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NOTICE OF MEETING

Meeting	Children and Families Advisory Panel
Date and Time	Tuesday 17th October 2017 at 1.30 pm
Place	Chute Room, Ell Court, The Castle, Winchester
Enquiries to	members.services@hants.gov.uk

John Coughlan CBE
Chief Executive
The Castle, Winchester SO23 8UJ

FILMING AND BROADCAST NOTIFICATION

This meeting may be recorded and broadcast live on the County Council's website. The meeting may also be recorded and broadcast by the press and members of the public – please see the Filming Protocol available on the County Council's website.

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Members who believe they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting must declare that interest and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3 Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter is discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore all Members with a Non-Pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at the meeting should consider whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 2 of the Code, consider whether it is appropriate to leave the meeting while the matter is discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting

4. DEPUTATIONS

To receive any deputations notified under Standing Order 12.

5. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive any announcements the Chairman may wish to make.

6. YOUTH JUSTICE ANNUAL PLAN (Pages 3 - 32)

To receive a report from the Director of Children's Services in relation to the Youth Justice Annual Plan 2017-18.

7. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEWING SERVICE AND SAFEGUARDING UNIT: ANNUAL CARE PLANNING AUDIT (Pages 33 - 60)

To receive a report from the Director of Children's Services in relation to the Independent Reviewing Service and Safeguarding Unit, including the Annual Care Planning Audit.

8. ESTABLISHING A CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD (Pages 61 - 126)

To receive a report from the Director of Children's Services in relation to the establishment of a Corporate Parenting Board.

9. UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN UPDATE (Pages 127 - 134)

To receive a report from the Director of Children's Services to provide an update in relation to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children in Hampshire.

ABOUT THIS AGENDA:

On request, this agenda can be provided in alternative versions (such as large print, Braille or audio) and in alternative languages.

ABOUT THIS MEETING:

The press and public are welcome to attend the public sessions of the meeting. If you have any particular requirements, for example if you require wheelchair access, please contact members.services@hants.gov.uk for assistance.

County Councillors attending as appointed members of this Committee or by virtue of Standing Order 18.5; or with the concurrence of the Chairman in connection with their duties as members of the Council or as a local County Councillor qualify for travelling expenses.

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Children and Families Advisory Panel
Date:	17 October 2017
Title:	Update on the work of Hampshire Youth Offending Team and the Hampshire Youth Justice Plan 2016-17
Report From:	Steve Crocker, Director of Children's Services

Contact name: Jayne Shelbourn-Barrow, Head of Youth Offending Service

Tel: 01962 845501

Email: Jayne.shelbourn.barrow@hants.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the work and update of recent developments within Hampshire Youth Offending Team. Attached to this paper as Appendix 1 is the annual Hampshire Youth Justice Plan for information and reference.

2. Contextual information

2.1. The primary aim of the youth justice system is to prevent offending and reoffending by children and young people (Crime and Disorder Act 1998). This legislation requires all local authorities to ensure they have a Youth Offending Team (YOT), and the YOT must be funded (in cash and in kind) by all the statutory partners who are the local authority, health, police, probation and the central government Youth Justice Board grant. These agencies are equally responsible through this Act for local youth justice outcomes. The Crime and Disorder Act stipulates that every multi-agency Youth Offending Team must contain at least one social worker, probation worker, police officer and education specialist. Hampshire Youth Offending Team is governed by and accountable to the Youth Offending Team Management Board which comprises of senior leaders of the statutory partnership who are jointly responsible for youth justice outcomes in Hampshire. This Board is currently chaired by the Assistant Director of Children's Services (Children and Families).

