Improvement Plan for Early Help and Children’s Social Care (2015 to 2017)

This document outlines what has been achieved in Birmingham City Council’s improvement in early help and children’s social care through 2014/15 and how we will continue to drive service improvement and better outcomes for children, young people and families over the next two years.
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1. Executive Summary including Progress on Directions

The Council’s top priority is protecting and promoting the welfare of Birmingham’s children. We have prioritised this and ensured sufficiency of funding, making available a further £21.5m in 2015/16. However, our commitment to this extends well beyond budget provision and corporately we have taken a lead role in ensuring that children’s services improvements and corporate support for these improvements are built into our wider Council planning and strategic outcomes.

At a corporate level we have prioritised improved working with partners with a greater degree of shared ownership and working together to deliver more effective services and improvement.

We are clear that we need to marshall corporate resources so that they are supporting the improvements in delivery of children’s services and we will use service level agreements to secure that position.

We have also taken charge of the Workforce Strategy 2015-17 to ensure we stabilise staffing and allow social care practitioners the space, knowledge, skills, confidence and the right tools to deliver great social work that makes a difference for children and young people in Birmingham. The workforce strategy is recognised as an aspect of the Improvement Plan that needs to be strengthened given the legacy of the Council’s record in this area. Recent enhanced capacity and focus at a strategic level needs to build on good early work and to demonstrate the capacity of the Council to tackle recruitment and retention of social workers and to change Council culture and practice so that it is more effective and sustainable.

Our strategy is emerging and developing and we will continue to drive actions to deliver our priorities.

Critical success factors for our workforce strategy are:

- a relentless focus on recruitment and retention.
- interventions to address capability, support development and deliver culture change.
- the development of high performing teams.
- appropriate practical support for staff (IT/equipment/business support etc).
- service design which minimises the number of changes to key workers/transfers between teams.
- manageable workloads that are regularly reviewed.
- pace and momentum.

We have been focussed over the last year on achieving stability in the service, ensuring children are safer, while building strong foundations to drive continuous improvement towards an Ofsted ‘good’ rating. We have been implementing the actions outlined in the Children’s Social Care Improvement Plan 2014 – 2017 (see summary of progress in Table 1 below).

So far we are:

- better assessing children’s needs when they are referred for help through improved screening and purposeful partnership working in our MASH.
• taking a third more referrals about children needing help from October to December 2014 when compared to the same period in 2013 as a result of our work with partners to tackle unidentified risk.
• delivering Think Family (DCLG troubled families programme) targets.
• making sure that children in care get timely reviews and better care planning with the support of CAFCASS.
• establishing a children’s strategic leaders forum for the city.
• investing an additional £21.5m in 2015/16.
• making faster long term decisions about children in care proceedings which have reduced from 54 weeks (the 2011-2014 average) to an average of 38 weeks during 2014 and to 28 weeks in December 2014.
• agreeing a Multi-Agency Early Help Strategy with partners, alongside a new multi-agency agreement about levels of need for children – Right Service, Right Time.

To ensure our priorities are delivered and we continue to drive service improvement at the scale and pace required we have produced a Commissioning Plan 2015-2017. The commissioning plan sets out our key priorities over the next 2 years, these are:

• develop a consistent, common and collaborative approach in Early Years between providers, including further integration of provision to ensure children reach their maximum potential.
• deliver a cost effective model of Early Years delivery in line with the MTFP savings.
• ensure children and families receive the appropriate support to meet their needs in the least intrusive way through strong targeted Early Help, think family/ family support services that are targeted and responsive.
• improve the outcomes of children in care through better work with families and improved care planning, leading to a safe reduction in the number of children in care to below 1850 by March 2016.
• reshape the profile of our children in care placements by increasing the proportion of family placements and reducing our reliance on residential care.
• improve support and access to further education and work for care leavers.

