

Self-View of Bolton 2016

Theme	Questions	Responses
Place Shaping	How are Children's Services contributing to building strong, resilient communities in your local area? Please tell us about any innovative approaches you are engaged in?	<p>A great deal of work has been undertaken to adapt services to take account of the needs of our changing population and to build resilience in all communities. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with our Achievement Cohesion and Integration Service (ACIS) on developing a revised children's profile for Bolton as a result of emerging community expansion • BSCB includes a representative of Bolton Council of Mosques (BCoM) • We have jointly delivered Level 3 safeguarding training through Bolton Council of Mosques for Imams, Mosque leaders and Madrasah staff • A Madrasah Safeguarding Checklist has been developed and implemented • We have worked with BCoM to review and update their safeguarding policy • We have supported Bolton Solidarity community association with the promotion of FGM awareness • Joint preparations with BCoM for changing legislation re illegal schools • Children's Services, through Bolton's Be Safe Community Safety Partnership, have worked on the development of the Bolton Serious & Organised Crime Local Profile • We have worked with Hungarian & Romanian communities on Modern Slavery, sham marriages, sexual and labour exploitation • We have supported Czech and Slovakian trafficking victims • A CSE community cohesion strategy has been developed • CSE safeguarding training has been delivered to taxi operators, taxi drivers and refuse operatives.
	What alternative methods of delivery are you considering across the range of Children's Service?	The development of a new integrated Start Well Service is well underway. An Early Help hub is being developed to sit alongside the MASSS which now includes both adult and children's safeguarding with PPIU. Two test sites for locality hubs are being developed and, in the longer term, we intend to identify Children's Services components for the Locality Care Organisation.

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Education / SEND	What are the key challenges and opportunities presented in 'Education Excellence Everywhere' for your local area, please tell us how you are addressing these both as a local area and through the sub region?	Contextual challenges do affect the Borough and these include relatively high numbers of International New Arrivals, primary school places and emerging pressures in relation to secondary school places. Overall, achievement at Key Stage 4 has re-emerged as a major issue for the Borough. The deployment and impact of National Leaders of Education is critical to impacting upon this and they are playing a leading role in the formation of MATs which are supporting underachieving schools. Improving the supply of teachers and leaders has been identified by the Secondary Supporting School Improvement Group and discussions about how best to maximise both ITT and recruitment are now being debated by leaders of Teaching School Alliances. National initiatives are supporting new appointments into headship and providing them within critical induction and those involved in national leadership projects are now supporting schools where interim leadership has been required.
	How are you managing the transition to a system of supported autonomy for schools in your area? How are you measuring and monitoring performance during the transition and what is this showing as strengths and issues for the local area?	<p>In the secondary sector extensive discussions are taking place and the development of a series of MATs across the Borough is now emerging. The secondary sector has established a Supporting School Improvement Group in partnership with Bolton Council and has now appointed a chair to lead this work. Data sharing is established and a system of support is in place but, in the light of 2016 outcomes, there is a need to demonstrate the impact of these school-led developments.</p> <p>Primary schools have a well-established cluster-based partnership system which is working effectively. The LA and schools work closely together through joint groups focused on school improvement, inclusion, safeguarding and policy development. Again, data is used to inform key stakeholder groups.</p> <p>A governance partnership system is well developed and has a number of effective features. Local Authority and Teaching School have developed a Bolton – Learning Together website for CPD and meet half-termly to discuss strategy.</p>
	How are you preparing for the SEND/Health Inspection and how have you been engaged in the Peer Challenge process that has been developed regionally?	Bolton was one of the first local areas to be inspected under the new SEND area inspection framework. We had to hastily update our previous self-assessment as the inspection was called just 12 working days after the framework was published. Partners responded well and there were many positives to be taken from the outcome letter published by the joint inspectorates. The areas identified for development were ones previously identified in our own self-evaluation and focus largely on joint commissioning arrangements, transitional pathways into adulthood and