2.2. Hampshire Youth Offending Team aims to prevent offending and reoffending by children and young people aged 10-17 years. This aim involves significant criminal justice statutory functions which include the assessment and supervision of children and young people subject to out of court disposals, court orders, custodial sentences and bail and remand. Youth Offending Teams also have statutory duties to co-operate under the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangement framework (MAPPA), and a duty under the 2004 Children Act to

promote the welfare and safeguarding of children and young people. Hampshire Youth Offending Team is well integrated into the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Criminal Justice Board, Hampshire Safeguarding Children's Board, the MAPPA Strategic Management Board, Children's Trust and Supporting Troubled Families Programme.

2.3. In addition to the statutory functions, Hampshire YOT also has a significant investment in the (non statutory) prevention of offending, with the aim of diverting children and young people away from the criminal justice system at an earlier stage. Hampshire Youth Offending Team assess and supervise community resolution disposals, which are dispensed by the police, to avoid those children becoming first time entrants into the criminal justice system. The decision making panels that were set up in 2016 continue to develop, the aim being to provide both children and their victims with a satisfactory outcome, using restorative justice processes and diverting away from formal criminal justice sanctions. In addition, Youth Crime Prevention (YCP) Workers provide the 'prevention arm' of the Youth Offending Team, providing assessment and interventions with children who are at risk of becoming involved in crime and anti-social or harmful behaviour. Youth Crime Prevention Workers came back under line management of the YOT in December 2016 but remained closely aligned to the early help hubs and wider early help offer in Hampshire.

2.4. Hampshire YOT is geographically represented across the county in four teams. We staff and service the three Youth Courts in the county in addition to the Crown Court sitting in various locations. We work with children in custody from Hampshire accommodated across England and Wales. At the beginning of September 2017 there were eight Hampshire young people in custody.

2.5. The Youth Justice Plan for Hampshire is an annual statutory requirement which is submitted each year to the Youth Justice Board (a non departmental public body that oversees youth justice and sponsored by the Ministry of Justice). The Hampshire plan is attached and sets the strategic direction and key priorities for 2017-18. In summary these priorities are as follows:

- Ensure readiness for and plan, respond and deliver within the available reducing resources, youth justice services that maximise opportunities through partnerships
- Continue to improve performance in line with performance framework
- Implementation of AssetPlus and closely monitor impact on timeliness
- Improve and develop relationships with Health (including Public Health) and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner/new PCC (regarding prevention and Restorative Justice practice notably)
- Continue to improve the quality assurance framework within Hampshire Youth Offending Team and ensure the views of children, parents and victims are involved in improving the quality of services.
- Maintain the 'business as usual' partnership with the Isle of Wight YOT; explore further models of delivery both strategically and operationally, that will benefit and enhance performance and outcomes of both YOTs.

2.6. The full Youth Justice Plan covers the detail of how the above will be achieved, written in a format required by the Youth Justice Board. Following the submission of the plan a letter was received back specifically commending Hampshire on:

- Its exceptional first time entrant rate
- The significant reduction in the number of young people sent to custody
- Positive national Standards audit result

2.7. At any one time, Hampshire Youth Offending Team is working with 230-300 children and young people across the county; during 2016/17 we worked with just over 885 in total. Furthermore, the Youth Crime Prevention Team is working with around 150 children at any one time. In addition, Hampshire YOT works with both the victims and the parents of those children and young people. All victims of youth crime are contacted by specialist trained Restorative Justice staff within the YOT and offered the opportunity to participate in a restorative intervention if they wish. Hampshire Youth Offending Team was awarded the Restorative Services Quality Mark by the Restorative Justice Council April 2016. Parents may be subject to statutory court orders, or participate in voluntary programmes with our staff and partners.