There have been a number of significant improvements made within the first year of our improvement plan. However, we are not complacent and know we have much to do. The table below is a summary of where are now with regard to the priorities that were identified in the direction given to the Children’s Social Care Commissioner, Lord Warner, and other priorities contained in the Children’s Social Care Improvement Plan 2014 – 2017, as well as what we considered was required going forward.
Table 1: Summary of progress against the children’s social care commissioner directions (in bold) and other Year 1 priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direction/ Priority</th>
<th>Action taken</th>
<th>Position Reached</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direction - Complete analysis of the unidentified risk issue and agree and implement a response to it.</strong></td>
<td>Work has been undertaken and completed on unidentified risk and a response actioned. An additional £6.2 m put into children’s safeguarding in 2014/15 with a further £21.5m to be put in 2015/16.</td>
<td>MASH established and partner commitment secured. The system is more open so children and young people’s needs are identified earlier and responded to more quickly. Referrals have increased by a third leading to a similar increase in child protection plans.</td>
<td>Maintain an open single point of access for request for advice and help and concerns about children in line with Right Service, Right Time. Ensure assessments are completed without delay and lead to effective planned help for children. Adopt a broader range of comparators – using best practice exemplars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direction - Establish a three year improvement plan and supporting budget.</strong></td>
<td>Improvement plan signed off and published July 2014 with budget provision made for children’s safeguarding and initial funding of project resource.</td>
<td>Majority of Year 1 actions completed and base budget for next 3 years agreed with identified funding for children’s safeguarding.</td>
<td>Monitor and review improvement actions against key milestones and measures. Progress related actions (e.g. commissioning) to ensure long term sustainability of agreed budget.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Direction – Senior management and social work capacity and capability.**          | Recruitment & Retention Programme:  
  - increasing the frequency and speed at which it is possible to appoint people to vacant posts (e.g. central coordination of advertising, interview arrangements and pre-employment checks).  
  - introduced recruitment incentives for experienced social workers in the form of a golden hello payment and a retention payment for maintaining | • Fully resourced workforce albeit with 30% agency staff.  
• Target and plan to progress towards 15% agency workers by March 2017.  
• PDR process review and redesign completed in 2014/2015 which informed corporate-wide approach for 2015/2016.  
• Audit of supervision quality.  
• Supervision Policy & Practice Guidance.  
• Agile Working – Phase 1.  
• Introduction of new devices and | Implement new Workforce Plan 2015-17 against milestones.  
Workforce development plan for 2015/17 including improved induction and learning support for new and experienced social workers to improve practice.  
Provision of a strong Assisted and Supported year in employment (ASYE) offer for newly qualified social workers. |
- Increasing Birmingham’s profile within the market (e.g. beyond the West Midlands, via national events, and in regards to improving public perception).
- Information and intelligence on the workforce profile, reasons for leaving, joining and staying.
- Career progression mechanism from GR4 to GR5.
- Agency worker strategy including regional agency cap.
- Reward offer – Team Manager Pay proposals.
- HCPC registration fees paid improving engagement and the employment offer.
- Management Capability Assessments completed.
- Progress on recruiting the posts of Chief Social Work Officer and Assistant Director for Early Help.
- Enhanced senior management team.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associated training.</th>
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</table>

| Fast track route to Birmingham’s final year social work students into permanent posts from May 2015. |
- Revised leadership and management capacity arrangements (phase 1 in place by October 2014).
  - Effective senior leadership of the service and demonstrable fulfilment of the statutory functions of the DCS role.
  - Area management: disaggregating the safeguarding service into manageable areas, with appropriate devolution and streamlined key performance indicators.
  - Sufficient management and professional expertise available to the front line safeguarding and family support teams.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revisions</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New HR leadership and governance implemented in March 2015.</td>
<td>Better grip of cases with unallocated work almost eliminated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area based structures implemented and area plans produced.</td>
<td>Vision and Purpose for service set and owned by senior and middle management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager competency assessments completed-top 80 managers.</td>
<td>Increased focus on leadership and management of social work practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1 of the Practice Improvement project has been carried out in all safeguarding teams to raise standards to the minimum level needed to keep children safe.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Investment in Leadership Development and Practice Development via a structured L&amp;D plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Defined management development pathway and individual development plans linked to capacity assessments.</td>
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</table>

- Refocus the performance and quality assurance frameworks in line with the improvement plan priorities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Refocused Efforts</th>
<th>Quality and Outcome</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality Assurance and Performance Framework defined and drafted.</td>
<td>QA framework agreed March 15.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HoS from business seconded to Business Change to develop in time scorecards, operational measures and outcomes.</td>
<td>In time scorecard for social work and for Family Support live in CareFirst.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit programme agreed for 15/16.</td>
<td>Appointment of Chief Social Worker who will lead on delivering QA framework.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>New file audit programme implemented.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Direction – Future commissioning strategy.</td>
<td>Commissioning intentions articulated for early years, early help and targeted support and for looked after children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direction – Partners.</td>
<td>Agreement with NHS and Police on establishing a Strategic Leaders Forum, with schools to join.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direction – Independent Review and Challenge.</td>
<td>Progress on IRO reform, working with CAFCASS. Ofsted improvement visits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a safe front door: ensuring the systems and capability are in place to ensure the timely and effective management of contacts, referrals and assessments.</td>
<td>MASH established with initial partner input and resource. Tactical Year 1 improvements identified in the Children’s Social Care Improvement Plan implemented along with process improvement and interim IT solution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delivery of the critical infrastructure and system requirements for effective management and good social work, including IT, business support, and performance management systems.</td>
<td>Capital investment secured £6 million for ICT investment. ICT Strategy defined for Children’s Improvement including current landscape. 7 year investment plan now being defined for ICT board and Deputy Leader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proof of concept for Agile Working completed.</td>
<td>requirements for case management going forward.</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSS review initiated to support the Service requirements from Children’s.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Performance Management systems reviewed.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hub development project has delivered 11 out of 14 planned hubs.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Support workers’ case recording transferred to CareFirst.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Initiation of case management system review.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design of the outline future operating model for children’s services to provide a clear vision and destination.</td>
<td>Early Help Strategy written and signed off at Board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Parenting Board Review.</td>
<td>Three year commissioning strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement that a single, agreed future operating model is needed.</td>
<td>Area Plans produced to specify area priorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Options on Children’s Residential provision completed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Parenting Board Review.</td>
<td>Three year commissioning strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement that a single, agreed future operating model is needed.</td>
<td>Area Plans produced to specify area priorities.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Consulted on the principles and produced draft outlines of a Future Operating Model (FOM) and Service Delivery Model (SDM) with Lord Warner, the Improvement Board and the AD team.** | **Cabinet April 2015.**  
New Corporate Parenting Panel established.  
Field based HR support model implemented.  
Strategic HROD leadership and support implemented. Additional capacity deployed to support Director of Children’s Services. Clear accountability for HROD support through one Business Partner.  
The future model for HROD delivery in development with the service. | **Consistent Resource Panels being established.**  
Cusp of Care service set up (July 2015).  
Focus on improving internal fostering and adoption service with agreed targets and milestones.  
Principal social worker in each area (April 2015). |
| Agreement with Improvement Board to use the commissioning principles of the Adults operating model as a starting point for children’s services. | Workshop with ADs to begin thinking of the vision, values, purpose and offer of social care, the operating model and implications for the wider system. | | Established a baseline of core data to understand the current model, structure and resourcing. | | Workshops with ADs to begin thinking of the vision, values, purpose and offer of social care, the operating model and implications for the wider system. |
2. **Safeguarding and Unidentified Risk**

