from the market	PB, MW	01/04/2021	Complete
2.6	Review of current short break provision to inform commissioning intentions for 2021 and beyond and agree next steps	PB,MW	01/09/2021	In progress
2.7	Procurement of a Framework for home/personal care provision for 0-17 and 18-25 respectively is being developed, aiming for implementation by end of calendar year	PB,MW	01/01/2022	In progress
2.8	Review end to end business processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further development and implement ContrOCC for child/YP and carer related payments</li> <li>• Review &amp; Improve CSC Child Payment Processes &amp; Flows</li> <li>• Develop the financial role, responsibility and capacity of Business Support across CSC (and EH)</li> <li>• Improve the CWD service's Financial Recording processes &amp; management oversight</li> </ul>	ST, RC	01/04/2022	In progress

3.	<b>Reducing the Spend on Children in Care</b> <b>Project Manager: Shaun Hanks</b>	MTFS Ref: CFE SAV 05						
<b>Project description</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing the numbers of children in care by systematically reviewing cases, looking at where children currently in care may be able to be safely placed at home or with wider family with the right support mechanisms in place</li> <li>• Reducing placement costs in order to ensure best value, with a new accommodation strategy to underpin this</li> <li>• Undertaking a thorough review of our payments systems and processes to ensure that providers are paid on time to maximise value for money to foster strong relationships with providers and maximise choice and buying power in the market</li> <li>• In addition, a one-off investment to right size the budget in 2021/22</li> </ul>		<b>Savings identified £000s</b> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2021/22</th><th>2022/23</th><th>2023/24</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>794</td><td>1,654</td><td>1,385</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <b>Croydon Renewal Plan performance measure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of local CLA (CLA 3)</li> <li>• Rate of local CLA per 10,000 under 18 population (CLA 2a)</li> </ul>	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	794	1,654	1,385
2021/22	2022/23	2023/24						
794	1,654	1,385						

Ref	Actions	Owner	By when	Progress
3.1	<p>Continue to reduce the numbers by gatekeeping entry to care, diverting from care and reviewing and reuniting where safe to do so</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Care Panel to gate keep entry to care, with multiple approval points to reduce expenditure</li> <li>Care Review Panel to review high cost placements, and agree targeted support to return children home from care</li> <li>Children's Continuous Improvement Board, independently chaired providing assurance on sustained service quality</li> </ul>	<p>RM</p> <p>SH</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Complete</p>
3.2	<p>Smarter commissioning and procurement underpinned by benchmarking and financial modelling based on the cohort and population analyses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial modelling to underpin accommodation strategy</li> <li>Accommodation strategy, commissioning plan and procurement timetable agreed, including cross-Council</li> <li>Procurement plan commences</li> </ul>	PB	<p>31/03/21</p> <p>30/06/21</p> <p>30/09/21</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>In progress</p>
3.3	<p>Systems, business processes and payments including integrated case recording and finance system, oversight of payments processes, improved end-to-end across dept. and council (placement, non-placement and staffing spend)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further development and implement ContrOCC for child/YP and carer related payments</li> <li>Review &amp; Improve CSC Child Payment Processes &amp; Flows</li> <li>Develop the financial role, responsibility and capacity of Business Support across CSC (and EH)</li> <li>Improve the Leaving Care Service's Financial Recording &amp; Oversight</li> </ul>	ST/SH	<p>June 2021</p> <p>Ongoing (started March 2021)</p> <p>Process in place – Oct 2021</p>	<p>In progress</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In progress</p>

<b>4.</b>	<b>Review Support for Young People who are Appeal Rights Exhausted</b> <b>Project manager: James Moore</b>	<b>MTFS Ref: CFE SAV 0</b>						
<b>Project description</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appeal Rights Exhausted (ARE) describes a person whose request for asylum or immigration application has been refused, and who has made all of the appeals that they are allowed to make without any success.</li> <li>As at 31/10/20 60 young people were being supported by children's services with no grant income. A needs-based approach to withdrawing services to young people who are ARE is proposed, alongside earlier, robust triple planning with unaccompanied minors as part of the pathway plan completed for all children looked after aged 16+.</li> </ul>		<b>Savings identified £000s</b> <table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>2021/22</b></td><td><b>2022/23</b></td><td><b>2023/24</b></td></tr> <tr> <td>295</td><td>560</td><td>142</td></tr> </table> <b>Croydon Renewal Plan performance measure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Net current expenditure on Appeals Rights Exhausted</li> <li>Number of young people who have Appeals Rights Exhausted</li> </ul>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	295	560	142
<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>						
295	560	142						

