

**SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES**
**OUTLINE IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN**

**CONTEXT:** This Improvement Action Plan addresses the priority improvement actions identified by Ofsted during the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services in Suffolk between the 3 and 7 June 2024.

#	Priority Improvement Area	Actions	Lead(s)	Milestone/Target Dates
1	<b>The consistency in the application of thresholds in the MASH</b>	<b>1.1</b> Review  Thresholds in relation to initial screening in the MASH to ensure all children's needs and risks are understood, including when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are no immediate safeguarding concerns</li> <li>- There is a history of domestic abuse concerns</li> <li>- There are anonymous referrals</li> <li>- There are decisions to close.</li> </ul> <i>(Detailed MASH Action Plan 1.2,1.3,1.6)</i>	Head of MASH	Immediate MASH audits completed by November 2024  Essex Sector Led Improvement Partnership (SLIP) Diagnostic November 2024
		<b>1.2</b> Strengthen the  MASH audit and dip sampling programme to assure the quality of practice, considering the specific issues outlined above.  <i>(Detailed MASH Action Plan 1.1)</i>	Head of MASH / Principal Practice Lead	MASH Audit Programme in place - October 2024
		<b>1.3</b> Review and report with recommendations on LADO practice to address any current.  inconsistencies in the application of thresholds and in recording outcomes.  <i>(Detailed General Action Plan 1.1)</i>	Safeguarding Manager responsible for Local Authority Designated Officers	Agreed change of practice June 2024

		<p><b>1.4</b> Review and report, with recommendations, the scope for introducing an integrated ‘front door’ to broaden the focus on family help and enhance the connectivity with Early Help and SEND Services</p> <p><i>(Detailed MASH Action Plan 2.1)</i></p>	CYP Leadership Team	Leadership Team Options Paper - December 2024
2	<p><b>The quality of assessment and support to children aged 16 and 17 who present as homeless, including joint assessments with housing, the provision of emergency accommodation and ensuring children are made aware of their right to be accommodated by the local authority</b></p>	<p><b>2.1</b> Complete a review and refresh of the Joint 16 / 17 Homeless Protocol to be ratified by the Suffolk Housing Board</p> <p><i>(Detailed 16 / 17 Action Plan 1.2)</i></p>	Head of Commissioning (in collaboration with the Suffolk Districts / Boroughs)	<p>Task &amp; Finish Meetings convened between July and September 2024.</p> <p>Staff workshops scheduled for October 2024</p> <p>Suffolk Housing Board scheduled for 28 November 2024</p> <p>Provisional implementation date December 2024, subject to Suffolk Housing Board</p>
		<p><b>2.2</b> At the point of implementing the Joint Protocol, to review and report at regular intervals, with recommendations, on the baseline position and associated practice regarding identification, assessment, support, and decision-making for children aged 16 and 17 where they are, or may become, homeless</p> <p><i>(Detailed 16 / 17 Action Plan 2.1)</i></p>	Head of MASH, PS&QA Team	<p>Baseline audit - December 2024</p> <p>To be reported to Quality Engagement and Performance Board December 2024</p> <p>Six monthly follow up, audit, and reporting cycle thereafter</p>
		<p><b>2.3</b> Scope options for the provision of emergency accommodation for homeless children aged 16 / 17 and report, with recommendations, about the way forward.</p> <p><i>(Detailed 16 / 17 Action Plan 3.3)</i></p>	Head of Commissioning	Scoping report January 2025