The DfE/Le Grand review in January 2014 highlighted the issue of unidentified risk to vulnerable children. In response, the Council commissioned independently-led work on levels of referrals, focusing on the numbers of referrals and how these children are prioritised within the child protection system. This included assessing data over time and in comparison with other similar authorities.

A multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) has been established to ensure there is a more open and responsive front door and that children in need of help and protection are dealt with rapidly in accord with our partnership Right Service, Right Time model. This has led to an increase of a third in referrals and in numbers of children subject to child protection plans. The children in care population has increased by 8% in the last year. There is a well-embedded multi-agency risk assessment process for children at risk of and victims of child sexual exploitation. There is also a new Early Help strategy, aligned to Right Service, Right Time.

Birmingham City Council and partners are now much more confident that as soon as a child’s additional needs are apparent they will receive an early help response or be referred to social care so that their needs can be responded to appropriately.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safeguarding and Unidentified Risk</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mission &amp; Approach</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To identify risk in a timely manner so that children and families are offered early help, support and protection as necessary.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Key Outcomes</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Transparent processes for identifying and referring children when need or concerns arise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rapid attention to assessment of need and delivery of appropriate help and intervention.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Objectives &amp; Priorities - 2015-2017</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A firmly established MASH with agreed medium and longer term partner commitment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Early help and family support made available to reduce the risk of issues escalating.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Actions and Timescale</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Review and refine MASH arrangements, with partners, to ensure children receive help without delay - Q1 2015.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Implement actions to address areas of development following the January 2015 Ofsted visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Streamline MASH systems and responsiveness through learning from observation and coaching work of Professor David Thorpe - Q1 and Q2 2015.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strengthen social work interventions with families, especially for children in need – area assessment teams established - Q1 2015.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ensure that parents are spoken to and consent is gained unless there are immediate child protection concerns – Q1 2015.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>High Level Success criteria</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• All children considered by the MASH receive a timely response commensurate with the needs identified, and they and their families receive the required support without delay through high quality practice, assessment and decision-making – Audit Q3 2015.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Early Help and Social Work Practice

Early Help and children’s social care recognises the critical need to improve the help, support and interventions that children and families in need in Birmingham require to ensure children are protected and their development and wellbeing are supported. The Ofsted inspection in March 2014 identified significant weaknesses, many of which have been addressed in the last year but at core we recognise that the quality of social work practice and interventions with children and families is not consistently good.

To address this we have developed an improvement plan for the service which, alongside the workforce strategy and the commissioning plan, will change the culture of practice and its leadership and management in the city.

### Early Help and Social Work Practice

#### Mission & Approach

Our **primary purpose** is to ensure that children are protected from significant harm and their development and wellbeing are promoted.

We will do this by:

- working openly with their families to bring about change so that parents and carers are able to provide good parenting, firm boundaries and emotional warmth allowing children to develop skills and resilience in a safe environment.
- being committed to supporting children to remain within their family wherever possible. Where this is not possible we seek to provide high quality substitute care within family settings, as near to home as possible, and to maintain links with birth family whenever this is in the child’s best interests.
- recognising that to bring about change in families who are often very disadvantaged is difficult and challenging work requiring skilled and confident social workers who need to be supported by good management, supervision and learning opportunities.
- creating a culture of learning and accountability, of high support and high expectation through leadership and challenge and freeing up practitioners to do more direct work with children and families.
- delivering our specific responsibility to ensure that children in our care and care leavers receive high quality support from us as corporate parents.
- providing services needed by children and families within the resource envelope allocated to us. We will root out inefficiency, duplication and waste and we will only fund that which is effective and adds value.