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		<p>wider engagement of parents and carers in the local offer. Bolton has shared its experiences of the inspection process widely both within the region and nationally. The multi-agency steering group has met recently to refresh workstream plans in the light of inspection outcomes and workstreams continue to implement these plans as part of the overall implementation of the 0-25 SEND reforms.</p>															
The Quality of Social Work Practice	What are the strengths and concerns in social work practice locally?	<p>Bolton benefits from a stable workforce – data as at 30/09/15 showed that Bolton had a children’s social work vacancy rate of 5%. This is significantly lower than the national average of 17%. This has important benefits for the quality of relationships that individual social workers are able to build with service users and for staff morale.</p> <p>Quality of interagency and partnership working is a significant area of strength in Bolton. Our MASSS is now established, and the expansion of the range of services who work within it is seen as a key priority for the Department and our partners.</p> <p>Services for children experiencing, or at risk of, CSE are good, and are supported by effective partnership working. In 2014, Ofsted noted the priority that the Council and our partners place on effective targeted action to support this group of Children and Young People.</p> <p>Bolton benefits from a discrete, high quality out of hours service. This is provided by a small team who know the area well and are well integrated into the Department’s referral and assessment services.</p> <p>Bolton continues to benefit from low rates of Out of Borough placement of LAC</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th><th>2014</th><th>2015</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Bolton</td><td>7.0</td><td>7.0</td></tr> <tr> <td>North West</td><td>9.0</td><td>10.0</td></tr> <tr> <td>Statistical Neighbours</td><td>14.6</td><td>14.9</td></tr> <tr> <td>England</td><td>13.0</td><td>14.0</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The effectiveness of social work practice in Bolton is demonstrated by comparatively low rates of re-referral.</p>		2014	2015	Bolton	7.0	7.0	North West	9.0	10.0	Statistical Neighbours	14.6	14.9	England	13.0	14.0
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		<p>Action taken to address previously identified challenges on the timeliness of child protection reviews appears to have been successful, with monthly internal data now consistently indicating that 100% of reviews take place on time</p> <p>Ofsted's 2014 single inspection of Bolton acknowledged that managers had a good oversight of practice in individual cases but recommended that oversight should provide a greater challenge to practice. A comprehensive programme of case audit has been instituted to address this. Ofsted has, in the past, raised the quality of Child Protection planning in Bolton as an issue. A comprehensive programme of case audits has been undertaken to enable service managers to better understand difficulties that staff are experiencing, and training undertaken to raise standards. Audits found many strengths, but also noted issues around the SMARTness of plans - especially with regard to the setting of deadlines and the way that visits are recorded on our ICS. Training was put in place to address this and we are starting to see the fruits of this in internal audits.</p>																						
	What has been the focus of any recent audits of practice and how were these identified?	<p>We have strengthened our case audit processes significantly this year, through the establishment of a dedicated practice improvement post and the strengthening of our rolling audit programme.</p> <p>The programme is drawn up by the staying safe management team to ensure that all key areas of practice are considered and that officers with a wide range of backgrounds are involved in audit. All areas of social work practice are subject to case audit, but recent themed audits have included Private Fostering, Closed Referrals and Children in Need.</p>																						


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	<p>What have these audits indicated in terms of risks and opportunities for securing better outcomes for children?</p>	<p>The audit process has given us a clear understanding of how practice in Bolton needed to develop to ensure that child's voice is fully captured in our work, and a briefing note for staff has been produced to embed our learning</p> <p> Practice Guidance Number 1 The child's</p> <p>The audit activity that has been undertaken around referral and assessment processes has provided service leaders with invaluable information to drive improvements to the support children and young people receive at the point of referral. As a result of the audit, action has been taken to improve the quality and consistency of information gathered through the referral process and the success of this was evidenced when a re-audit was undertaken.</p> <p>Audit of cases which are open to the Department as Children in Need identified strengths in terms of family participation and management oversight, but identified areas where social work practice needed to improve. An action plan to improve this was drawn up and is now being implemented.</p> <p>Audit of LAC cases highlighted the good quality of much of the work being undertaken with looked after children, whilst noting that improvements needed to be made to the way that work was recorded.</p>
	<p>How are front line practitioners engaged in improving their practice and that of their peers?</p>	<p>Social workers in Bolton benefit from a Personal Development process which has been developed to be compliant with HCPC registration requirements.</p> <p> Bolton CPD Guidance Document.doc</p> <p>There is also a mandatory training programme for all social care staff – the precise details of the programme vary according to role but one sample is provided.</p>

