



Devon Children's Services
Improvement Plan
April 2023 - March 2024

Summary

The Devon Improvement Partnership Board was stood up by the Department for Education in 2020 in response to an Inadequate rating from Ofsted for Children’s Social Care Services.

In March 2023 the Board agreed to reset its focus and approach so as to:

- clarify and create shared understanding of the role and purpose of the Board, particularly with new system leaders and Board members
- create the conditions for Board meetings to focus on key outcomes and associated actions
- create partnership priorities, outcomes and actions to become part of the Devon Children’s Services Improvement Plan.

The role of the Board is to direct, prioritise, measure and hold accountability for the Improvement Plan and the Devon improvement journey.

As part of this reset, we have created an updated strategic-level Improvement Plan which incorporates:

- actions for the Devon County Council Children’s Services which have been developed by the Senior Leadership Team through knowledge, data and understanding; and through the operational work of the Children’s Services Heads of Service
- actions for Devon County Council corporate services which are created and governed through a regular strategic Quality Performance and Review Meeting
- actions for the Improvement partners including social care, education, health and police which are developed and governed through the Improvement Partnership Board.

Key outcomes

“I feel safe, supported and loved.”

“I only need to tell my story once.”

“I want to feel like I belong where I live, and my friends and family can support me.”

“I have some control over my life. I understand why decisions are being made and I’m confident that you understand my life.”

“My voice – however I am able to communicate – is heard and recorded.”

“Everyone involved in supporting me works well together so that I get the right help in the right way at the right time.”

Key priorities

- Develop and improve front door and MASH services.
- Develop and improve Early Help support.
- Ensure a permanent, stable and skilled strategic and tactical leadership for Children’s Services.
- Embed consistent understanding and use of Restorative Practice values across all professionals.

Key actions

- Agree a joint vision for childhood in Devon.
- Create a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.
- Launch an embed a focused and effective auditing approach.
- Develop joint strategies and approaches to support children and young people with complex needs.

Purpose and approach

Our purpose

We care about all children and young people in Devon, they are our future. We are ambitious for our children and young people. In recognising our role as corporate parents, we look at what we and our partners do through the lens of *'Would this be good enough for my child?'*

Our purpose focuses on our relationship with our children and families, and our ambition for every child in Devon to get the right help, at the right time from the right person

Our approach

We aspire to provide consistently Good, or better, services to children and their families, and we recognise that we have considerable work to do to achieve this. This plan explains the strategic action we will take over the next 12 months, and how this will build on the work and learning we have already undertaken. This plan is dynamic and will be updated as we continue to learn and make progress.

We have four priority areas which inform the strategic improvement plan, then feed into and inform our service delivery plans which inform our supervision and appraisal work. This creates a golden thread which connects the strategic and operational actions directly to the impact on children and families. (*Appendix 1*)

Governance and decision making

We have a governance structure which gives clarity on where decisions are made. We will use knowledge, data and understanding effectively to make and record evidence-based decisions. (*Appendix 1*)

Learning

We are working to create a learning organisation where we have safe and supportive conditions for everyone at every level to learn and develop. We will put in place systems and structures which support learning, including our use of data and how we share learning across services and across the organisation.

Principles, Behaviours and Restorative Practice

DCC Core Principles and Behaviours

We want to unlock the potential of individuals, teams and the organisation through embedding core principles and behaviours to increase our effectiveness to do what matters for the people of Devon. They are a fundamental part of our overall approach to becoming an anti-racist learning organisation; committed to continually evolving, learning and transforming so that we can deliver the best possible services for the people of Devon. Our principles and behaviours have been developed by a diverse group of staff from across the council, including our leaders, managers and staff from all service areas.

Restorative Practice

Restorative Devon is a co-ordinated programme of work, funded by Devon County Council, and the DfE to embed restorative values and practice as a whole system approach. In our practice framework we have integrated the core values of restorative practice alongside motivational interviewing as a practical skill for supporting positive changes in family life, blended with concepts from systemic theory that support practitioners in managing risk and uncertainty.

Our practice framework was designed by practitioners to articulate the core values that we believe support good outcomes for children – relational practice, which shows respect to colleagues and families, encourages resilience and responsibility, and is reflective in nature.

Children's Services



Our Core Principles

What we focus on

Our core principles outline what we expect from our organisation and the way we work. They lead to clarity on purpose and direction and help us to create a culture of learning.

Intent

We are committed to being a child-friendly Devon, where all children and young people are safe, healthy, ambitious, and can fulfil their potential

Learning

Create conditions to feel safe to learn by doing, testing and reflecting

Clarity

Seek and create clarity for ourselves and each other

Culture

Developing a restorative culture where practitioners feel safe and supported to co-produce collective outcomes and deliver good practice

Honest and productive conversations

Share what we are thinking and why



Professional skills

Our professional knowledge and skills are the qualifications, experience and expertise we have acquired; they inform our thinking, approach and decisions.

Our Core Behaviours

Who we are

Our core behaviours outline how we should act and behave in our work and in our interactions with others. They are described in terms of expectations and impact.



Generous

Create the conditions to enable learning and promote development and growth



Curious

Learn from people, data, technology and the things around you



Inspiring

Create the conditions for yourself and others to try new things, challenge, ask questions and make good decisions



Committed

Do what you say you are going to do



Authentic

Be real, genuine, sincere, and true to yourself



Respectful

Act with kindness and compassion; appreciate and value differences; learn, collaborate and embrace change

Our Restorative Practices

How we support children and families

The five R's outline how we work together with children and families to achieve positive and lasting change in their lives.



1. Relational

We develop trusted, caring and collaborative relationships.

2. Respect

We respect children and families by being inclusive, participatory and honest

3. Responsibility

We take professional responsibility by being well-informed and risk-aware, while empowering families to have responsibility

4. Resilience

We build resilience by understanding and repairing trauma, while remaining patient and professionally curious to get to the heart of issues that families experience

5. Reflective

We reflect on our relationships and practice making sure we are flexible, responsive and outcomes-focused

Our priority outcome areas

We recognise that there is a lot of work to do to improve across a range of areas. Our priority outcome areas help us to focus on key areas, and to prioritise and align our actions at a strategic and operational level.

Change

Our children, young people and families have their voices heard and their preferences and wishes recorded and met wherever possible. We work with children and families to create their own plans, to improve the way that we deliver services and to achieve the best outcomes for children that we can.

Leadership

We have effective leadership and management creating system-wide high ambitions and expectations for all children and young people. Every manager and leader shares in the responsibility for creating good services for children through effective oversight and strong partnership working, and works to create a culture which values learning from quality assurance and continuous improvement.

