

Appendix 1.

No.	Improvement Enabler	Progress against Enabler.
1	Strategic Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One Children’s Service: There has been progress in working to improving outcomes for children as one service and not in separate silos i.e. one for children’s social care and one for education services. Significant elements of our work are inextricably linked such as education for looked after children overseen by the Virtual School. • Corporate Working: Children’s Services has developed closer working relationships with directorates across the council and is benefitting from this more corporate approach. Corporate colleagues comment positively on the accessibility of children’s services personnel and the transparency of discussions. • The Corporate Reference Group: This group has taken time to find its purpose but under the direction of the Chief Executive it has produced a strategic plan setting out the contribution that each directorate will make to the Children’s Services’ improvement journey. As an example a contribution from Public Health is ‘Implement the Home Environment Assessment Tool to be carried out at all mandated home visits to identify early neglect’. • ‘Middlesbrough Children Matter’ (MCM): This represents the identity of Children’s Services’ identity developed with the support of children’s and young people’s voices and views. It is used on documentation, in organisational discussions and on social media. MCM and our vision ‘Our vision is showing Middlesbrough Children that they matter’ are recognisable and support our ‘one service’ approach. It will be presented for endorsement to the next available executive members. There are ambitious plans to engage partners in the promotion of the MCM identity. • Multi-Agency Strategic improvement Board. This board holds Children’s Services, but increasingly the partnership to account receiving reports on progress against the improvement plan by exception and also on audit and on performance indicators. The membership of this board has now widened to include colleagues from Housing, the

		voluntary sector, Adult Services and the chair of the South Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership.
2	Leadership and Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stability of Leadership. The Children’s Services leadership team remains stable however there have been significant changes in Middlesbrough’s political leadership and Mayor Preston is now the lead member for Children’s Social Care. The Department of Education (DfE) is clear that this instability must be resolved within 3 months of the commissioner’s visit. • Ofsted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Focused visit – see main report. ○ Annual Engagement Meeting – This meeting is part of Ofsted’s Children’s Services inspection framework. It is designed as an opportunity for a mutual conversation about aspects of the authority’s performance. Middlesbrough’s next conversation is in November 2021. • Commissioner Involvement – see main report.
3	Engaging and Supporting the Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Practice Model. Our Practice Model, ‘Children and Relationships First’ has evolved since our full inspection and is our overarching practice guide. The model is supported by a set of non-negotiable Practice Standards for example ‘Assessments will be jargon free, using language that is clear and easy to read’. • Learning and Development. We have created a Learning and Development Offer encompassing a wide variety of training opportunities to ensure that employees are equipped with the skills and knowledge to meet the demands of their roles. This a central component of our recruitment campaign. • Supervision Policy: Performance information evidences that supervision is taking place however, Ofsted reported that ‘management oversight and supervision are not sufficiently

		<p>evaluative of children’s progress’. This revised policy has been launched to support this aspect of practice development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mind your Ps and Q. This is an internal campaign highlighting the importance of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ People - Staff matter. We need provide the tools for staff to work effectively. ○ Participation – Showing Middlesbrough Children that they Matter by engaging our young people, consulting with them and shaping services together. ○ Partnership – We are more effective together and will work collaboratively to drive positive change within our organisation ○ Practice – Our learning culture accepts and provides professional challenge, collaboration and support ○ Permanency – We will ensure children understand where their forever home is and professionals will support the best options to support their life chances. ○ Quality – underpins everything we do. • Centre for Practice Excellence: This is central to defining the Middlesbrough Children Matter workforce as a community in which children matter. It includes our Principal Social Worker and our bespoke Audit for Excellence programme. The latter has been commended by both Ofsted and the Commissioner. • Practice Week: This was a very successful virtual event held in March with a range of developmental opportunities for staff and colleagues from partner agencies. There was over 1000 ‘touch points’ and complimentary feedback. • Engagement is promoted through the executive director’s weekly briefing and directors newsletters in line with corporate expectations.
4	Engaging Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID Effect: COVID has brought unprecedented challenges but also benefits in terms of partnership engagement for example some schools report a better and more informed relationship with Children’s Services. It is crucial that this momentum is sustained. Schools must be commended for their work in supporting pupils, particularly their vulnerable children,

going forward. Discussions are taking place about a pilot project to place a social worker in one of our larger maintained primary schools.