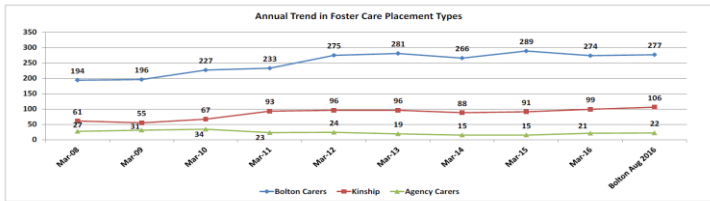


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		 Children SW Matrix Jan 14.xls Support is available for members of the Department's staff who aspire to become social workers through the Step Up to Social Work programme. Dedicated support is available to newly qualified social workers through our ASYE programme.  ASYE Handbook - Bolton Version 2012.c Members of the Department are eligible to take part in the Multi Agency training programme provided by BSCB.
Help and Protection	How have you evidenced the impact of help and protection services in terms of data, quality assurance and outcomes measures over the last 3 years?	<p>Procedures for reporting and analysing service performance management data were overhauled in January 2016 and heads of service now receive reports which give an overview of data and an analysis of trends. These are regularly discussed at service management team and at Departmental Management team level.</p> <div>    </div> <div> 2015-16 Q4 Exec Member Performance Monthly Safeguarding Report After Child Report Ju Monthly Looked </div> <p>These reports are backed up by a cycle of performance management meetings which look at individual issues on a rotating basis to explore the story behind the data. Case work quality is tested through supervision and through of case audit, while individual service areas are subject to peer review exercises with other local authorities facing similar challenges to Bolton. Service users are asked to feedback their views on the help they have received when their case is closed, while a major survey of service users' views is being conducted as part of the service's 2016 "Practice Week".</p>

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		 Childrens Services Feedback Sept PDF.p Views of service users gained in these ways are used to inform future development of the service. These activities are backed up by the comprehensive audit cycle referenced above, while the council is also a full participant in the audit cycle managed by the LSCB.
	What does a steady state look like in your local area and how are you planning to reach/maintain this?	Our long term aim is to reach a situation where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intervention thresholds are well understood and there is a thorough understanding and management of risk to individual and groups of children. • Interventions are consistently delivered and are effective. • Targeted interventions are made for high priority groups of vulnerable children, including children at risk or experiencing child sexual exploitation, those with complex safeguarding issues, children with disabilities, children and young people at risk of offending or young offenders, young carers and those being privately fostered. • Services adapt to Bolton's changing communities and encourage community cohesion. These aspirations have been included in the refresh of Bolton's Community Strategy that is currently in progress, and will be jointly owned by the Local Authority and our partners. Detailed action plans for the work we will be carrying out to progress towards these aspirations are currently being drawn up.
Children in Care and Care Leavers	Over the last three years, do your data and other evidence validate your overarching strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers, including permanence?	Bolton's strategy for looked after Children recognises that services which seek to prevent the need for children to be received into care must be properly integrated into wider consideration of services for LAC. Ofsted's view of these services - such as the Adolescent Support Unit , the family support provision made through our children's centres and the family group conferences we commission from a voluntary sector partner is that they are highly effective and that they have contributed to a reduction in numbers of children coming into care. LAC rates in Bolton have historically been high – action was taken to reduce these and in 2015-16 this appeared to be paying off.



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	How can you demonstrate the contribution of effective adoption services to your overall approach to permanence?	<p>The Local Authority remains committed to pursuing a plan of adoption where this is in the best interest of a child, even when that child may be deemed harder to place as a result of age, special needs or being part of a sibling group. Bolton has consistently been among the highest performing areas for adoption, with a rate of adoption some 73% above the national average for 2015-16.</p> <table><tr><td></td><td>2014</td><td>2015</td><td>2016</td></tr><tr><td>Bolton</td><td>35</td><td>31</td><td>26</td></tr><tr><td>North West</td><td>17</td><td>19</td><td>18</td></tr><tr><td>Statistical Neighbours</td><td>22</td><td>22</td><td>19.1</td></tr><tr><td>England</td><td>17</td><td>17</td><td>15</td></tr></table> <p>Ofsted rated Bolton's adoption services as "Good" with some aspects outstanding when conducting an inspection in 2014.</p> <p>Bolton is the host local authority for the developing Adoption NoW Regional Adoption Agency which comprises Adoption Matters and Caritas VAA's with Blackburn with Darwen, Bolton, Bury, Rochdale, Oldham and Tameside Councils.</p>		2014	2015	2016	Bolton	35	31	26	North West	17	19	18	Statistical Neighbours	22	22	19.1	England	17	17	15
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	What does a steady state look like in your local area and how are you planning to reach/maintain this?	<p>Our long term aim is to reach a situation where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We have further developed edge of Care Services to prevent admission to care.• We look after the right children at the right time• We provide stable, local placements for our Looked After Children• Adoption will be timely for those where this is the most appropriate method of achieving permanence.• We provide a range of Alternative Education provision• Access to mental health services has improved• We have reduced engagement in risky or antisocial behaviour by children and young people in our care.• We have improved outcomes for young people leaving care and transitioning to adulthood																				