Engagement

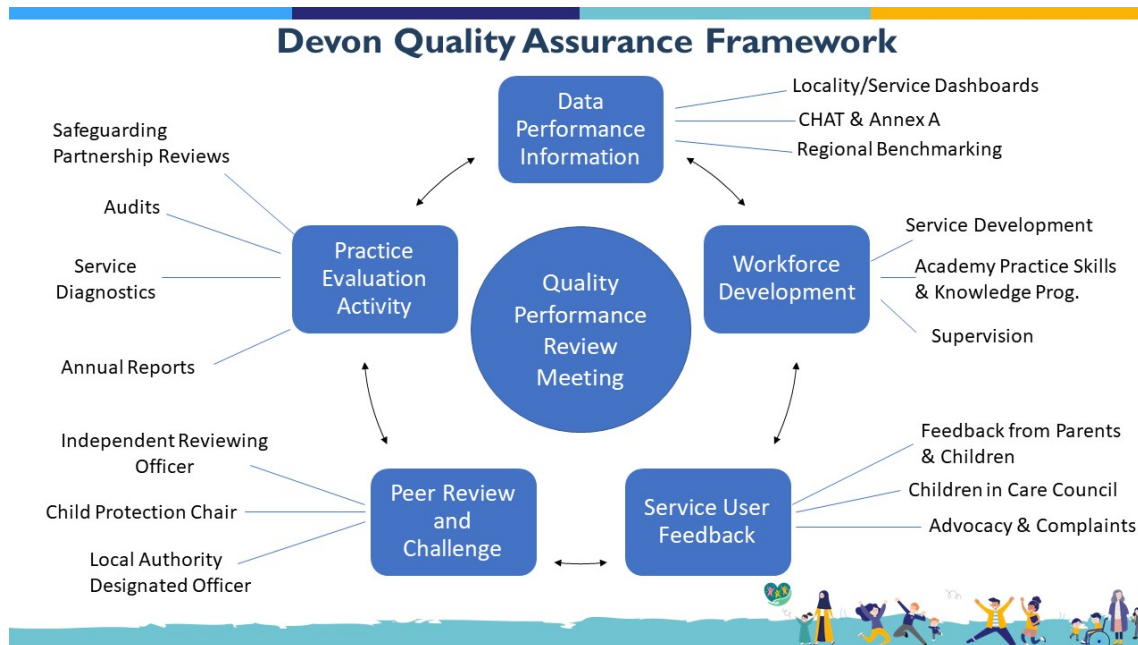
We consistently work restoratively to support families to create sustainable changes that lead to good outcomes for children. We invest in the development of practitioners and managers, so that they are confident and skilled in their ability to work restoratively with families and share a common language and values in a culture which supports relational practice.

Workforce

We have a stable, highly skilled, and permanent workforce which is key to our relational approach to practice. We invest in our workforce to achieve stability and a safe and positive place to work for everyone. We support continuous professional development.

Our Frameworks

Our **Quality Assurance Framework** will provide a clear line of sight to the lived experience of children and the impact of the help that we provide.



The **Learning and Improvement Framework** brings together quality assurance, performance and the voice of children, families, and the workforce into a continuous cycle of improvement. The learning and improvement framework will strengthen the involvement of the workforce in shaping the service, improving practice and outcomes for children.

A quarterly review of the self-assessment will measure the impact of the improvement strategy and review the improvement priorities.

Learning and Improvement Framework



1. Audits

- Monthly Audits
- Thematic Audits
- Dip Sampling.

3. Performance

- KPI high level dashboard
- CLST Dashboard
- Live snapshots and tracking

5. Internal Peer Reviews

- Deep dive into service areas/themes
- Preparation for inspection
- Appreciative enquires
- Rapid Reviews

2. Voice

- Feedback from Children and Families
- Complaints
- Feedback from the workforce and partner agencies

4. Practice Weeks

- Quarterly
- Thematic
- Elected Member, senior leadership and partner involvement

6. Impact and Outcomes

- Quarterly overview report
- Refreshed self assessment/plan
- Communications - 'you said, we did.'

Measures and outcomes

Our measures and targets have been developed by looking at our data and knowledge, our statistical neighbours and the national average for England. They will help us to monitor key elements of our service, and to understand which actions are improving our service and where we need to change our approach. We will use this to report progress through the Improvement Partnership Board, Devon Children and Families Partnership Board and to DCC Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

These measures form a part of our Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) along with workforce development, service user feedback, peer review and challenge, and practice evaluation. The QAF comes together in reflective, monthly Quality Performance Review Meetings. Monthly thematic audits, dip sampling and practice observations inform the practice evaluation. The audit process will

increasingly seek to involve children, young people and their families in the evaluation of practice and the impact that it has.

Change

Our children, young people and families have their voices heard and their preferences and wishes recorded and met wherever possible.

	Indicator	Baseline April 2023	Where we are now	Target April 2024
Quality Assurance	% of audits rated good or better in:			
	Children in need and Child Protection services	TBD	From May 2023	70%
	Children in care services	TBD	From May 2023	70%
	Care Experienced Young People Services	TBD	From May 2023	70%
	% of audits with feedback from families	TBD	From May 2023	80%

Outcomes

- The views and experience of children, young people and their families are clearly evidenced in our Quality Assurance Framework, giving us greater understanding of how to improve services in a way which really makes a difference for children
- We have clear evidence in our audits that our practice is making a positive impact for vulnerable children.
- We consistently capture feedback in every service which tells us whether children, young people and families are having a better experience with our services. We use this feedback to improve our practice.

Leadership

We have effective leadership and management creating system-wide high ambitions and expectations for all children and young people.

	Indicator	Baseline April 2023	Where we are we now	Target April 2024
Quality and Timeliness of Practice	% of referrals which are repeat referrals	19%		19%
	% S47s that progress to ICPC	25%		35%
	% initial assessments with outcome Case to Close	41%		38%
	% of initial assessments completed in 45 days	85%		90%

Child Protection	% ICPCs completed within 15 days of S47	94%		95%
	% of children subject to CPP for 2 years +	2%		2%
	% children starting a CP plan who have been subject to a previous CP plan	28%		25%
Children in Care	% of CIC with an up to date health assessment	90%		95%
	% of CIC with a permanence plan	92%		95%
	% of CIC with an up to date visit	86%		90%
	% children who had three or more placements in the year	14%		10%
	Number of under 16s in unregistered accommodation	5		0
Care Experienced	% Care Leavers in Touch	93%		95%
	% Care Leavers in suitable Accommodation	80%		90%
	% Care Leavers in EET	47%		60%
	% of Pathway plans up to date	83%		90%

Outcomes

- A high number of children are protected from harm because families are offered the right help, the first time they need it, and at the most collaborative level of intervention.
- We have high quality management oversight and reflection which clearly contributes to good outcomes for children.
- Children and young people in our care, or leaving our care, are healthy, feel safe and reach their full potential.
- Staff work in a system designed to minimise bureaucracy, ensuring they are able to spend the majority of their time supporting children and families.
- Staff have access to accurate and timely data which helps to build a learning organisation and focuses on continuous improvement for children.