3. Finance

3.1. Hampshire Youth Offending Team's pooled partnership 2017/18 revenue budget is circa £3.7m (in both cash and/or staffing resource from partners) with approximately 80 staff (including those employed by partners). The Youth Crime Prevention budget is circa £565k with 16 staff. Hampshire County Council Children's Services department contributes the largest percentage (50%), followed by the Youth Justice Board (30%), probation (6%), police (6%) and health (2%) and other (6%). Hampshire Constabulary and the five Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Groups contribute their resource through staffing (police officers and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Nurses respectively); whilst Hampshire Children's Services and the Youth Justice Board contribute in cash. The National Probation Service has revised its national contribution to youth offending teams this year and from 2017 is providing four probation staff and a contribution to non-staffing costs. The YOT Management Board oversees the partnership budget. The separate Youth Crime Prevention budget is currently funded by a Police and Crime Commissioner grant (42%). The fact that the YOT is funded and staffed by four statutory agencies does present some risks and challenges in the current economic climate. Partners need to ensure that the delivery of youth justice services is done as effectively and efficiently as possible in order to reduce and prevent offending, and make best use of the financial resources available and guarantee it is flexible and responsive enough to deal with the demand for services required.

3.2. There was a full service review and restructure with an estimated £235k saving from the 2016/17 budget.

4. Performance

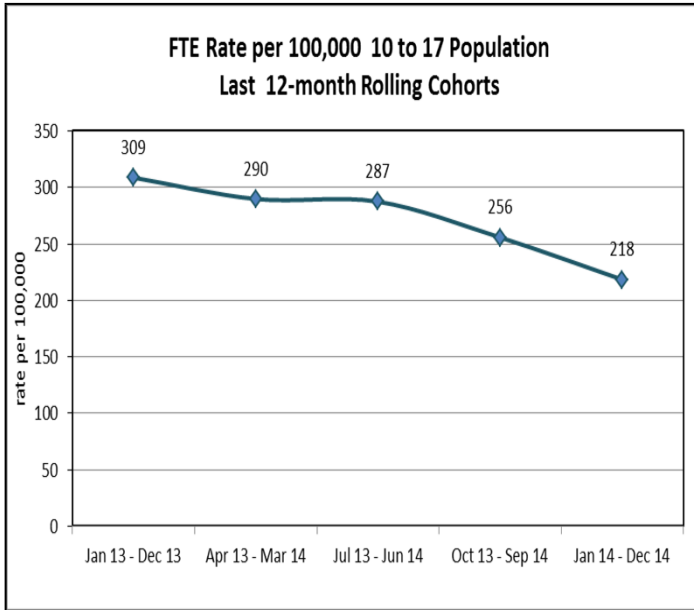
4.1. All YOTs are required to nationally report to the Ministry of Justice via the Youth Justice Board on three national performance indicators. The Hampshire YOT Management Board sets internal targets annually for these indicators and monitors them. The performance indicators are:

- **Reducing the number of first time entrants into the criminal justice system** (measured as the rate per 100.000 10-17 year old population)
- **Reducing reoffending** (measured as number and percentage of young people who reoffend and number of re-offences)
- **Reducing the number of children in custody** (measured as rate per 1000 per 10-17 population).