		<b>2.4</b> Ensure children aged 16 / 17 are made aware of their right to be accommodated by the local authority <i>(Detailed 16 / 17 Action Plan 3.1, 3.2)</i>	Head of Social Care Fieldwork	New Fieldwork Guidance and Young People's Booklet - October 2024
<b>3</b>	<b>Timeliness of the application of pre-proceedings and proceedings to ensure that children do not experience delay in their permanence being secured.</b>	<b>3.1</b> Ensure staff are clear about standards and expectations regarding local practice to align with the Public Law Outline (PLO) best practice guidance (published via the Family Justice Resource Hub hosted on the ADCS website) <i>(Detailed PLO / Permanence Action Plan 1.1, 1.2, 2.1)</i>	Head of Social Care Fieldwork	Thematic audit between December 2024 - January 2025. Reporting in February 2025  Essex Sector Led Improvement Partnership (SLIP) Diagnostic (provisionally March 25)
		<b>3.2</b> Develop the Liquid Logic permanence tracker in accordance with the Suffolk Permanence Framework to improve management oversight, tracking and reporting. <i>(Detailed PLO / Permanence Action Plan 2.2)</i>	Head of Social Care Fieldwork, Head of Corporate Parenting, Head of Data and Intelligence	New Permanence Dashboard in place - January 2025
<b>4</b>	<b>The quality and consistency of pathway planning with care leavers.</b>	<b>4.1</b> Enhance the Leaving Care development programme in consultation with staff to improve care planning activity with care leavers. <i>(Detailed Care Leaver Action Plan 1.5)</i>	Head of Corporate Parenting	Initial Pathway Planning training as part of the Leaving Care Pathway Practitioner Development Programme – 28 November 2024.
		<b>4.2</b> Review and refresh the current Pathway Plan and process with young people to ensure these are co-produced to be user friendly and impactful. <i>(Detailed Care Leaver Action Plan 1.3)</i>	Leaving Care Service Manager in consultation with young people's 'Our Voice' group	Revision of Pathway Plan Form and process - November 2024  QA and SLIP Diagnostic to test impact - tbc following implementation of new Pathway Plan and process.
		<b>4.3</b> Publish a co-produced annual questionnaire for and with Care Leavers.	PD& QA Team	Questionnaire distribution - December 2024

		<i>(Detailed Care Leaver Action Plan 1.2)</i>		Analysis to QEP – February 2025
		<b>4.4</b> Develop a Care Leaver-specific audit tool and strengthen dip sampling to assure the quality of pathway planning and outcomes for care leavers.  <i>(Detailed Care Leaver Action Plan 1.1)</i>	Head of Corporate Parenting and Principal Practice Lead	Baseline Pathway Plan Dip Sample - September 2024  Further Audit - December 2024 and repeated thereafter In September and December 2025
<b>5</b>	<b>Care leavers’ understanding of their entitlements and the local care leaver offer.</b>	<b>5.1</b> Communicate with all care leavers with an electronic link to Suffolk’s Local Offer, including details of the Employment, Education and Training (EET) digital tool kit.  <i>(Detailed Care Leaver Action Plan 3.1)</i>	Head of Corporate Parenting and Virtual School Head Teacher	Review In Touch communications - October 2024
		<b>5.2</b> Confirm PA practice standards and expectations to discuss the Local Offer when keeping in touch with care leavers and when reviewing arrangements to ensure their rights and entitlements are clear, understood and recorded.  <i>(Detailed Care Leaver Action Plan 2.1, 2.3)</i>	Head of Corporate Parenting	Pathway Plan practitioner workshop - November 2024  Liquid Logic updates to Pathway Plan forms– December 2024
<b>6</b>	<b>The assessment and accessibility of support for care leavers post-21</b>	<b>6.1</b> The current Pathway Plans and case closure formats to be reviewed and changed to include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- confirmation that post 21 support has been discussed with the young person.</li> <li>- a need and risk-based assessment is completed to inform post 21 support options</li> <li>- to ascertain young people’s preferences for keeping in touch arrangements</li> <li>- decide with the young appropriate access and support, including any closure arrangements</li> </ul> <i>(Detailed Care Leaver Action Plan 3.1)</i>	Head of Corporate Parenting	Updated Liquid Logic form - December 2024