Engagement

We consistently work restoratively to support families to create sustainable changes that lead to good outcomes for children.

	Indicator	Baseline April 2023	Where are we now	Target April 2024

Number of children/young people supported per 10,000	Referrals to children's social care (per 10,000)	392		450
	Section 47 enquiries (per 10,000)	222		190
	ICPCs (per 10,000)	71		58
	Children who are the subject of a child protection plan at period end (per 10,000)	42		40
	Initial Assessments completed in the period (per 10,000)	391		425
	Children looked after at period end (per 10,000)	58		56
	Rate of children in need at point in time (per 10,000)	281		280
	CiC starts (per 10,000)	33		25
	CiC ends (per 10,000)	16		25

Outcomes

- Our culture is shaped by our core Principles and Behaviours and our Restorative Values; creating an environment where practitioners work with families in a high support and high challenge approach.
- Our children have the right support in the right way at the right time. So that most of our children are safely reunified with their family through skilled intervention and fewer children are subject to Child Protection Plans and are in care.
- We consistently use best practice and evidence-informed models which are aligned with Restorative Practice and support good outcomes for children.

Workforce

We have a stable, highly skilled, and permanent workforce which is key to our relational approach to practice.

	Indicator	Baseline April 2023	Where are we now	Target April 2024
Workforce	% FTE Agency worker rate	42.6		37.5
	Average caseloads	16		16

Outcomes

- Children and families have stable relationships with practitioners who know them well because of a Recruitment and Retention Strategy to improve the stability and well-being of the workforce.
- Practitioners have development opportunities, and are skilled, trusted and empowered to practice in creative ways which in turn supports families to make sustainable changes.
- Devon is a safe and positive place to work for all staff due to a focus on anti-racist practices and behaviours.

1. Children's Services Action Plan

Priority 1

Change

Our children, young people and families have their voices heard and their preferences and wishes recorded and met wherever possible. We work with children and families to create their own plans, to improve the way that we deliver services and to achieve the best outcomes for children that we can.

What needs improvement?

- Good, timely decision-making around permanent and secure arrangements for children coming into care.
- Children living with family members or friends have rigorous and comprehensive assessments and appropriate packages of support.
- No children are living in children’s homes that are not registered with Ofsted.
- Quality assurance through the auditing of social work needs to be clear and of high quality and evidence the child’s lived experience.
- Better involvement of parents in early planning and in the audit process.

0-3 Months

Outcome - Success Criteria	Strategic actions	By when	Action lead/s	Measure	Impact for children and young people
Strategic ownership and oversight of young people in unsuitable accommodation to ensure young people are housed suitably and can thrive.	1.1 Head of Service for Corporate Parenting will report to DCS children and young people under 25 years who are accommodated in B&B and hotel settings for more than 24 hours. DCS will follow these cases up with district council leads.	In place from April 2023	Director of Children’s Services and Head of Service Corporate Parenting	Reduction in number of young people accommodated in unsuitable accommodation	“I have a safe place to live that is right for me.”
Strategic and council-wide oversight and ownership of support for NEET Care Experienced young people	1.2 Reporting levels of NEET care experienced young people become part of the monthly QPRM process and Scrutiny reporting so that information is understood across Children’s Social Care and used to drive down numbers of NEET young people.	July 2023	Director of Children’s Services	Lower levels of NEET young people	“Everyone involved in supporting me works well together so that I get the right help in the right way”
Our Quality Assurance Framework is clear and high-quality, and used effectively and consistently to improve practice for children and families.	1.3 Publish the Quality Assurance Framework and embed it in Children’s Social Care practice through the monthly QPRM sessions.	July 2023	Deputy Director for Health and Wellbeing	Quality Assurance Framework is published	“Everyone involved in supporting me works well together so that I get the right help in the right way”

3-6 Months

Outcome - Success Criteria	Strategic actions	By when	Action lead/s	Measure	Impact for children and young people
We have robust and evidenced-based strategies which incorporate the voice of children and young people to ensure that families get the support they need in social care, accommodation, education and health	1.4 Publish up to date strategies including: Sufficiency Strategy, Commissioning Strategy and Short Breaks Strategy which are focused on purpose, are evidence-based and informed by our understanding of how best to meet children and young people's needs.	September 2023	Heads of Service	Strategies are published	"Everyone involved in supporting me works well together so that I get the right help in the right way"
We have a system-wide approach to learning and improvement in key areas such as transitions, visits, and engagement with families.	1.5 Embed a monthly audit approach where services complete 10 audits per month which are reviewed at monthly moderation meetings and shared across social care through the QPRM structure.	July 2023	Director of Children's Services	Ten audits are completed and reviewed every month.	"Everyone involved in supporting me works well together so that I get the right help in the right way"
	1.6 Embed the monthly QPRM approach to drive practice improvement across children's services and build a strong team culture.	July 2023	Director of Children's Services	July review of QPRM shows that the approach adds value and is supporting practice improvement	"Everyone involved in supporting me works well together so that I get the right help in the right way"
The voice of children and young people is embedded in our approach. Our structure is designed around listening to children and young people and learning from their feedback.	1.7 Feedback from children and young people is included in service feedback for all service areas and shared at QPRM sessions	July 2023	Heads of Service	Every service area has an appropriate process to capture and use feedback from children and young people.	"I know my voice is heard by my worker and by everyone who makes decisions about services for me."
	1.8 MOMO app is being promoted as an effective and responsive way for young people to share their feedback with us.	July 2023	Participation Team Leader	Increased number of users on MOMO app.	

6-12 Months

Outcome (Success Criteria)	Strategic actions	By when	Action lead/s	Measure	Impact for children and young people
Children supported by us have accurate and high-quality plans which provide them with the right level of support at the right time.	1.9 Focus on practice through practice weeks and coaching supported best practice programme.	March 2024	Heads of Service	Audits show that 60% of children's plans are Good or better.	"I get the right support for my situation."
Services are seamless and appropriate for young people moving into adulthood and planning is clear and timely.	1.10 Establish a structure for strategic co-ordinated commissioning for support for older children and care leavers linked to transition and moving to independence	March 2024	Deputy Director Health and Wellbeing	Plan for co-ordinated commissioning is created.	"I know what my support and my journey looks like from my teens into adulthood."
Our Corporate Parenting approach is focused on purpose and keeps love for our children and young people at the centre of everything we do.	1.11 Publish a Corporate Parenting Strategy reflecting a countywide approach which applies to staff, elected members and partners. Focus on purpose and ensuring that love and care for our children and young people is at the centre of every decision.	October 2023	Head of Service Corporate Parenting	Corporate Parenting Strategy is published	"People who support me make me feel safe and treat me with love and respect"
	1.12 Implement the actions from an independent external review of Corporate Parenting Service	October 2023	Head of Service Corporate Parenting and Participation Team Leader	Survey of children and young people which shows that they report feeling happier and safer.	
Children with disabilities have the support they need to live safely and well at home wherever possible	1.13 Develop a strengthened local offer for children with disabilities and their families which will enable them to remain with their families and/or within their local communities.	October 2023	Head of Service Disabled Children's Service	Increased number of children and young people with disabilities living at home	"I can live the life I want with my family."
Children and families receive high-quality and effective	1.14 Develop an Early Help and effective front door service which can understand and provide	December 2023	Deputy Director of Children's Social Care	Reduced numbers of Children in Need	"I get the right support for my situation."