Ref	Actions	Owner	By when	Progress
4.1	HRA Training for staff- Training for staff to complete Human Rights Assessments to provide assurance that support can be safely removed	JM	March 21	Complete
4.2	For all new young people conduct triple planning if they are at risk of ARE	JM	April 21 and ongoing	In progress
4.3	Undertake in-depth analysis on a case by case basis to get a current list of ARE CYP for April,	JM	May 21	complete
4.4	Work to reduce the amount spent on accommodation, reducing the number of houses paid for by bringing places together, and reducing the void down to 15%.	JM and SC	April 21 and ongoing	In progress

<b>5.</b>	<b>Improving Efficiency in the Practice System</b> <b>Project Manager: Roisin Madden</b>	<b>MTFS Ref: CFE SAV 07</b>						
<b>Project description</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To tackle the legacy of poor practice additional staff were recruited to reduce social workers' caseloads taking these to below both London and national averages. Focused work to improve the quality of day to day practice was effective, as noted in the 2020 inspection.</li> <li>Caseloads will now be gradually increased over 2021-23 to an average of 17. Heads of service will manage and monitor the increase closely to balance continuity of care for children and their families and manageable workloads for individual staff with the need to address the financial challenge for the service.</li> <li>Assistant team managers were appointed to larger teams of social workers to increase management direction and grip on casework and support the introduction of the systemic practice model across the whole service. As the service moves into an improved steady state this cohort will be reconfigured over 2022-24. The timing will ensure that the increase in caseloads is carefully supported and managed at the front line, and that risks are appropriately identified and held</li> </ul>		<b>Savings identified £000s</b> <table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>2021/22</b></td><td><b>2022/23</b></td><td><b>2023/24</b></td></tr> <tr> <td>1,065</td><td>1,450</td><td>385</td></tr> </table> <b>Croydon Renewal Plan performance measure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average Caseload by worker- by service area</li> </ul>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	1,065	1,450	385
<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>						
1,065	1,450	385						

Ref	Actions	Owner	By when	Progress
<b>5.1</b>	Develop a modelling tool for caseloads	JF	April 21	Complete
<b>5.2</b>	Gather workforce finance data to work up scenarios across the service,	SS	June 21	In progress
<b>5.3</b>	Consult and comms with service managers	RM	July 21	Not Started
<b>5.4</b>	Develop a timetable for implementing changes	RM	July 21	Not started

<b>6.</b>	<b>Review Children's Centres Delivery Model</b> <b>Project Manager: Debby MacCormack</b>	<b>MTFS Ref: CFE SAV 09</b>						
<b>Project description</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Redesign the children's centre delivery model and contracts from by December 2021</li> <li>Re-commission Best Start services</li> <li>The proposed delivery by December 2021 consists of 3 designated Children's Centre Hubs with spokes covering the North, South and Central localities. Services will be available to families across the borough with delivery prioritised in areas where there is the most need.</li> <li>Consultation responses will be taken into consideration when the final model is taken to Cabinet for approval. Any changes to the model will be within the funding envelope</li> </ul>		<b>Savings identified £000s</b> <table border="1"> <tr> <th>2021/22</th><th>2022/23</th><th>2023/24</th></tr> <tr> <td>660</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> <b>Croydon Renewal Plan performance measure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of children accessing children's centre services</li> <li>Number of children living in most deprived areas accessing children's centre services</li> </ul>	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	660		
2021/22	2022/23	2023/24						
660								