- **South Tees Safeguarding Children’s Partnership:** The partnership covers both Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland although it is hosted by Middlesbrough. The key partners are the two local authorities, health and the police. Although partnership meetings were taking place the arrangements were not compliant with statutory guidance. An Independent Chair/Scrutineer has now been recruited to energise the partnership and hold it to account. A recent and positive development is that the partnership itself is now held to account by a Chief Executive level governance group.
- **Multi-Agency Strategic Improvement Board:** The board has widened partnership representation to include adult services, housing, a representative of the voluntary sector and the chair of the Safeguarding Partnership. This will bring a greater depth to multi-agency discussions about improving outcomes for children and families.
- **Children’s Trust:** This multi-agency board has three agreed priorities and tracks the progress being made to develop them by partner agencies. They are
 - Locality Working
 - Emotional Health and Well-being
 - Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- **Early Help:** The Partnership and Prevention board: Representatives of 23 organisations working with children and young people in Middlesbrough have signed off a revised version of the Early Help Strategy and Action Plan (2021 -2024). This strategy sets out the actions being taken as a partnership to ensure that there are robust and effective Early Help arrangements in place for children and their families across all of our communities.
- **Learning and Education Strategy (2021 -2024):** The vision for this strategy is that every child and young person in Middlesbrough has equal access to high quality education that increases life chances, through achievement of the best possible outcomes at every stage of their improvement journey. The vision was ‘soft launched’ with head teachers at the end of

		<p>the summer term and will be rolled out in the new school year. It has been endorsed by Steve Munby – Chair of Middlesbrough’s Strategic Improvement Board.</p>
5	Building the Support Apparatus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering Service: The Partnership in Practice (PiP) programme has been paused as North Yorkshire has identified a lack of management capacity as the main issue. Financial modelling has been completed for both a new team structure and payments and bandings for foster carers. If the modelling is agreed then the PiP programme will be resumed. • Digital Equipment: Schools received additional funding to purchase additional devices and WIFI accessibility to ensure that every pupil had access to remote learning. This funding was targeted at children in families who were struggling to purchase the appropriate equipment but did not meet the criteria for funding from other sources for example where siblings had to share one piece of equipment which meant that they could not access remote learning at the same time. • Enrichment Activities: Children’s Services worked with Public Health to provide such activities during the school holidays • Communication with Stakeholders: There has been considerable amount of communication with both internal and external stakeholders however future activity needs to be part of an overarching strategic plan. The Communication Board has been re-instated to oversee the development of this plan and map future opportunities for communication and publicity.
6	Fostering Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Futures For Families (FFF): Middlesbrough is a trail blazer for North Yorkshire’s ‘No Wrong Door’ initiative which is known in Middlesbrough as Futures For Families but its development and the use of the No Wrong Door practice model is overseen by North Yorkshire. It works with young people who are on the edge of coming to the care of the local authority and has made a significant contribution to reducing the number of Middlesbrough’s looked after children. The ‘What Works for Children’ Centre are currently evaluating FFF. Their report is due toward the end of this year.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable Children Attendance Project (VCAP): The attendance of vulnerable children (those children allocated to a social worker) at school has been monitored since the beginning of the pandemic however the system for doing so relatively cumbersome and was not as robust as required. The attendance of looked after children is tracked by the Virtual School. Middlesbrough has worked with an organisation called 'Welfare Call' to track the attendance of children in need and children in need of protection. The information is gathered on the same day as the absence so that immediate action can be taken to prevent longer term absence.
7	Judicious Use of Resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive piece of work has been undertaken to forecast the demand for children's services. The Commissioner's report comments that 'the work on understanding demand and future projections is of a very impressive nature, sophisticated enough to incorporate the challenges of analysing legacy issues whilst also incorporating ongoing COVID related issues. The quality of this analysis and forecasting work enhances leadership credibility and corporate support and engagement in improvement activity. The work has considerable potential to meet the ambition of joining improvement and financial strategies in a comprehensive Medium-Term Financial Forecast for Children's Services'. • Ofsted noted that 'Leaders have appropriately prioritised recruitment and the development of a workforce strategy'. This was launched in April 2021. • Seven proxy indicators have been identified with indicative targets to track the high spend on agency social workers, external residential placements, and children placed with independent fostering agencies.