understanding and support which meets their needs providing them with the right support at the right time.	children and young people with the right support at the right time to meet need early, reducing the number of re-referrals and contributing to reduced numbers of Children in Need.			Reduced numbers of re-referrals	
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Priority 2

Leadership

We have effective leadership and management creating system-wide high ambitions and expectations for all children and young people. Every manager and leader shares in the responsibility for creating good services for children through effective oversight and strong partnership working and works to create a culture which values learning from quality assurance and continuous improvement.

What needs improvement?

- Promoting stability remains primarily reactive and not focused enough on early intervention.
- The skills audit of foster carers needs to be completed.
- Audits and self-assessment show that practice is variable and further work is required to ensure safe placement for children with parents.

- NEET performance remains lower than the national and statistical neighbour comparators.
- Review of the Audit Framework to improve the quality of audits, moderation and engagement of the workforce.
- Review of arrangements for children and young people who are missing from home, care, or full-time school education (including those who are excluded from school) and those at risk of exploitation and trafficking.

0-3 Months

Outcome - Success Criteria	Strategic actions	By when	Action lead/s	Measure	Impact for children and young people
Whole council approach to, and ownership of, Children's Services improvement	2.1 Establish a Strategic QPRM forum – embedding a strategic level whole council approach to children's services improvement including the Chief Executive and Directors of Finance, Legal and HR.	April 2023	Director of Children's Services	Strategic QPRM action plan is created and owned; and is shared with Improvement Partnership Board and Scrutiny Committee.	"Everyone involved in supporting me works well together so that I get the right help in the right way"
We have good quality audits which help leaders and staff to learn and improve practice.	2.2 Publish Audit Framework Review	May 2023	Deputy Director for Health and Wellbeing	Audit Framework Review is published	"I always get really good support helps me from workers who understand me."

3-6 Months

Outcome - Success Criteria	Strategic actions	By when	Action lead/s	Measure	Impact for children and young people
We welcome peer support and challenge which informs our improvement. We are building sustainable partnerships with our peers.	2.3 We will invite peer-led diagnostic visits which bring in external feedback and support to help us learn and make effective sustainable changes • Strategic Corporate	June 2023	Director of Children's Services	We have plans for improvement work co-produced with our peers We have invited peers to come back for review	"Everyone involved in supporting me works well together so that I get the right help in the right way"

	Parenting - DfE Leaving Care Services Adviser <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cornwall – Disabled Children’s Service Diagnostic • Leeds – Early Help Services Review • Dorset – LADO review • Wiltshire – Care Experienced Support 			visits to provide ongoing support and challenge	
We work from a solid data foundation to inform and improve practice	2.4 All children’s social care leaders consistently track and share data to the monthly QPRM session on key performance areas and workforce management. Support Heads of Service to build capability around MI data as necessary.	July 2023	Director of Children’s Services	Increased use of social care dashboards. Data shared in every QPRM report.	“The people who make decisions about making services better for me use good data and information.”
We have good quality consistent reporting, so everyone works from a shared understanding.	2.5 Align our measures and reporting processes for QPRM, Scrutiny and self-assessment so that we are reporting effectively and consistently.	June 2023	Deputy Director for Health and Wellbeing and Deputy Director for Social Care	More effective reporting for Scrutiny Committee meetings. Positive feedback on our data and Self-Assessment from April Ofsted Monitoring Visit	“The people who make decisions about making services better for me use good data and information.”
We have a clear and effective process for governance and management of policies and improvement which is embedded in our work.	2.6 Create a programme of work to review and improve our governance approach including policy review and panels to embed good practice in our business as usual.	September 2023	Deputy Director for Health and Wellbeing and Deputy Director for Social Care	We can see that panels are making good decisions for children. Staff tell us that they know what to do and where to get support.	“The people who make decisions about making services better for me use good data and information.”

Priority 3

Engagement

We consistently work restoratively to support families to create sustainable changes that lead to good outcomes for children. We invest in the development of practitioners and managers, so that they are confident and skilled in their ability to work restoratively with families; and share a common language and values in a culture which supports relational practice.

Outcome - Success Criteria	Strategic actions	By when	Action lead/s	Measure	Impact for children and young people
We have a stable senior leadership team which owns and maintains effective improvement.	2.8 Appoint permanent Director of Children's Services	Appointed by May 2023	Chief Executive	Permanent DCS is in post by December 2023	"Everyone involved in supporting me works well together so that I get the right help in the right way"
We have a stable senior leadership team which owns and maintains effective improvement.	2.9 Appoint permanent children's senior leadership team	Appointed by April 2023	Director of Children's Services and Chief Executive	Permanent Deputy DCS is in post by August 2023	"Everyone involved in supporting me works well together so that I get the right help in the right way"
				Our policies are up to date and published.	
We have a stable and well-supported leadership team which owns and maintains effective improvement.	2.7 Identify mentors for our Heads of Service to develop a strengthened and sustained high-quality leadership team	July 2023	Director of Children's Services	All Heads of Service have been offered a mentor.	"The people who work with me are skilled and love their jobs."

6-12 Months

What needs improvement?

- The Restorative Practice model introduced by senior leaders is not clearly identifiable in the work of most social workers, or of the council as a whole. Consequently, planning and support remain more reactive than focused on long term, sustainable change.

- Supervision records vary – they should be regular and clear with timescales to achieve next steps
- Supervision records should reference audit outcomes and reflect on the process from the child’s point of view.
- Deprivation of Liberty Order applications should be more tailored to individual children. Planning should be more rigorous to ensure that restrictions are only for as long as absolutely necessary.
- Records for Deprivation of Liberty orders should be clear and complete.