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		<p>These aspirations have been included in the refresh of Bolton's Community Strategy that is currently in progress, and will be jointly owned by the Local Authority and our partners. Detailed action plans for the work we will be carrying out to progress towards these aspirations are currently being drawn up.</p>
Early Help	<p>What is the range and quality of services available to support the needs of children and families from escalating?</p>	<p>Bolton's strategy is to reduce the number of families entering crisis through use of high quality interventions which aim to improve the quality of parenting and family life – such as Bolton's outstanding Adolescent Support Unit and the work of the Family Group Conferences services referenced above.</p> <p>Bolton's Framework for Action underpins our approach and provides partners with a pathway to prioritise and determine what services are required to support, respond to and coordinate a range of early help services to children and young people.</p> <p> framework-for-action-2.pdf</p> <p>Agencies use a common Early Help Assessment to assess the needs of children and young people.</p> <p> early-help-assessment-form.pdf</p> <p>The assessment process is much more than a referral system, but part of any action plan might involve additional interventions by universal services or a referral to specialist service(s) within the borough's Early Help offer such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 360° - Substance Misuse Service for Young People and Families • 3rd sector provision

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour Support Service • Bolton at Home and other registered social landlord provision • Children's Healthy Weight Team • Children's Community Nursing Team/Eczema Link Nurse • Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services • Child and Family Support • Early Intervention Team • Education Psychology • Family First Team • Outreach Service for children and young people with SEND • Paediatric Dietetic Clinical Team • Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy • Pupil Referral Service • Short Break and Family Support Services for Disabled Children and Young People • Targeted Youth Support • Youth Offending Team. <p>We have developed pathways for children and young people with Social, Emotional and Health difficulties and have increased the amount of Nurture Group work with younger children.</p> <p>A recent development has been a new Early Years Communication and Language Service, jointly funded and managed by the Council, the CCG and the NHS Foundation Trust, to provide a preventative and early intervention pathway for children and families from 0-5 years. A business model has been developed to enable this service to be sustainable from 2017, providing a traded offer of interventions, screening tools, professional development, accredited training and bespoke support for early year's settings and schools.</p> <p>In both the latest SIF and SEND inspections, Ofsted have identified our early help processes as a strength and commented that they are a good example of joint working across the education, health and care workforce, particularly in relation to providing an Early Help offer and evidencing the need for Education Health and Care Plans.</p>

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	Can you evidence that risk is managed effectively and cases are escalated and de-escalated appropriately for social work intervention?	<p>The local authority and the LSCB monitor a wide range of management information and performance indicators about the volume of early help and threshold information for children's social care but we recognise a need to further embed our Early Help (ECAH) Information System and explore ways of better matching early help assessments to social care interventions for high level monitoring of the effectiveness of step up/ step down. The multi-agency Early Help Steering Group is developing a new performance management framework to enable more robust monitoring of the effectiveness/ impact of early help in the future.</p> <p>The LSCB's Quality Assurance Group is also undertaking an investigation to see if there is any evidence of a correlation between an increase in Early Help and the reduction in referral rates. A multi-agency review of our 'Step Down' process is currently being undertaken to identify challenges and barriers to providing a seamless approach for families at the point of transitions and to seek a more robust commitment and use of the process across the practitioner workforce.</p>
	How are local partnerships helping to secure better outcomes for children, young people and families?	<p>Despite no longer being a statutory obligation, partners in Bolton have chosen to retain a Children's Trust as a core part of its strategic partnership arrangements. The Bolton Children's Trust maintains a strategic overview of outcomes for children and young people and is able to act as a champion for children and young people in wider arenas where the specific needs of children and young people may get overlooked. The Trust monitors performance against 30 high level performance indicators related to priority outcomes for children and young people and instructs themed sub-partnerships to investigate and take remedial action where outcomes aren't improving.</p> <p>Service specific partnerships such as the Early Help Steering Group, SEND Steering Group and CSE and Missing Group work effectively at a more operational level to ensure that appropriate actions are taken by the most appropriate partner agency.</p> <p>Examples of improved outcomes include: Work by the SEND Steering Group around the earlier identification of SEND has resulted in larger numbers of EHC Plans being developed for pre-school children and in 2015 we saw a significant increase in the proportion of children on EHCPs achieving a GLD at EYFS, ranking us 5th nationally. Well-established cluster-based partnership work with schools has resulted in 97% of Bolton's primary pupils attending good or better schools compared to 60% in 2009.</p>

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