Ref	Actions	Owner	By when	Progress
6.1	Agree in-year savings approach with Children's Centre Headteachers	SD, DM	11/2020	Complete
6.2	Review and identify delivery options to reconfigure children's centres to hub & spoke model based on a locality footprint	SH, DM	31/03/21	Complete
6.3	Launch public consultation – extended to 20/06/2021	DM	04/06/21	In progress
6.4	Full Cabinet to agree children's centres strategy	SD	31/08/21	Not started
6.5	Procurement of new provision completed <i>Contracts awarded 20.09.21</i> <i>Mobilisation and TUPE transfer 21.09.21-22.10.21</i>	DM, SH	Sept-Nov 2021	In consultation
6.6	Implement new delivery model	DM, SH	Dec 21	

<b>7</b>	<b>SEND Strategy - support inclusion and access to local provision</b> <b>Project Manager: Kathy Roberts</b>	<b>MTFS Ref: CFE GRO 04</b>						
<b>Project description</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This one-off investment is in line with the Dedicated Schools Grant Deficit Recovery Plan and aims to inject pace to how quickly the deficit can be recovered.</li> <li>Inclusion support for schools and early intervention will ensure the Council is meeting its statutory duties and the needs of our pupils through the delivery of the 0 – 25 SEND strategy, efficiently and effectively and with a continued focus on securing the best outcome for children and their families.</li> </ul>		<b>Savings identified £000s</b> <table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>2021/22</b></td><td><b>2022/23</b></td><td><b>2023/24</b></td></tr> <tr> <td>866</td><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr> </table> <b>Croydon Renewal Plan performance measures</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under development at SEND strategic Board;</li> <li>To focus on increase in children attending in-borough mainstream schools and caseloads for EHCP workers</li> </ul>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	866	0	0
<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>						
866	0	0						

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By when</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<b>7.1</b>	Recruit additional locality-based 0-25 SEN staff to increase capacity to complete EHCP annual reviews	KR	July 2021	In progress
<b>7.2</b>	Recruit Local Offer website content and communication manager to ensure up to date advice and signposting to parents and carers	KR	July 2021	In progress
<b>7.3</b>	Recruit locality-based SEN Support in Mainstream Schools (Inclusion project) Teachers	KR	July 2021	in progress

## 2. Practice priorities – Early Help & Children’s Social Care

This section of the plan focuses on the priorities for improvement in early help and children’s social care practice. It addresses the recommendations of the ILACS inspection March 2020 as well as improvement priorities identified through the Windows into Practice cycle of performance management and quality assurance. It also includes actions in response to the June 2021 Ofsted Focused Visit. Progress against the priorities will be reviewed as part of Windows into Practice. Priorities and key activities will be kept under review and adjusted, for example as a result of further focused visits from Ofsted or external reviews commissioned by the department.

Ref	Priorities and key activity	Delivered through	Lead (s)	By when	Success measures impact for children, young people and families
<b>1</b>	<b>Identify and reduce risks to vulnerable children &amp; young people</b>				
<b>1.1</b>	<b>Responses to homeless 16 &amp; 17 year olds</b> Improve our response to homeless 16 & 17 year olds including assessment of their needs and emergency housing (section 20 and section 17) <b>[Ofsted ILACS recommendation]</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commission appropriate emergency and longer term accommodation for 16 &amp; 17 year olds</li> <li>Work with young people to consider how they want to lead on their CiN Reviews when offered housing through S17</li> <li>Test the impact of practice through dip sampling/audit activity</li> </ul>	✓ Access, Support and Intervention Service Plan	IL	30/09/21	16 & 17 year olds at risk of becoming homeless are supported to stay at home safely. Where this can’t happen we work with young people to secure a safe home
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Responses to children in care at risk of exploitation or going missing.</b> 1.2.1 Develop and implement a whole service approach to improve the response for children in care at risk of exploitation or going missing. To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embedding the Contextual Safeguarding Framework and Risk Exploitation tool</li> </ul>	✓ Adolescent support team plan & service plans	SH	30/09/21	Children and young people in care who may be at risk of exploitation benefit from robust risk assessments and