0-3 Months

Outcome - Success Criteria)	Strategic actions	By when	Action lead/s	Measure	Impact for children and young people
Effective strategic partnership working which supports good quality practice.	3.1 Devon Children and Families Partnership creates new Terms of Reference and Structure creating shared clarity around its role and work in improving services for children in Devon going forward.	June 2023	Deputy Director for Social Care	DCFP publishes a new structure and terms of reference.	“Everyone involved in supporting me works well together so that I get the right help in the right way”
We are focused on good quality Restorative Practice which is visible in everything we do.	3.2 Design the strategy for the next stage of our Restorative Practice work. Working with Heads of Service to design training and development approaches which create effective and sustainable changes in our practice	June 2023	Restorative Devon Transformation Lead	Publish a sustainable plan for embedding Restorative Practice over the next twelve months.	“People who support me make me feel safe and treat me with love and respect”

3-6 Months

Outcome - Success Criteria	Strategic actions	By when	Action lead/s	Measure	Impact for children and young people
Effective and consistent supervision practice across Children’s Services which adds value to practitioners and improves support	3.3 Publish a Supervision Policy which gives clarity on high quality and consistent practice. And which meets need, adds value and links supervision to our purpose and uses the supervision principles.	September 2023	Principal Social Worker and Social Work Academy	Supervision Policy is published	“I get good support which helps me from workers who understand me.”

for children and families. Supervision practice is linked to Service Development Plans and the Improvement Plan to create a golden thread through every level of the service.	3.4 Work with Leeds Council to create a conference programme focused on improvement in supervision.	August 2023	Deputy Director of Health and Wellbeing and Head of Service - Academy, Quality Assurance and Practice	Conference takes place and staff attend	"The people who work with me are skilled and love their jobs."
	3.5 Design and roll out best practice toolkit – including existing best practice examples and developing new ones	September 2023	Principal Social Worker and Social Work Academy	Best practice toolkit is published	"I get good support which helps me from workers who understand me."

6-12 Months

Outcome - Success Criteria	Strategic actions	By when	Action lead/s	Measure	Impact for children and young people
Organisation focused on Purpose Principles, Behaviours and Restorative Practice which has a clear, co-ordinated and pro-active approach to learning and improvement.	3.6 Embed the organisational Principles and Behaviours at every level from strategic through to operational. Using existing structures to embed the change in the work, such as CSLT, Head of Service Meetings and Team Meetings.	March 2024 – ongoing work throughout the year to create sustainable change	Director of Children's Services and Head of Organisational Change	Regular monthly learning activity is an established part of Extended CSLT	"People who support me make me feel safe and treat me with love and respect"
Effective strategic partnership working which supports good quality practice.	3.7 Work with Research in Practice to hold a conference on practice improvement for social care staff.	October 2023	Director of Children's Services	Conference is held and staff attend	"The people who work with me are skilled and love their jobs."

Priority 4

Workforce

We have a stable, highly skilled, and permanent workforce which is key to our relational approach to practice. We invest in our workforce to achieve stability and a safe and positive place to work for everyone. We support continuous professional development.

What needs improvement?

- More consistent quality in supervision practice.
- There are recruitment and retention challenges within Children and Families North, Mid and East Devon.
- Changes of social worker are a key challenge in ensuring children and families receive the right help and support.

0-3 Months

Outcome - Success Criteria	Strategic actions	By when	Action lead/s	Measure	Impact for children and young people
Clear and stable structure which supports improvement and gives clear lines of responsibility and decision making	4.1 Launch staff consultation for Phase 2 of Children's Services reshape. Get feedback and publish the proposals.	June 2023	Deputy Director for Health and Wellbeing	New proposals are published	"Everyone involved in supporting me works well together so that I get the right help in the right way"
	Implement the new structure.	September 2023		New structure is in place creating smaller teams and 38 new posts	
We have a clear and focused approach to improvement which leaders and staff understand and are aligned with.	4.2 Establish and maintain a thematic approach to practice improvement – focusing on key areas to understand what works well and why, highlighting good practice and areas for improvement across Children's Services	July 2023	Director of Children's Services	All QPRM reports demonstrate a thematic focus starting with supervision and then audits.	"Everyone involved in supporting me works well together so that I get the right help in the right way"

3-6 Months

Outcome - Success Criteria	Strategic actions	By when	Action lead/s	Measure	Impact for children and young people
We use our estate effectively for our workforce and our children and families to access support. Professionals can work together to secure the best outcomes for	4.3 Ensure teams are based in the right physical locations to work more effectively together and with families	June 2023	Director of Children's Services and Corporate Estates Team	Create a medium term plan for location of teams which will inform longer term planning work	"I know where I need to go to meet my worker and I can get there safely"

children and young people					
Our staff communications are clear, consistent and timely. We balance sharing important messages, best practice and positive news with avoiding overload and minimising duplication.	4.4 Create a strategic communication plan for Children's Services incorporating service newsletters and timescales to ensure consistency and timeliness of messages.	July 2023	Deputy Director of Health and Wellbeing and Deputy Director of Social Care	We have a consistent set of tools including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly newsletter - Monthly Teams briefing - Principal Social Worker newsletter - Staff survey 	"Everyone involved in supporting me works well together so that I get the right help in the right way"
All staff feel valued and supported in a workplace which understands and respects them as an individual. Devon is an employer of choice for social care professionals.	4.5 EDI Workforce Group reports regularly to CSLT to raise key issues at a strategic level. There is strategic support for the Social Work Academy EDI action steps with monitoring and support through CSLT and QPRM.	July 2023	Director of Children's Services	Higher retention of staff Increased number of permanent staff Fewer grievances related to EDI We have less disproportionality in our service delivery	"The people who work with me are skilled and love their jobs." "People who support me make me feel safe and treat me with love and respect"
All staff feel valued and supported in a workplace which understands and respects them as an individual. Devon is an employer of choice for social care professionals.	4.6 Collate data from key journey points – such as exit interviews, appraisals, inductions and complaints – to build understanding of positives and challenges of working for Devon to inform strategic workforce improvement	June 2023	Children's Workforce Development Lead	Publish Recruitment and Retention Report	"The people who work with me are skilled and love their jobs."

6-12 Months

Outcome - Success Criteria)	Strategic actions	By when	Action lead/s	Measure	Impact for children and young people
All staff feel valued and supported in a workplace which	4.7 All social care staff will complete the	October 2023	Deputy Director for	All staff have completed the training	"The people who work with me are skilled

understands and respects them as an individual. Devon is an employer of choice for social care professionals.	mandatory EDI online training All senior managers will complete the EDI Advanced training		Health and Wellbeing		and love their jobs.” “People who support me make me feel safe and treat me with love and respect” ³¹
We use our estates effectively for our workforce and for children and families to access support. Professionals work together to get shared understanding and secure the best outcomes for children and young people	4.8 Create a strategic plan setting out our ambition for a locality-based service which aligns social care, education, health and police services.	April 2024	Director of Children’s Services and Corporate Estates Team	A locality plan for services is published	“I know where I need to go to meet my worker and I can get there safely” “Everyone involved in supporting me works well together so that I get the right help in the right way”
All staff feel valued, supported and respected in a workplace which understands and respects them as an individual. Devon is an employer of choice for social care professionals	4.9 We will develop and publish a clear career plan for all social care staff giving clarity on opportunities for development and progression pathways in Devon.	September 2023	Children’s Workforce Development Lead and Principal Social Worker	Career plan is published Increased number of permanent staff	“The people who work with me are skilled and love their jobs.”