#### Key Outcomes

- Ensuring children and families receive the appropriate support to meet their needs in the least intrusive way through strong early help, Think Family and family support services that are targeted and responsive.
- Ensure that children and families in need or in need of protection receive effective social work intervention in order to find solutions and enable positive change.
- Support children to remain at home within their families where possible through social work interventions and cusp of care services.
- Improve life chances and other outcomes for children in care.
Increase the number of children in care placed near to home and in foster care

**Objectives & Priorities - 2015-2017**

- Effective interventions, which promote family resilience, to bring about positive change for children.
- Active engagement with families, properly exploring issues, understanding of child and parents’ perspectives and motivation, understanding of strengths and dangers.
- Front-line practitioners investigate, engage and creatively enable family to identify solutions before seeking more restrictive statutory interventions.
- Social work teams in each area are configured to support direct social work with children and families and coherent workflow, allowing social workers to develop specialisms and eliminating delay and unallocated cases.
- Establish a consistent cusp of care service in each area.
- Ensuring social work assessments and interventions are of good quality, systemic and strengths-based, engage and listen to all family members including children and result in SMART care plans.
- Ensure effective planning for children in care, including a focus on safe return to family, and where this is not possible to a long-term stable and secure home without undue delay.
- Improve support and access to further education and work for care leavers.
- There is a robust social work Quality Assurance process including learning from feedback from children and families.

### Actions and Timescale

- Agree operating model across service– Q1 2015.
- Implement changes to deliver new model – Q2 2015.
- Area resource panels - Q1 2015.
- Area assessment teams – Q1 2015.
- MASH systems streamlined - Q2 2015.
- Full case audit system in place - Q3 2015.
- Programme of practice improvement learning seminars in place - Q2 2015.
- Coherent Early Help/ Family Support offer in each hub - Q2 2015.
- Increase in available in house foster carers through creative recruitment measures - Q2 2015.
- Ensure all children in care and care leavers have robust pathway plans - Q2 2015.
- Strengthening Families case conferencing reviewed - Q3 2015.
- New IRO service - Q3 2015.

### High Level Success criteria

- Children and families receive a service as soon as they need it and at a level commensurate with their needs.
- Children in need and in need of protection and their families are helped without delay through effective direct social work which helps families make positive change.
- Only children who need to be in care, are in care and there is effective planning to ensure they have long-term stability as soon as possible.
- Audit, Ofsted, partner and family feedback demonstrate gradual improvement in the quality of practice and an increasing satisfaction with our service.
4. Leadership and Management Capability

The top 80 leaders and managers of children’s services have undergone a competency assessment conducted by iPeople. This has resulted in each manager having an individually tailored development and support plan.

The senior management team of children’s services has now agreed a vision and purpose statement and we have begun a discussion in the service about the necessary changes to deliver that vision and purpose.

**Leadership and Management Capability**

**Mission & Approach**
To provide leadership in each area that ensures effective management of staff and casework within a culture of high expectations and high support.

**Key Outcomes**
- High quality social work is provided to children and families in accordance with the agreed vision and purpose.
- Practitioners are well supported through supervision, manageable caseloads and learning opportunities, leading to increased retention and stability.
- The development of a culture of learning and accountability which prioritises direct work with children and families.
- Senior and middle managers hold responsibility for quality and performance in their area.

**Objectives & Priorities - 2015-2017**
- Assistant Directors drive improvement in their areas, with high expectations of managers and hold managers to account for performance so that there is a ‘grip’ on casework and the elimination of delay or drift or unallocated work and workloads are manageable.
- Assistant Directors and Heads of Service demonstrate leadership by making change happen in their area in ways agreed and by leading specific areas of service development.

**Actions and Timescale**
- Assessment teams and resource panels established - Q1 2015.
- Systems and processes in MASH improved to eliminate delay - Q2 2015.
- Robust file audit system put in place - Q1 2015.
- Ensure the strengthening families approach is embedded in the case conference service - Q2 2015.
- Strong IRO service maintained - Q3 2015.
- Each Assistant Director has a supervision and performance agreement which is specific to their area of responsibility, which includes the change they will lead in their service areas, a set of measures which will evidence that change and the support they need to lead that change – Q1 2015.
- Full implementation of personal development plan for all managers – Q1 2015.
- Assessment of leadership progress and achievement – Q2 2015.

**High Level Success criteria**
- Culture of accountability at all levels established – Q2 2015.
- Demonstrable progress on agreed measures (eg. timely strategy meetings, ICPCs, allocation of work, completion of single assessments; purposeful plans for all open cases and timely reviews) – Q3 2015.
- Monthly case and reflective supervision in line with policy given to all staff with support and challenge around performance – measured each quarter.
- Quality assurance system demonstrates improvement in quality of practice and direct work with children and families – measured each quarter.
5. Workforce

At a corporate level we have taken charge of the Workforce Strategy 2015/17 to ensure we stabilise staffing and allow social care practitioners the space, knowledge, skills, confidence and the right tools to deliver great social work that makes a difference for children and young people in Birmingham. The workforce strategy is recognised as an aspect of the Improvement Plan that needs to be strengthened given the legacy of the Council’s record in this area. Recent enhanced capacity and focus at a strategic level needs to build on good early work and to demonstrate the capacity of the Council to tackle recruitment and retention of social workers and to change Council culture and practice so that it is more effective and sustainable.

More immediate tactical actions have been taken to improve retention of more experienced social workers and this will now be absorbed within the wider strategy.