	<p>b) Produce practice guidance outlining the rationale and process for tracking vulnerable care leavers and share across the workforce.</p> <p>c) Test the impact of practice through programmed quality assurance activity- include a specific audit on homeless and care leavers to the Windows into Practice audit plan in addition to the bi-monthly case audits.</p>	<p>✓ SWwCLA &amp; CL service plan</p> <p>✓ Windows into Practice audit plan</p>	<p>SH</p> <p>KC</p>	<p>31/10/21</p> <p>31/12/21</p>	<p>receive well-coordinated responses that reduce the harm or risk of harm to them.</p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Co-produced plans, language and recording</b></p> <p><b>Improve the quality of written plans for children in need, children in care and care leavers</b>  <i>[Ofsted ILACS recommendation]</i></p>				
<b>2.1</b>	<p><b>Continue our work over the last year to raise the quality of Child in Need plans to ensure:</b></p> <p>a) Plans are SMART with clear tasks, responsibilities, next steps and timescales</p> <p>b) More plans are written with children and families, in accessible child and family-friendly language</p> <p>c) Test the impact on practice through the Windows into Practice case audit programme</p>	<p>✓ Social Work Academy Practice Improvement Plan</p>	<p>RM</p>	<p>31/03/22</p>	<p>Quality assurance activities show majority of planning judged good or better across child in need, care and pathway plans</p> <p>Children in need and their families benefit from purposeful planning informed by creative direct work which supports more children and young people to remain safely within their families</p>
<b>2.2</b>	<p><b>Continue to raise the quality of plans for children in care and care leavers to ensure:</b></p> <p>a) Plans are specific about risks, vulnerabilities and actions that will be taken to reduce risks</p> <p>b) Plans are specific about health and emotional wellbeing needs and supporting actions</p>	<p>✓ Social Work Academy Practice Improvement Plan</p>	<p>RM</p>	<p>31/03/22</p>	<p>Children's care and pathway plans comprehensively address their needs and experiences, including the need for timely permanence.</p>

2.3	c) Plans are written with young people in language they can understand d) Test the impact on practice through the Windows into Practice case audit programme	✓ Social Work Academy Practice Improvement Plan	RM	31/03/22	They are thoroughly and independently reviewed with the involvement, as appropriate, of parents, carers, residential staff and other adults who know them. Plans for their futures continue to be appropriate and ambitious
	<b>Improve the consistency of Life Story Work</b>  Ensure every child in Croydon's care is supported to understand their history and identity through creative life story work				
	<b>Child and family friendly language</b> Continue to ensure all written communication with children and families, including pre-proceedings and PLO letters, is written in accessible child and family-friendly language				
2.4		✓ QA Service Plan	DW	31/03/22	Children and young people co-produce their life stories, supported by skilled practitioners using a range of creative tools
2.5	<b>Recording</b> Continue our work with staff across the service, with the CFS team and CDS to improve the ease of recording case work and management oversight -	✓ CFS service plan	ST	31/03/22	Plans, letters and notes are accessible to children and their families, avoiding jargon and making the contents clear and unambiguous
3.	<b>Service development and improvement</b>				
3.1	<b>Develop and implement a new approach to referrals at the Single Point of Contact (SPOC)</b>		IL	30/11/21	Children and young people benefit from timely and

3.2	<p>a) Develop and implement a revised SPOC where all contacts are responded to through conversations with referrers (Thorpe Model).</p> <p>b) Merge the current EDT with the SPOC</p> <p><b>Develop and embed the brief intervention ‘Supporting Croydon Families’ Service</b></p> <p>a) Ensure a comprehensive professional development offer is in place to support staff across the service to implement the change supported by the Clinical team</p> <p>b) Ensure feedback from Managers and practitioners continues to refine and improve the operating model</p>	<p>✓ Access, Support and Intervention Service Plan</p> <p>✓ Access, Support and Intervention Service Plan</p> <p>✓ Workforce Development service plan</p>	IL	30/11/21	transparent decision making and are supported by practitioners who receive regular reflective supervision.
	<p><b>3.3 Simplify access to services to children with disabilities</b>, including:</p> <p>a) a shortbreaks pathway</p> <p>b) a diverse family support offer</p> <p>c) locality based working</p>	<p>✓ CWD Service plan</p>			
	<p><b>3.4 Clinical services</b></p> <p>a) The Croydon Family Therapy Academy, has been created within the clinical service, delivering courses for the first time at practitioner and supervisor level. Following the completion of these courses, the Academy will be seeking AFT (Association of Family Therapy) accreditation.</p> <p>b) Review the current commissioned EWMH parenting programmes to provide support and early intervention aligned with the whole-</p>	<p>✓ Systemic and Clinical Services service plan</p>			
			RC	30/11/21	Children with disabilities and their families access tailored support when they need it.
			RM	31/12/21	Practitioners are equipped to meet the EWMH needs of children, swiftly drawing on specialist advice and input where needed.