2. DCC Corporate Services Action Plan

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DCC strategic Themes / Foundations

- People First
- Leadership and Direction
- Governance and Performance

Corporate Plan Priorities

The corporate plan for the year ahead will, subject to approval by the Council, focus on the following priorities.

1. Improving services and outcomes for children and young people.
2. Improving SEND outcomes and finances.

3. Getting the best value from the public money we spend.
4. Sustaining Adults' Services to achieve good outcomes for vulnerable people whilst achieving best value within financial constraints.
5. Implementation of the People First strategy – recruitment, reward, learning, wellbeing, belonging and voice. Working well together as one council.
6. Reviewing the Council's corporate governance arrangements.
7. Making the best use of our buildings and assets.

Actions	Owner	Steps to be taken	Timescale	Outcomes for Children
Produce a Recovery Plan for complaints and Subject Access Requests	Maria Price /Matthew Jones	Agree improvement plan and advise ICO of improvement plan	20 April 2023	"Everyone involved in supporting me works well together so that I get the right help in the right way"
Early Help offer join up with Youth Commissioning	Vikki Hearn / Simon Kitchen	Review Devon Levels of need document Identify and agree priority cohorts Joint session to develop understanding and plans Map commissioning and wider opportunities Develop recommendations and options for future work	18 May 2023	"Everyone involved in supporting me works well together so that I get the right help in the right way" Shared understanding of the Council's Early Help offer and definition/scope. Co-produced responses to commissioning and community opportunities.
Early Help offer join up with Youth Commissioning	Vikki Hearn / Simon Kitchen	Review Devon Levels of need document Identify and agree priority cohorts Joint session to develop understanding and plans	24 April 2023 28 April 2023 18 May 2023	"Everyone involved in supporting me works well together so that I get the right help in the right way"

Actions	Owner	Steps to be taken	Timescale	Outcomes for Children
		<p>Map commissioning and wider opportunities</p> <p>Develop recommendations and options for future work</p>	<p>18 May 2023</p> <p>18 May 2023</p>	<p>Shared understanding of the Council's Early Help offer and definition/scope.</p> <p>Co-produced responses to commissioning and community opportunities.</p>
<p>Agree immediate finance leads in Children's Services to provide oversight of budgets</p>	<p>Angie Sinclair and Julian Wooster</p>	<p>Establish clear links between Finance officers and Children's Services officers</p> <p>Link to the Governance review</p>	<p>28 April 2023</p>	<p>"I get the right support for my situation."</p> <p>Better knowledge and practice of budgets and financial regulations</p> <p>Children & Families have access to the right support as needs will be properly identified and have appropriate funding sourced</p>
<p>Shared understanding and agreement on engagement and commitment between Children's Services and corporate partners – agree clear contracts of engagement</p>	<p>Senior Leadership Team, Extended Leadership Team, and DTM</p>	<p>Understand the barriers to engaging with training and processes for Children's Services staff; and the benefits for children and staff in accessing and embedding training and financial processes</p> <p>Clarity about non-negotiables and what is mandatory training built on understanding of what will help Children's Services</p>	<p>18 May 2023</p>	<p>"I get the right support for my situation."</p> <p>Better engagement from CS.</p> <p>Children & Families are supported by staff with up-to-date training and</p>

Actions	Owner	Steps to be taken	Timescale	Outcomes for Children
		<p>managers work more effectively - Improving Performance means there is less critical work to do.</p> <p>Create agreement for engagement and support</p>		<p>knowledge to provide the best possible outcomes</p>
<p>Further develop our strategy for reducing agency workers</p>	<p>Maria Chakraborty</p>	<p>Continue to try to convert agency workers onto permanent contracts</p> <p>Respond to ADCS consultation about agency workers</p> <p>Meet with Children's Recruitment and Retention Lead (Harriet Cadman) to understand how strategy can be developed further</p>	<p>31 May 2023</p>	<p>"I always get really good support from workers who understand me."</p> <p>Reduction in number of agency staff replaced with quality permanent staff</p> <p>Children and families form stable and meaningful relationships with skilled permanent staff to provide continuity</p>
<p>Legal and Children's Services managers to process map legal activities</p>	<p>Maria Price /Julian Wooster</p>	<p>Hold a working group session to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess legal thresholds and establish shared understanding of working with thresholds effectively to create best outcomes for children • understand work needed on decision-making linked to pre-proceedings activity • identify immediate actions and complete them and create a longer-term plan to address issues. 	<p>Immediate actions completed by 19 June 2023</p> <p>Plan finalised by 19 June 2023</p>	<p>"Everyone involved in supporting me works well together so that I get the right help in the right way"</p> <p>Ensure that thresholds are working to reduce numbers of children coming in to care and ensure better</p>

Actions	Owner	Steps to be taken	Timescale	Outcomes for Children
		Meeting with Maria Price, Julian Wooster, Jassi Broadmeadow and Heads of Service		outcomes for children.
Understand the opportunity for joint Pathway Planning and commissioning for young people moving from Children's Services to Adult's Services	Tandra Forster / Julian Wooster	Understand and review the Preparing for Adulthood project in light of QPRM actions.	5 May 2023	"Everyone involved in supporting me works well together so that I get the right help in the right way" Test scope is fit for purpose.
Review of comms and engagement to understand best way forward to support Children's Services comms	Tony Parker	Initial meeting between Tony Parker and Julian Wooster	9 May 2023	"The people who make decisions about making services better for me use good data and information."
Enhance the Learning and Development offer	Julian Wooster and Maria Chakraborty	Establish the engagement and the basics before looking at the enhanced offer of L&D. Continue to engage with staff to feed into actions developing the Learning theme of the People Strategy Identify timeline for the roll out of training which will underpin a plan to pilot some of the corporate training identified in the People Strategy in Children's Services – including learning on the job.	18 May 2023 Learning and Development Strategy finalised by 12 June 2023	"The people who work with me are skilled and love their jobs." Improved learning and subsequently management performance Children and families supported by skilled professionals who are up to date with training in their field
Agree Business Partner Model with corporate partners to support Children's Services and work effectively across the Council: initially	SLT	Scoping workshop / session across relevant services	31 May 2023	"Everyone involved in supporting me works well together so that I get the

