

North West Regional Innovation & Improvement Plan

September 2024

Vision

A region that works for all children and those who support them

- where innovation and improvement go hand-in-hand;
- where practice, leadership and partnerships are strengths-based;
- where relationships are at the heart of what we do, and how we do it.

A cohesive yet adaptive regional approach to support better outcomes for children and their families will be achieved through our strategic objectives:

- Promoting collaboration across the North West
- Identifying what works so every local authority will benefit from shared practice and learning
- Empowering, engaging and connecting local authorities
- Supporting analysis, insight and evidence-based approaches
- Championing the opinions, feelings and aspirations of children and young people
- Increasing impact through effective use of resource

Belonging

Outcome	Activity	Impact measures
Children are able to live in their local area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 121 meetings with residential providers with homes in the North West who are not taking any or many children from the host or neighbouring authorities. • Regular regional provider engagement sessions to complement local activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in children placed at distance. • Increased number of providers on the regional purchasing systems.
Children moving or placed across local authority boundaries have their needs met appropriately.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with relevant North West colleagues to maintain and update North West inter-boundary procedures for children and young people moving across local authority boundaries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased use, implementation and embedding of the procedures reflected in annual collection of feedback from North West safeguarding colleagues.
Unaccompanied migrant children coming to the North West find homes quickly and have their needs met appropriately.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-delivery of regional sufficiency workstreams with RSMP. • Training programme for local authority teams, external placement providers, foster carers and supported lodgings householders. • Communication campaign to recruit more fostering carers and supported lodgings householders and encourage current carers to take unaccompanied children. • Sharing of best practice within the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in the time for children to find a home after being referred. • Reduction in Missing from Home incidences. • Local authorities and external providers report feeling equipped to meet the needs of unaccompanied children.
Adopted children and their families are better able to access support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-delivery of recommendations from Adoption Support Fund regional needs assessment. • Production and dissemination of spend data on interventions from external providers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced reliance on the Adoption and SGO Support Fund to meet the needs of families. • Reduction in disparity of payment for interventions.

Belonging

Outcome	Activity	Impact measures
<p>Authorities and providers have a shared understanding of how the regulated provision can best meet children's needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement of external placement providers in local authority social work models. • Regional quality assurance work including organisation level assurance and transitional monitoring for supported accommodation. • Review of and forward planning for re-commissioning regional purchasing systems ahead of 2028. • Co-produce an EDI toolkit that takes into account intersectionality of these issues for Looked After Children for external providers to support improvements in services for all children. • Practice sharing session looking at National Accommodation Standards for children leaving secure provision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in proportion of providers rated Good or Outstanding. • Decrease in children being moved due to quality concerns. • Improved ability for local authorities to access quality external provision for children. • Homes available in quality external provision for looked after children. • Children leaving secure provision have a placement identified six weeks before release date.
<p>Sub regional and regional workstreams are aligned and mutually supportive.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing mechanism for Fostering Hubs to share progress and understand regional and sub regional sufficiency need. • Develop clear lines of communication between Fostering Hubs and Fostering Leads and Fostering Recruitment Leads. • Provide data, information and other support to sub regional commissioning workstreams. • Support SLIP Sufficiency workstream with links to wider stakeholder groups including external providers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets and performance indicators for sub-regional workstreams are met. • Fostering Hubs understand and can report against their impact on local and regional sufficiency.

Inclusion

Outcome	Deliverables	Impact measures
<p>Children in Alternative Provision have their needs met effectively and authorities have good oversight over placements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market engagement with providers on and off the SEND FPS. • Implementation of Information Sharing Protocol for Alternative Provision. • Targeted engagement in the Autumn term with schools to make use of the SEND FPS to commission Alternative Provision. • Online sessions providing opportunities for dialogue between Alternative Provision, schools and authorities to promote children accessing appropriate services. • Shared regional provider list to facilitate regional and local engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely sharing of information on provider concerns resulting in ISP notifications being shared on Alternative Provision. • Schools and authorities placing with new providers. • Increase in Individual Placement Agreements or similar in place. • Places being sourced in Alternative Provision via the SEND FPS.
<p>Children across the region benefit from more robust and consistent quality of support within the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-produce, with local authority and health partners, young people, parents and carers, developments which provide for more effective support to children, young people and families while they wait for assessment and therapeutic support. • Engage a group of regional SEND colleagues to create, design, and share robust quality assurance processes within the SEND system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output from co-production work enables a more consistently understood and applied approach to supporting children, young people and families while they wait. • Resources produced will be shared on NWADCS website and communicated to regional SEND colleagues. • Impact measures to be defined and outlined by SEND colleagues engaging in the working group.
<p>Children have a better experience as they transition to adulthood.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation carried out on preparation for adulthood and pathway planning and best practice events or guidance developed in response. • Co-production of event for SEND with Parent Care Forums and National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) in September. • Development of resources for pathway planning, independent living skills programmes, tenancy support and support networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are better prepared for adulthood and independence. • Local authorities and providers are equipped to meet children's needs as they transition to adulthood

Inclusion

Outcome	Deliverables	Impact measures
<p>Authorities understand their relative position in relation to SEND, education and children's social care and use of external provision and can identify areas for exploration or intervention.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely sharing of NCER supplied datasets on Key Stages and report on results data. • Quarterly review of data with commissioning colleagues to identify areas for further investigation. • Producing and disseminating data on Education outcomes. • Ad-hoc meetings with SEND analysts from 24 authorities, to complement local activity and provide updates. Quarterly SEND data collection. • Continued development and dissemination of RIIA data on children's social care incorporating any national policy change. • State of the Region report produced for NWADCS and lead members. • Quarterly sharing of dashboards, data tables and report on external placements data. • Quarterly review of external placements data with commissioning colleagues to identify areas for further investigation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmarking available to leaders in education, local authorities and sub regions. • Increased engagement, improved quality of data provision to datasets. • Evidence base available to local authorities and sub regions to inform commissioning decision making and market development.