Our intention is to increase the capacity of the service as illustrated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Funded Posts (FTE)</th>
<th>Permanent FTE in post</th>
<th>Agency FTE in post</th>
<th>% Agency Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>GR4</td>
<td>217.00</td>
<td>158.80</td>
<td>49.00</td>
<td>23.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Social Worker / Senior Practitioner</td>
<td>GR5</td>
<td>225.30</td>
<td>143.80</td>
<td>82.00</td>
<td>36.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Manager</td>
<td>GR6</td>
<td>69.00</td>
<td>51.40</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>30.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL FRONTLINE</strong></td>
<td><strong>GR4-GR6</strong></td>
<td><strong>511.30</strong></td>
<td><strong>354.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>154.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>30.31%</strong></td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Required Posts (FTE)</th>
<th>Permanent FTE in post</th>
<th>Agency FTE in post</th>
<th>% Agency Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>GR4</td>
<td>234.00</td>
<td>210.60</td>
<td>23.40</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Social Worker / Senior Practitioner</td>
<td>GR5</td>
<td>243.30</td>
<td>152.81</td>
<td>90.49</td>
<td>37.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Manager</td>
<td>GR6</td>
<td>74.00</td>
<td>66.60</td>
<td>7.40</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>GR4-GR6</strong></td>
<td><strong>551.30</strong></td>
<td><strong>430.01</strong></td>
<td><strong>121.29</strong></td>
<td><strong>22.0%</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

GR4 Target Agency % 10.00
GR5 Target Agency % 37.19
GR6 Target Agency % 10.00

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<tr>
<th>Job</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Required Posts (FTE)</th>
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<th>Agency FTE in post</th>
<th>% Agency Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>GR4</td>
<td>251.00</td>
<td>238.45</td>
<td>12.55</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Social Worker / Senior Practitioner</td>
<td>GR5</td>
<td>261.30</td>
<td>189.11</td>
<td>72.20</td>
<td>27.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Manager</td>
<td>GR6</td>
<td>79.00</td>
<td>75.05</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>GR4-GR6</strong></td>
<td><strong>591.30</strong></td>
<td><strong>502.61</strong></td>
<td><strong>88.70</strong></td>
<td><strong>15.00%</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The critical success factors for our workforce strategy are:

- a relentless focus on recruitment and retention.
- interventions to address capability, support development and deliver culture change.
- the development of high performing teams.
- ensuring practitioners have the tools and support to spend more time undertaking direct work.
- service design which enables casework to be undertaken in the right team where team members have that expertise.
- workers with manageable workloads that are regularly reviewed.
- social worker progression and performance-linked reward scheme.
- a strong ASYE programme for newly qualified staff and an evidenced-based workforce development programme to drive up direct social work practice with families.

Children’s Services Workforce Strategy 2015-17

Mission & Approach

This strategy will enable the recruitment, development and retention of a creative and solution focused children’s services workforce that is able to deliver high quality direct work with children and families to bring about positive change.

Our strategy is to establish an environment that will:

- both attract new joiners and be a place where social workers stay and develop their expertise.
- be one of learning that enables high performance through professional and personal development.
- be a centre of excellence for social work practice.

The purpose is to develop a culture that will enable:

- high performing teams to deliver great outcomes for children and families.
- social work practitioners to have the space, knowledge, skills, confidence and tools to deliver great social work that makes a difference for children and young people in Birmingham.
- family support and social care managers to lead the development of a culture of learning and accountability which ensures high standards, continuous improvement, reflective supervision and to manage and support confident high performing teams and practitioners.
- the recruitment and retention of newly qualified and skilled and experienced social workers and managers who can model and shape high quality practice.
Key Outcomes

- Creation of a workforce plan for 2015-17.
- Increase the stability of the permanent workforce — sustained reduction in turnover of permanent staff and reduce agency staff rate to 22% Q4 2016 and 15% Q4 2017.
- Establish and maintain an operational model, design and culture that enables staff to practice well with support and children and families to get the service they need without delay.
- Create an environment that enables staff to deliver an early help and social work service to children and families that the people of Birmingham are proud of, validated by Ofsted - Q4 2017.

Objectives & Priorities - 2015-2017

- All social work practitioners are clear about their role and performance expectations, are skilled and use evidence-based social work practice in line with the College of Social Work Professional Capability framework and the DfE Knowledge and skills framework – Q2 2015.
- A culture of learning and accountability that encourages open dialogue, listening, feedback and learning from mistakes to drive up performance – Q3 2015.
- The right number of experienced social work practitioners in the right roles with the right skills, values and behaviors, with the management information to inform this – measured each quarter against table above.
- Competitive employment offer that includes development and support framework, career progression pathways, effective induction and supervision, pay and reward – Q2 2015.
- Managers at all levels who lead and manage effectively and confidently with a clear understanding of their role, the skills to deliver and model values, behaviour and effective performance and practice – Q4 2016.
- The Council’s people management framework and policies support the delivery of social work in line with Professional Capability framework and Knowledge and Skills framework including pay, recruitment, performance, development and job design – Q4 2016.
- Social workers are able to do more direct work with children and families, focus on social work practice, have the tools and support to deliver and the administrative burden is minimised – Q4 2016.