Actions	Owner	Steps to be taken	Timescale	Outcomes for Children
looking at: HR, Comms, Legal, Finance				right help in the right way"
Establish systems alignment between Children's Services (Eclipse) and Adult's Services (Carefirst) recording and case management systems - focus on finance and payment functionality, case note recording and risk assessment; and addressing legacy issues.	Angie Sinclair and Matthew Jones, Julian Wooster and Tandra Forster	<p>IASC Procurement for Carefirst replacement – Children's Services rep to join project group</p> <p>Map capacity of DCC to manage two separate and potentially uncommunicative IT systems – risk of designing in duplication</p> <p>Develop shared view of specifications and requirement for the replacement system (business case developed)</p> <p>Finance system introduction - risk register and mitigations</p>	Development Plan by 19 June 2023	<p>"Everyone involved in supporting me works well together so that I get the right help in the right way"</p> <p>Compatible systems across CS/IASC to ensure efficient data sharing and smooth transition for children and families from CS to IASC</p>
Clarify and improve the Social Work Academy offer – children's social care and adult's social care	Children's Services /IASC – Tandra Forster/Julian Wooster/Maria Chakraborty	<p>A lead identified from Finance, Adults, children's and HR to work on the alignment within the Hub.</p> <p>Initial plan to give clarity on the current offer and map the new offer.</p>	19 June 2023	<p>"The people who work with me are skilled and love their jobs."</p> <p>Alignment across IACS /CS learning to enable better working together.</p> <p>Children and families will be supported by skilled professionals throughout their lives</p>
Check statutory data information linked to families receiving Subject Access Record	Matthew Jones /Julian Wooster	<p>Additional staff being employed</p> <p>Action plan agreed to be reported to the ICO</p>	19 June 2023	"People who support me make me feel safe and treat

Actions	Owner	Steps to be taken	Timescale	Outcomes for Children
(SAR) information on time		SLT performance reporting		me with love and respect" Information being received on time.
Check and sort statutory responses linked to legal requirements	Maria Price / Julian Wooster	Annual report to Standards and Scrutiny Committees Monthly SLT Performance reporting commencing May 2023	19 June 2023	"Everyone involved in supporting me works well together so that I get the right help in the right way"
Analysis of abandoned calls and also call follow through	Matthew Jones	Establish the process for abandoned calls in the CSC and MASH. Analysis of the abandoned calls. Benchmarking.	19 June 2023	"Everyone involved in supporting me works well together so that I get the right help in the right way" Abandoned calls reduced.
Develop EDS /Out of hours service	Tandra Forster / Julian Wooster / Maria Chakraborty	2022 report considered splitting and enhancing the service between IACS/CS. Need to understand the impact of this and the decision that was taken – DAP to action. SLT to review report. What does the offer need to be across Adults and Children's?		"Everyone involved in supporting me works well together so that I get the right help in the right way"
Continue work on Council Tax discount for care experienced young people /care leavers	Donna Manson /Keri Denton/ Cllr John Hart	Working with South Hams and West Devon Council agree approach; cost, consultation, and communication Gain political agreement across Team Devon to roll out	19 June 2023	"I get the right support for my situation." Council Tax Exemptions for care leavers agreed (part of Corporate Parenting Action Plan).

Actions	Owner	Steps to be taken	Timescale	Outcomes for Children
Produce a plan for Council assets re-purposing for targeted housing opportunities	Keri Denton / Matthew Jones	Work through assets map already developed and identify key properties Develop appraisal and business case for one / several	19 June 2023	"I know what my support and my journey looks like from my teens into adulthood." Assets Strategy and approach developed and contribution to housing position
Establish fit for purpose governance and Terms of Reference Ensure links to DCC responsibilities statute	Donna Manson / Julian Wooster , Simon Kitchen / Maria Price	Initial meeting to understand the current arrangements and what is required going forward Link in with Maria Price and governance review	19 June 2023	"Everyone involved in supporting me works well together so that I get the right help in the right way" Clear understanding of roles and responsibilities and powers, lack of duplication.

3. Partnership Action Plan

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Priority areas

The work of the Improvement Partnership Board will focus on multi-agency working to achieve better outcomes for children and families in these key areas:

1. Improving outcomes of pre-birth services and for infants
2. Improving partnership working in compliance with Working Together, focusing on areas of shared responsibility and multi-agency responses to families

3. Improving response to adolescent need through developing multi-agency contextual safeguarding approaches

We will focus on:

- understanding and working on the root causes not the symptoms
- creating shared understanding of the problem we are trying to solve
- using a strengths-based approach which prioritises working with the family rather than focusing on process
- creating shared understanding of our own and each other's roles, responsibilities, priorities, challenges and opportunities
- creating clarity on the role of the Improvement Partnership Board and the role of the Devon Children and Families Partnership Board to avoid duplication
- taking ownership and responsibility, and completing actions quickly and effectively.

Priority Area 1 – Improving outcomes of pre-birth services and for infants

How we work together to provide effective and consistent support through pregnancy and in the first years of child development. How agencies work together to recognise and best support vulnerable parents and children under two in a way which makes sense to those families.

Outcomes

- I can get the help and support I need for physical, emotional and mental health challenges throughout my pregnancy and my child's early years.
- My child is safe, happy and healthy and I can get the help I need to support and maintain this.

Measures

Measure	Baseline at March 2023	Target
% of infants who received a face-to-face New Birth Visits (NBV) within 14 days of birth*	60%	85%
% of babies who received a 1-year developmental health review by 12 months old*	30%	65%
% of children who received a 2 – 2.5 -year developmental health review by age of 2.5 years*	37%	75%
Number of hospital admissions for under twos		
Number of newborn deaths per annum		
Number of newborn serious incidents per annum	3	
Number of repeat removals of children per annum		
Number of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) for under twos.		

**Shared measures across SEND Local Area Improvement Plan and Children's Social Care Improvement Plan*

Actions

Action	Owner
PA1.1 Map the current service landscape for pregnancy and under twos to create a clear shared picture of the services and support available across Devon – midwifery, HV, parent health, children's centres etc – create visibility of services available and gap analysis	
PA1.2 Create picture of specialist support available for vulnerable parents and children – Social Care Tier 2 support and above – create visibility of services available and gap analysis	

PA1.3 Establish current data picture for measures from March 2023 to understand Devon figures and comparison to statistical neighbours, South West and England – analysis of the data to create shared context and understanding	
PA1.4 Use the data and understanding from previous actions to create a clear pathway of support for pre-birth and under twos which is recognised and owned by partners	

Priority Area 2 – Improving partnership working in compliance with Working Together, focusing on areas of shared responsibility and multi-agency responses to families

How we effectively and consistently understand and respond to need. Including who provides support, where and how. How agencies work together to understand levels of need and provide the most effective response at the right time.

Outcomes

- I get the right support at the right time in the right way.
- Services work effectively together to support me and my family.