Workforce

Outcome	Deliverables	Impact measures
<p>Authorities are supported to develop leaders across children's services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohort 1 of NWADCS Leadership Programme providing a diverse and inclusive development route for aspiring leaders across children's services completed with delivery partner by February 2025. • Programme of leadership development workshops delivered to third tier or Head of Service colleagues not accessing the Leadership Programme. • Lead positive action which supports local authorities to develop diverse and inclusive leaders and managers through coordination of the LeadHERship Women of Colour programme with Cohort 3 of the LeadHERship programme completed in June 2024. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 aspiring children's services leaders completed the programme before end of 2024/25. 360 surveys completed by Cohort 1 to support with measuring impact of the course and adapt as necessary for Cohort 2. • Evaluation surveys completed by participants of the leadership workshops, as the session ends, reflect skills learnt. • 16 participants from across 10 authorities graduated from the LeadHERship Programme on 12 June.
<p>Authorities have improved stability in their social care workforce.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All local authorities signatories North West Pledge for workforce stability in children's social care in compliance <i>Agency rules for children's social care</i> statutory guidance. • Options for extension or transfer of the pledge approach to SEND workforce appraised. • Alignment or extension of arrangements to considered collaboratively with NWADASS. • Developing and improving collection of workforce indicators in RIIA dataset working with DfE and Data to Insight to improve shared understanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in variability of cost of agency social worker deployments. • Reduction in reliance on agency social workers. • Reduction in substantive social worker vacancies.

Workforce

Outcome	Deliverables	Impact measures
<p>Authorities have a clear understanding of areas for improvement and how to facilitate positive change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the NWADCS Framework for Self-Assessment to inform a revised, co-designed approach to annual self-assessment and Peer Challenge activity. • Facilitate Sector Led Improvement Partner (SLIP) and Care Leaver Improvement Partner (CLIP) small packages across NW through peer reviews, diagnostics, audits and leadership support. • Research in Practice (RiP) Regional Partnership - Implementation support programme to embed evidence-informed policy and practice in relation to domestic abuse and child protection between October and March. • 'Getting to Good and beyond' event in September 2024 for leaders to share improvement journeys and support authorities to deliver high quality services which promote better experiences and outcomes for children, young people and families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All local authorities demonstrate they 'know themselves' through effective self-assessment and robust Peer Challenge. • Pairings with SLIPs and CLIP and work completed impacting on the practice and outcomes in authorities. • RiP implementation programme participants to attend a follow up session six months after the last event to reflect and feedback on actions and impact. • Implementation programme leaders to produce a share a report on the programme and its impact on regional practice. • Improved practice in authorities' policy and practice in relation to domestic abuse evident through self-assessment and peer challenge process. • Learning from the SLIP work is shared regionally.
<p>Authorities are able to work with the external sector to get the best outcomes for children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of training around deprivation of liberty on current practice by authorities and providers. • Delivery of training around use of reports under Fostering and Children's Home Regulations (35, 44 and 46) for quality assurance. • Referrals training delivered to an additional 500 social care colleagues. Specialisms around unaccompanied children and SEND and links to sub regional work on needs assessments. • All 24 authorities have access to and are using the Provider Portal for basic due diligence. • Regional quality assurance forum set up with representatives from all authorities. • Regional commissioning training offer extended and all authorities accessing the sessions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding of DoLs for placement providers to increase placement choice for those with DoLs. • Authorities utilise regulation reports as part of broader quality assurance. • Providers report improvement in the quality of referrals. • Children have fewer placement breakdowns and transitions between homes. • Improved information sharing of quality concerns. • Providers report reduced duplication of information requests of providers for pre-placement checks.

Workforce

Outcome	Deliverables	Impact measures
<p>Authorities have access to data which enables them to effectively meet the needs of children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding conference based on findings from NWADCS data collection and analysis to promote shared practice and promote improved understanding. • Quarterly Regional Information Group and breakout meetings with analysts from 24 authorities, to complement local and national activity, improve understanding of national context, policy and emerging trends and provide updates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on practice will be measurable in future data collection and numbers of referrals and re-referrals. • Increased engagement, improved quality of data provision to RIIA dataset.
<p>Authorities are represented in a national context and in a position to shape and influence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional consultation events to respond to relevant published consultations. • NWADCS team to participate in national meetings and conferences (including NPIMG, Combined Authority, Education Information and Statistics group, DfE, Data to Insight workshops, National Commissioning Conference) to provide and receive updates for dissemination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional responses reflected in Department's published responses and in the resulting decisions made around policy. • Connecting regional colleagues to national developments and practice. • Contribution to shaping wider policy and practice development.

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