Actions and Timescale

We have a number of streams of work underway in response to delivering the outcomes. Key areas of work include:

- Recruitment & Retention Programme
  - increasing the frequency and speed at which it is possible to appoint people to vacant posts.
  - increasing Birmingham’s profile within the market.
  - information and intelligence on the workforce profile, reasons for leaving, joining and staying.
  - career progression mechanism from GR4 to GR5 and team manager reward.
  - agency worker strategy, including regional agency cap.
- Leadership and management
  - capability assessments.
  - performance and support agreements.
  - introduction of Chief Social Work Officer and area principal social workers.
- Improved corporate PDR framework and system in 15/16
- Quality Supervision
  - supervision linked to performance and progression/ capability.
• Agile Working
  o introduction of new devices and associated training.

These will evolve, for Year 2 and onwards, into the following workstreams to reflect the priority areas within the workforce strategy:
  • Recruitment and Retention Programme
    o updated recruitment strategy.
    o updated agency worker provider arrangements.
    o continued evolution of employment package.
  • Building Children’s Services Capability
    o refreshed learning and development offer – linking practice development with the development of wider (managerial and other) skills required to operate effectively.
  • Creating a High Expectation and High Achievement Culture
    o setting and communication of standards of practice and performance.
    o performance management framework.

**High Level Success criteria**
  • Permanent staff numbers are in line with intentions above - review at 6 monthly points.
  • Focus on individual performance in supervision and through regular review leads to increased competence at all levels.
  • Staff feel that Birmingham is a good place to practice social work and our proud of their work in the city.
6. Partnerships

In addition to work at a corporate level we have made significant progress in our work with partners and their role in driving improved outcomes for children, young people and families, as well as service improvement and delivery. We are developing a framework for partnerships across the city at both a regional and city level. This is reflected in partnerships related to children’s services and our drive to ensure children in need are safe and able to achieve the same life chances as others in the city.

We’ll know our partnership working is successful when:

- there is improvement in children, young people and family outcomes against agreed measures.
- there is evidence of successful partnership working – following independent review.
- a framework is in place for partnership working and governance.
- clear QA arrangements are in place for partnership working.

Elements of the emerging partnership landscape are captured in Figure 1 overleaf.
Figure 1: Partnership Mapping – Children’s Services

Civic Leadership Group (Respect
Brun) – shared vision of city. Young people at the centre of these arrangements.

Birmingham Leadership Group – independent and multi-agency, longer term vision for city; intelligence function.

Birmingham City Council
- Cabinet
- Quartz
- Scrutiny

Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board

Community Safety Partnership
- Police
- Crime
- Community
- Local
- Policing
- Crime
- Board
- Youth
- Commissioners x 8

BCC Chief Executive/Health
- Quarterly meetings
- Whole city agenda
- Interface with: ski, economy, LEP, region

Health & Wellbeing Board
- Strengthened assurance
- Shared set of principles for partnership working

Health Chief Executive Forum
- Quarterly half days
- System leadership: share, health inequality, unhealthy lifestyles, helplessness, isolation

Children’s Strategic Leaders Forum
- BCC, Health, Police
- Schools to join
- Hold BCC, NISE and BCC CCG to account for safeguarding MOU (BCC/NISE, CCG agreement)
- Focus: safeguarding, MASH, joint commissioning, performance, early help/family support
- Quarterly
- Duty to co-operate
- Values/principles agreed here and applied across CYP Partnerships (could draw on Health Compact)
- Informed by a communication and engagement forum (meeting once or twice a year)
- Support via Think Tank

Children’s Joint Commissioning Partnership Board
- Deliver in accordance with CYP agreement and joint commissioning strategy
- BCC and Health (BCC CCG)
- Senior elected members
- CPH
- Expand to include education and police
- Time shared T&D work
- To absorb MASH Board remit

Birmingham Education Partnership
- Commissioned
- Improvement support and challenge to all schools
- Based on 10 districts
- Council has QA role
- CYP engagement
- of SAE

Notes:
- Avoid structure/systems overriding behaviour/relationships
- All: purpose districts developments
- Voices of the child (CICC, UKYP, It takes a city, plus...)

Children’s Area Partnership arrangements x 3
- relationship with districts
- relationship with CYP engagement
**Partnership Plan and Working**

**Mission & Approach**
To agree with our partners a new vision and plan for the city, and agree shared values around partnership working.

We remain firmly committed to our goals of working with partners and Birmingham people to achieve a fairer, more prosperous and more democratic city.

Within these goals, our top priority is protecting Birmingham’s children.

**Key Outcomes**
Children, young people and families will:
- be afforded better life chances.
- be able to access help and support from the agency they are most comfortable with without delay or difficulty.
- benefit from the way we and our partners share information and work together to meet their needs.
- be heard, listened to and engaged in all work with them, be asked about their experience of partner services, and help shape future service design.