	system review of early help and to achieve best value and quality, including consideration of delivering the services in-house.				
3.5	<b>Family Group Conference</b> Support as many families as possible through the Family Group Conference co-ordinators or through a family meetings supported by the systemic team, with the aim of ensuring that families and wider networks of care are supported to find safe solutions, to provide care for children.	✓ Children's Commissioning Service Plan  ✓ SWwF service plan	PB  RC	31/10/21  31/12/21	More children are supported to stay with their families and extended families where this is safe to do so, entering formal care as a last resort.
3.6	<b>Young Croydon</b>  Re-launch Young Croydon bringing together: the Youth Offending Service, Youth Engagement and the Adolescent Service. Working with young people in Croydon to provide a broad range of individual support at home, school, and in community settings.  Explore, agree and implement multi-agency working options with partners in relation to adolescents, with preferred the options being developed to sit within the SPOC	✓ Access, Support and Intervention Service Plan	IL	31/12/21	Early help improves the child's situation and supports sustainable progress
3.7	<b>Early Help</b>  Develop and deliver a revised partnership service delivery model for Early Help, reshaping the offer across children's services to deliver sustainable, good services to children, young people and their families	✓ Croydon Early Help Change Programme	RC	31/12/21	
3.8	<b>Transition into adulthood</b> Improve on our work to prepare children and young people for adulthood, including children and young people who have additional needs. Our work	✓ SWwCWD service plan	RC	31/03/21	Children with disabilities move towards independence at a pace that is right for them, developing the skills and confidence they need to maximise their chances of

	<p>with young people needs to support a seamless transition to Adult Social care or other pathway services our young people might require. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work collaboratively with the ASC lead to design the new transitions service, including effective 14+ transition planning including:</li> <li>• Agree a seamless transition protocol for disabled young people moving from CSC to ASC</li> <li>• Hold monthly transition meetings to ensure SEND and ASC are involved in decision making and prepared to support young people are underway and would need to be strengthen.</li> </ul>				<p>successful maturity to adulthood.</p> <p>Children receive the right level of practical, emotional and financial support with a seamless transition into support from adult services where appropriate.</p>
3.9	<p><b>Trauma Informed Practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3.10.1 Support and embed trauma informed practice through training of staff and culture change to recognise the impact of trauma on children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. Embed this across CLA, Leaving Care and UASC practice.</li> <li>• 3.10.2 Ensure that children's social care are active participants in the Mental Health Priority Group of the CSCP.</li> </ul>	✓ Quality Assurance service plan	DW	31/03/21	<p>Social workers recognise the factors that can make children more vulnerable and tailor their interventions appropriately</p>
3.10	<p><b>The Voice of the child</b></p> <p>Establish a Child's Voice and Participation Working Group to share best practice, identify gaps and ensure that action is taken on children and young people's priorities in a timely way across the department</p>	✓ Windows into Practice Quality Assurance plan	KC	31/07/21	<p>Practice is informed and sustainably improved by feedback, research and intelligence about the quality of services drawing directly on the experiences of children, young people and families who use them</p>