Measures

Measure	Baseline as at March 2023	Target
Number of social care contacts which don't become referrals	78% of contacts do not become referrals	
Reduce percentage of failure demand contacts coming in to MASH	Will measure as part of process mapping in May 2023 38% Repeat contacts	
Reduction in re-referral rates	31%	

Actions

Action	Owner
PA2.1 Create a process map for MASH and wider front door to understand what demand is coming in, why, where it goes and the impact this has – collate with review done by DCFP independent scrutineer, previous MASH project and Leeds review to create one picture of demand and work happening which can be shared and owned by partners	
PA2.2 Use this collated learning to work with MASH leadership and partners to design changes which can be tested and measured to show improvement in efficiency and ability to meet purpose for children and young people	
PA2.3 Use publication of updated Working Together in 2023 to clarify shared understanding of thresholds/levels of need and establish shared pathways and approaches	

Priority Area 3 – Improving response to adolescent need through developing multi-agency contextual safeguarding approaches

Creating a culture of love and care for our teenagers. Creating the conditions to work well with teenagers, understanding them, meeting their needs and keeping them safe in a way that makes sense to them.

Outcomes

- I get the right support at the right time in the right way.
- I feel loved and valued.

Measures

Measure	Baseline as at March 2023	Target
Increase in young people who are EET	47%	60%
Increased school attendance	92.4%	
Reduction in S47 enquiries	58 – April 2023	
Reduction in exclusions	134 total in 22/23 and increase in 49 from 21/22. 47 of these are in secondary	
Reduction in referrals categorised as NFA into MASH		

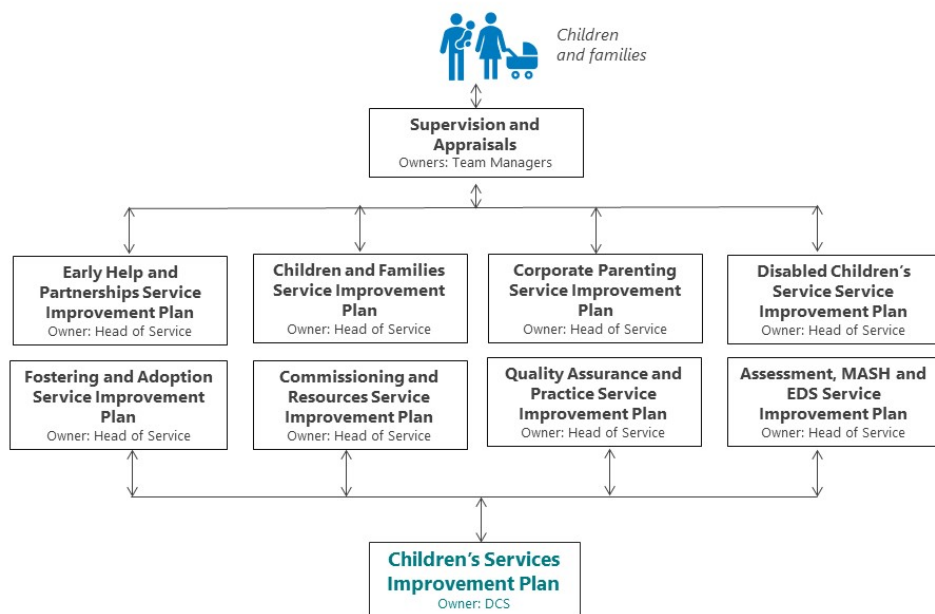
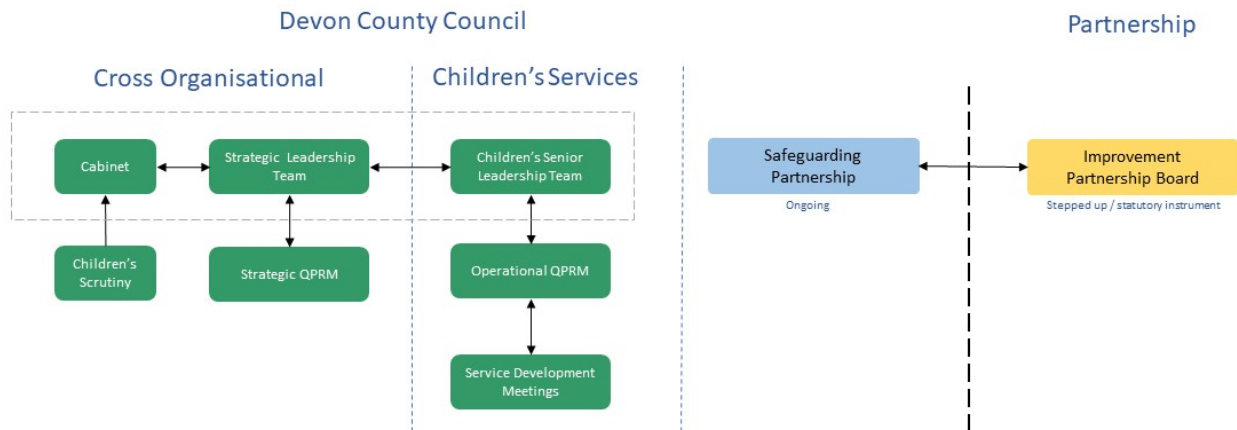
Actions

Action	Owner
PA3.1 Create a shared picture of the current vision and offer for adolescents in Devon. Create a shared picture of the services and pathways for support with demand data inclu for missing/exploitation.	
PA3.2 Using this information create a shared vision for young people in Devon	
PA3.3 Design a clear pathway for support available for young people in Devon with clarity on partner roles and responsibilities – this action links with PA2.2	

Appendix 1

Governance

Children's Social Care Improvement Delivery and Governance Structure



Improvement Partnership Board

The Improvement Partnership Board is chaired by DfE Children's Commissioner Matt Dunkley and meets **monthly**. The Improvement Board drives the strategic implementation of the Partnership Improvement Plan and provides support and challenge to ensure partners are delivering the expected outcomes. The Board includes senior representation from DCC and partners including the Lead Member for Children's Services, senior officers of the council and multi-agency representation.

Strategic Quality Performance and Review Meeting

The Strategic Quality Improvement element of QPRM will provide assurance to the Children's Commissioner that DCC is ensuring that there is sustainable improvement in Children's Social Care. Strategic QPRM will meet every 3/6 months and will be chaired by the Children's Commissioner. Each relevant Corporate Director for ICT, Finance, HR, Business Support (inc. premises) Legal, Governance, Partnerships and Performance will give a presentation on supporting children's social care improvement.

Operational Quality Performance and Review Meeting

The Director for Children and Young Peoples Futures, chairs a **monthly** forum where Heads of Service review data, learning from quality assurance and feedback. This allows progress and patterns to be seen whilst receiving support and challenge from the group about areas of strength and areas for development.

Devon Children and Families Partnership (DCFP)

Progress on the Improvement Plan is also reported to the multi-agency forum of the DCFP executive group, to ensure alignment across the safeguarding partnership.