		<p><b>6.2</b> Review closure letter and who sends this to care leavers to improve the consistency of practice and strengthen decision making</p> <p><i>(Detailed Care Leaver Action Plan 3.1)</i></p>	Leaving Care Service Manager	October 2024
		<p><b>6.3</b> To review and refresh the policy to highlight and confirm rights and entitlements for care leavers aged 21 years plus.</p> <p><i>(Detailed Care Leaver Action Plan 3.1)</i></p>	Head of Corporate Parenting and Leaving Care Service Manager	Updated policy for post age 21 support - October 2024
		<p><b>6.4</b> Review practice with staff to maintain additionally vulnerable care leavers aged 21+ as open active cases who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In HMP custody</li> <li>- Homeless</li> <li>- Under the care of the Mental Health Services</li> <li>- Receiving Substance Misuse Services</li> <li>- Pregnant / have young children</li> </ul> <p><i>(Detailed Care Leaver Action Plan 3.2)</i></p>	Leaving Care Service Manager	Report from Liquid Logic around vulnerabilities linked to open status - December 24
		<p><b>6.5</b> Review and address Leaving Care Service staffing capacity and resources</p> <p><i>(Detailed Care Leaver Action Plan 4.1, 4.2)</i></p>	Assistant Director – Children’s Social Care, Corporate Parenting and Youth Justice	New Service Manager appointed - September 2024 Additional Practice Managers and PAs appointed December 2024
		<p><b>6.6</b> Pursue plans for a Leaving Care Service Peer Review.</p> <p><i>(Detailed Care Leaver Action Plan 5.1)</i></p>	Assistant Director – Children’s Social Care, Corporate Parenting and Youth Justice	Peer Review – 2025 exact date tbc

<b>7</b>	<b>The comprehensiveness and accuracy of the local authority's understanding of the quality of practice for children, families, and care leavers.</b>	<b>7.1</b> To engage with Essex Sector Led Improvement Partners (SLIP) to undertake a series diagnostic practice reviews highlighted by the Ofsted ILACS report, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MASH</li> <li>• PLO pre / care proceedings</li> <li>• QA - IROs and CP Chairs</li> <li>• Care Leavers</li> </ul> (Detailed General Action Plan 4.1, 4.2)	DCS and Leadership Team with Essex SLIP	DfE RAB - approval obtained 30 October 2024.  SLIP Phase 1- November 2024 to March 2025: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MASH diagnostic - November 2024</li> <li>• Leaving Care diagnostic- January 2025</li> <li>• PLO pre/care proceedings and Permanence diagnostic – March 2025</li> <li>• Quality assurance diagnostic – March 2025</li> </ul> SLIP Phase 2 - April 2025 to March 2026.
	<b>7.2</b> To engage with Norfolk Sector Led Improvement Partners (SLIP) to focus on residential outreach.	DCS and Leadership Team with Norfolk SLIP	Introduction facilitated by DfE with a preliminary meeting between Suffolk and Norfolk scheduled for 22 November 2024. Follow up activity December 2024 in preparation for DfE Resource Allocation Board in January 2025.	
	<b>7.3</b> To engage with Action for Children (AfC) Sector Led Improvement Partners (SLIP) to focus on digital solutions	DCS and Leadership Team with Action for Children SLIP	Introduction facilitated by DfE. Preliminary meeting scheduled and specification prepared for consideration by the DfE Resource Allocation Board in December 2024.	
	<b>7.4</b> To request a LGA Review to facilitate a refresh of Corporate Parenting Board	Lead Member / Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board	Request- November 2024 with planning meeting January 2024.	

	<p><b>7.5</b> To engage with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLH) Youth Homeless Team for a Focus Visit</p>	Both Assistant Directors	<p>Focus Visit scheduled - April 2025.</p> <p>Notification to Suffolk Housing Board Chair and requests to engage Housing Authority Strategic Leads November 2024.</p>
	<p><b>7.6</b> To establish a Strengthening Services for children and families in Suffolk Board to be chaired by the Chief Executive.</p> <p><i>(Detailed General Action Plan 2.2)</i></p>	DCS	Inaugural meeting - 23 January 2025
	<p><b>7.7</b> To update and refresh the Self-Assessment</p> <p><i>(Detailed General Action Plan 2.1)</i></p>	Head of Programmes	<p>To be sent to Ofsted - 25 November 2024</p> <p>For discussion - 5 December 2024 for Ofsted Annual Engagement Meeting</p>
	<p><b>7.8</b> To review and refresh the system and process for managing Need-to-Know notifications and statutory reporting.</p>	Assistant Director, MASH, Family Support, Safeguarding, PD&QA	Operational launch - December 2025