**Objectives & Priorities - 2015 - 2017**
- Establish a Children’s Strategic Leaders Forum – Q1 2015.
- Work formally with the Birmingham Education Partnership – transfer of school improvement services and others – Q3 2015.
- Develop a partnership and governance framework for partnership working outlining shared values, purpose, clarity of each of our statutory responsibilities, outcomes and performance – Q3 2015.
- Involve children, young people and families in setting priorities and quality assuring partner services – Q3 2015.

**Actions and Timescale**
- Transfer of some BCC services to BEP (more may follow in 2016/17) – Q3 2015.
- Update Web content around partnerships – Q3 2015.

**High Level Success criteria**
- Improvement in children, young people and family outcomes through partners working together as agreed in Right Service, Right Time model – Q1 2015.
7. Commissioning
Our commissioning will create a continuum of service where needs are met at the least intrusive level, ensuring we deliver the best outcomes for children and young people and avoiding the unnecessary use of more intrusive interventions. The delivery model is aligned with the partner agreed Right Service, Right Time framework and is illustrated below.

Figure 2: Service Delivery Environment

In order to deliver this environment capable of meeting children and family needs and delivering better outcomes, our plan outlines our commissioning priorities over the next 2 years.
Mission & Approach
To use our position as a commissioner and a deliverer of services to drive improvement in services so that children, young people and families can achieve improved outcomes through the least intrusive intervention and Right Service, Right Time approach.

We will work closely with our partners in the public and voluntary sector to influence and shape their service offers. We will commission our providers to deliver the volume and quality of service necessary to deliver the outcomes required for those children and young people who require more intrusive services. To achieve this we will have a clear approach to partnerships, develop shared values, purpose and outcomes, which are value for money, ensuring the most appropriately placed partner organisations drive improvement and change. We will use the joint funding arrangement being developed with the NHS to deliver this more integrated approach to commissioning and to support this system leadership.

Key Outcomes
- Improved outcomes for children, young people and families through our commissioning intentions in services in:
  - Universal
  - Universal Plus
  - Additional
  - Specialist and Complex
- Improved outcomes for children, young people and families through our support and interventions (Think Family, Family Support, Children in care).
- System-wide change to define what good looks like and commission services that achieve that.
- To develop quality assurance and performance measures to tell us how well we are doing, hearing clearly the voice of the child, young person and family.
- Greater alignment of Health and city council budgets and their use for children and families.

Objectives & Priorities - 2015-2017
Early Years:
- develop a consistent, common and collaborative approach between providers, including further integration of provision to ensure young children reach their maximum potential.
- deliver a cost effective model of delivery in line with the MTFP savings.
Early Help and Targeted Support:
- ensure children and families receive the appropriate support to meet their needs in the least intrusive way through strong Early Help, Think Family and family support services that are targeted and meet children’s needs by working responsively and consensually with the whole family.
Looked After Children:
- improve the outcomes of children in care through better work with families and improved care planning leading to a safe reduction in the number of children in care to below 1850 by March 2016.
- reshape the profile of our children in care placements by increasing the proportion of family placements and reducing our reliance on external foster care placements and residential care.
- improve support and access to further education and work for care leavers.
**Actions and Timescale**

**Early Years:**
- review of current provision and central costs – move from high cost to lower cost – Q3 2015.
- renegotiate contract with NHS for Schools Nursing – Q2 2015.
- fully commissioned Early Years Service – April 2016.

**Early Help & Targeted Support:**
- Early Help strategy – Q1 2015.
- Think Family Phase 1 contract re-let – Q1 2015.
- Think Family Phase 2 outcome framework – Q2 2015.
- new service design and model – Q4 2016.
- MASH systems and process review, including appropriate use of Early Help – Q2 2015.

**Looked After Children**
- externalisation of internal residential – Q3 2015.
- improved care planning – return home or move more swiftly to long-term arrangements, SGO, adoption etc - Q2 2015.
- cusp of care services in place – Q2 2015.
- increase use of internal fostering and reduce residential use – measured each quarter.
- children adopted more quickly when agreed by Court – measured each quarter.
- creation of a fostering and adoption business unit – Q4 2016.

**High Level Success criteria**
- A coherent and responsive service for younger children and their families that helps young children be ready for school and improves outcomes for the most disadvantaged.
- Fewer children in care (especially fewer teenagers) – 1850 Q4 2016.
- Greater use of foster care, especially in-house.
- Children in care services deliver better care planning and avoid drift through improved practice - measured through IRO service each quarter.
- The development of a substantial targeted early help offer to children, young people and families through new service design and potential integration of family support and Think Families provision, leading to more families receiving support without needing social care intervention – Q4 2016.
8. Quality Assurance, Monitoring and Challenge

During year 1 the improvements have been overseen by the Quartet, made up of the Leader, Lead Member for Children’s Services, Chief Executive and Director of Children’s Services. The Lead Member and the Director of Children’s Services will take responsibility for the delivery of this and the aligned plans 2015 to 2017, reporting progress to the Leader and Chief Executive and to the Improvement Panel.

The children’s improvement programme board, chaired by the Lead Member for Children’s Services, will take an increasing role in ensuring we deliver on our policy, plans and intentions. We have a number of papers going to Cabinet which will set out our policy and priorities (Early Help Strategy, Children and Family Services Commissioning Plan, and this plan). The children’s improvement programme board along with Overview and Scrutiny will provide Member oversight.