<b>4.</b>	<b>Workforce Development</b>				
<b>4.1</b>	Maintain a responsive, agile learning and development offer that supports the continuous improvement plan, provides an exciting, innovative entry and career progression pathway for early help and children's social care and is informed by practice improvement priorities identified through quality assurance activities	✓ Social Work Academy Practice Improvement Plan	RM	31/03/22	Children and families benefit from well-supported practitioners who have the tools and capacity to provide consistently good services
<b>4.2.</b>	Build a sustainable CPD offer, prioritising the development of practice champions, commissioning training that includes a train the trainer element and maximising the use of digital options to record and disseminate specialist training so that the service gets maximum value for money	✓ Family Therapy Academy Service Plan			Effective organisational support for the training and professional development of social workers and managers and the quality of their practice improves the lives of vulnerable children, young people and families
<b>4.3</b>	Receive bi-annual updates relating to CFE workforce equalities from the new planned Equalities Diversity and Inclusion Board	✓ CFE Race Equality Review Draft Action Plan	DJ	31/12/21	Ensure that a focus on equalities in relation to the children's workforce is maintained by the Board
<b>5.</b>	<b>Ofsted Focused Visit- Early Help and the Front Door (June 2021)</b>				
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Work with the police to ensure adherence to the statutory safeguarding guidance</b> [Ofsted Focused Visit draft area for improvement ] <p>(i) Key statutory partners consider examples of single-agency action to understand the context and drivers</p> <p>(ii) Working together:</p>	✓ Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP)	EB, DJ	31/07/21	Effective partnership work to ensure that children and young people are safe and suffer no undue stress as actions taken by partners to keep them safe consistently adhere to the statutory safeguarding guidelines



	<p>(a) Children's social care, school and police reviewing actions and timeline for the case identified by Ofsted- outcome of review to be shared with partners</p> <p>(b) Service managers from Children's social care attending police safeguarding training (Jonathan Lung, Veronica Leigh, Acting DI Paul Smith)</p> <p>(c) Children's Social Care and Police agreeing protocols for young people in police stations (Inspector Mark Sexton, Veronica Leigh, Iain Low, Jonathan Lung)</p> <p>(iii) Draft guidance to enable a shared understanding of and commitment to working within the statutory safeguarding guidance in day to day practice</p> <p>(iv) Guidance to be disseminated and embedded into frontline practice across the partnership through practice workshops, seminars and briefings as appropriate</p>	✓ Ofsted focused visit action plan		<p>19/07/21</p> <p>22/07/21</p> <p>Initial meeting 05/08/21</p> <p>30/09/21</p> <p>31/10/21</p>	
<b>5.2</b>	<p><b>The effectiveness of the emergency duty team in terms of response times and quality of practice</b> [Ofsted Focused Visit draft area for improvement ]</p> <p>(i) A robust urgent response to the challenge to the EDT Consultation.</p> <p>(ii) Identify a standalone contact (telephone) solution for referrals into EDT.</p> <p>(iii) Implement the changes from the consultation: - EDT SWs based in BWH.</p>	✓ Ofsted Focused Visit Action Plan		<p>31/07/21</p> <p>30/09/21 (TBC)</p>	All children who need it receive timely help and protection no matter what time of day it is

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Removal of Back Ups SW resource.</li> <li>- Review of EDT Practice Standards</li> <li>- CPD Programme for EDT SWs.</li> </ul> <p>(iv) Consider Team Manager resource for the service</p>			(TBC)	
<b>5.3</b>	<p><b>The quality, frequency and effectiveness of supervision</b> [Ofsted Focused Visit draft area for improvement ]</p> <p>(i) Design and implement a Practice Improvement Programme across all services, working with supervising managers to enable a consistent offer of enhanced supervision- including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• succinct recording of reflective supervision conversations,</li> <li>• demonstrable evidence of challenge, and follow up on previous discussion,</li> <li>• recording professional curiosity and</li> <li>• A focus on neglect including how it manifests and the role of chronologies in the identification of chronic neglect</li> <li>• Review the level of management oversight of families repeatedly referred</li> <li>• Link with supervision recording on CRS to make it easy to record, building on previous work</li> </ul> <p>Programme to be delivered through a series of workshops with Heads of Service and Practice Improvement team involved.</p> <p>(ii) Neglect to be the focus for the October bi-monthly Windows into Practice case audits.</p>	<p>✓ Ofsted Focused Visit Action Plan</p>	RM, with CD	<p>31/08/21</p> <p>31/10/21</p> <p>31/10/21</p>	<p>All children, including those who may be living with chronic neglect, benefit from social workers whose supervision enables them to develop their professional curiosity, contingency planning and alternative ways of working</p>