Our performance and quality assurance framework will set out how we will measure the effectiveness and impact of our services and associated with these will be a set of performance measures.

We will be open and transparent about what the measures are and look to regularly inform children and families, staff and partners on progress against these in accessible formats that are easy to understand.

In 2014 we introduced a performance scorecard to measure safety and performance from the team level to the Strategic Director for People. This is being implemented across all areas for use by April 2015. It provides real time information drawing on the existing CareFirst case management system.

A high level scorecard is reported to the Quartet monthly and will be complemented by more qualitative reporting in 2015.

In addition we will make use of Ofsted’s improvement visits in 2015 to inform areas that require further development.

There will be monthly performance meeting where Heads of Service account for performance in their area and discuss what measures will be taken to address deficits.

We have a new Quality Assurance strategy and we will use this to learn about the quality of social work and other services and take action where this is deficient.

We will focus on the extent to which we are having a positive impact on children, young people and families. This will include learning from:

- self-assessment.
- file audit and multi-agency audit.
- themed audits.
- complaints and feedback from children and families.
- case reviews, CP conferences and IRO service.
- sector-led peer reviews.

The Quality Assurance framework implementation will be led and strengthened by the Chief Social Work Officer.

Our services for children in care and care leavers will be improved by learning from the Children in Care council and the strengthened IRO service.

The Children’s Strategic Leaders Forum will be in place by June 2015. This will be an opportunity for the most senior leaders of the wider system to consider and agree the greatest challenges to and best joint responses to improving outcomes for children and young people.
Appendix 1 - Corporate Support and Responsibility

In addition to service improvements we are clear that we need to harness the full range of corporate resources to ensure front-line workers can deliver great social work and that appropriate support is in place to enable children’s services to deliver key outcomes across all areas of services.

As an example, to ensure the supporting infrastructure is in place we have developed a 3 year IT Strategy with investment of £6m identified to support new technology solutions and deployment.

We will agree service level agreements with relevant corporate functions including HR, legal, property, ICT, performance management and reporting, procurement and business support. They will serve as statements of intent to help secure timely and relevant support for children’s services improvements.

In all of these areas we will work to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and form filling to free up children’s services time to work with children and families.

Critical Systems and Infrastructure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To ensure effective and appropriate non-bureaucratic corporate support is in place to support children’s services to deliver its key outcomes across all areas of services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivery of the critical infrastructure and system requirements for effective management and good social work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives &amp; Priorities - 2015 - 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secure the enabling technology and business solutions, via corporate resources, to support the delivery of safe and then good services (IT, Property, HROD, Business Support).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop the framework and support needed for engaging with, communicating with, reporting on and monitoring the effectiveness of children’s services to deliver safe and good services that are sustainable and embedded (Engagement, Policy, Performance and Quality Assurance).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivering an effective and enabling HROD model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A relentless focus on reducing bureaucracy and streamlining reporting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions and Timescale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology (Data and Management Information) – development of an IT strategy and implementation plan that is fully costed and funded to support front-line practice – 2015 through to 2017.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process – process and systems improvement and redesign, including Professional Support, to support improved child, young person and family experience and journey through services – Q3 2015.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property – completion of hubs and assess the development needs of new ways of working and future organisational design against the property portfolio in children’s services – Q3 2015.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications and Stakeholder Engagement - to effectively engage key stakeholders in the change required to deliver safe services improving to good services over the duration of our children’s services improvements – Q4 2016.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance &amp; QA - implement a robust and meaningful performance management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
framework and quality assurance framework that is meaningful, accessible and transparent – Q2 2015.

- Implementation of a new HROD service model - Q2 2015.

**High Level Success criteria**

- Surveys of staff confirm increasing satisfaction with corporate responsiveness and support – Q4 2016.
- Business support confirmed as sufficient, focused and accessible in meeting the administrative requirements of children’s services – Q2 2015.
- Social Workers have more time to do direct work and managers have more time to supervise and support their staff in professional decision-making.
## Appendix 2 – Birmingham Child Protection Funding Position

**CHILD PROTECTION BUDGET**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Area</th>
<th>2014/15 Original Budget £m</th>
<th>Growth Funding £m</th>
<th>2014/15 Revised Budget £m</th>
<th>Base Budget Changes £m</th>
<th>2015/16 Base Budget £m</th>
<th>2016/17 Base Budget £m</th>
<th>2017/18 Base Budget £m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safeguarding (including social workers)</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children in Care</td>
<td>94.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>94.6</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>111.0</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>115.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Help/Family Support including Cusp of Care</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City-wide and Support services</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>14.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Change/Transformation support</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL REVENUE BUDGET</strong></td>
<td>145.3</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>151.5</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>171.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>176.2</td>
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**UNMET NEED: FURTHER FUNDING REQUIRED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Area</th>
<th>2015/16 Further Required £m</th>
<th>2016/17 Further Required £m</th>
<th>2017/18 Further Required £m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safeguarding (including social workers)</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children in Care</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Help/Family Support including Cusp of Care</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City-wide and Support Services</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Change/Transformation support</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>7.3</td>
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</table>