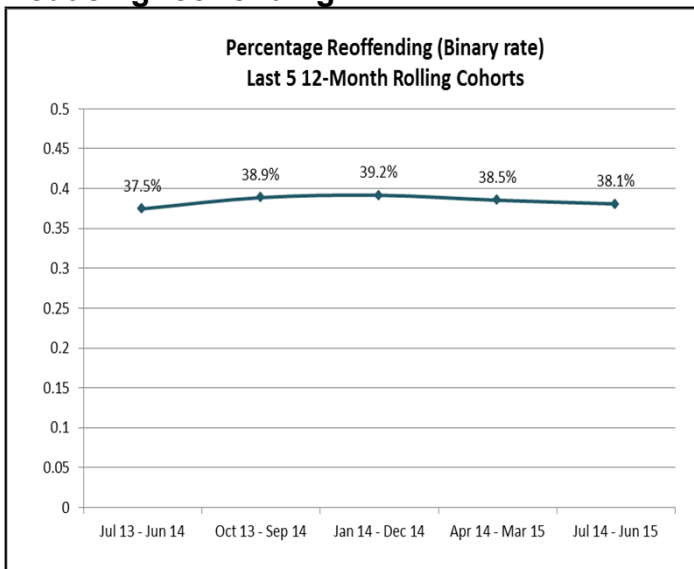
4.2. Nationally there continues to be a downward trend in children and young people entering the criminal justice system (40.5% reduction in first time entrants since 2012/13) and the number of children in custody (5% reduction since 2012/13). Hampshire YOT has followed this trend and currently performs well on these indicators, (59.9% drop in FTE and 1% reduction in custody since 2012/13). Nationally, reoffending rates have dropped slightly and the cohort of children in the system is much reduced. In Hampshire, the cohort size has fallen by 60% since 2012/13. It is also important to note that reducing numbers do not necessarily equate to reducing workload. We have significant evidence that the children and young people with whom we are working are presenting with complex needs, risks and behaviours. Around 17% are looked after children, and our health needs analysis indicated a plethora of emotional, physical and mental health related issues experienced by children known to YOT. We are therefore working with a smaller number of children, but a larger percentage of those have complex and significant risks and needs. Furthermore, trends and fluctuations in the criminal justice system are not simple to control and link to a huge number of variables. This can range from changes in policing practice and targets, legislation, demographics, to media and political events and incidents.

4.3. Hampshire YOT has maintained relatively strong performance in recent years on all three indicators in relation to both national, regional and comparator YOTs. Latest figures show Hampshire performs better than the national rates for all three indicators. The latest performance data is shown below for information:

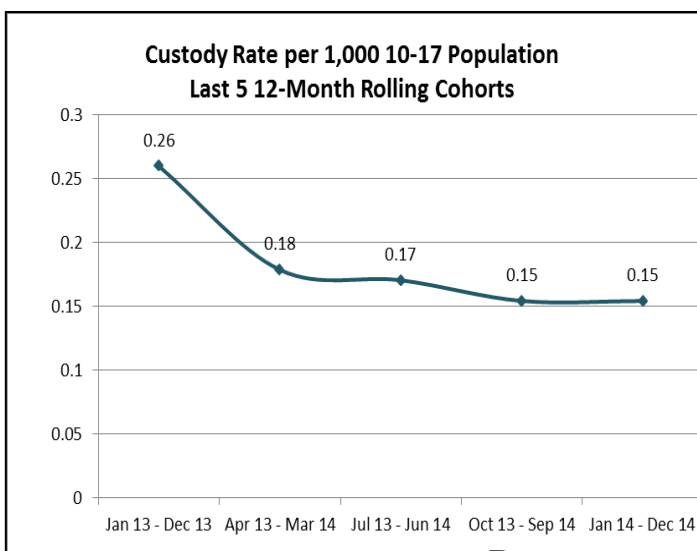
First time entrants



Reducing reoffending



Reducing Custody



5. Other Key Issues

- 5.1. The final report of the Charlie Taylor Review of the Youth Justice System and the Government's response were published in December 2016. To date there has been limited further publication in relation to the proposals set out in the report.
- 5.2. Following the general election a new Secretary of State for Justice was appointed. To date there has been limited information on the direction for Youth Justice so the Hampshire plan may need to change to reflect any announcements made.

6. Recommendation(s)

- 6.1. That the Children and Families Advisory Panel note the work of the Youth Offending Team and the Youth Justice Plan for Hampshire.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Strategic Plan**

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

- 1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

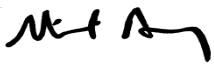
See Hampshire Youth Justice Plan Impact statement section C.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

See Hampshire Youth Justice Plan Sections A and B.

Children's Services Department: Service Plan 2017/18

HAMPSHIRE YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN (as required under s40 (1) of Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

Service:	Hampshire Youth Offending Team
Service manager/lead:	Jayne Shelbourn-Barrow, Head of Service
Chair of YOT Board Page 11	 Stuart Ashley Assistant Director (Children & Families)

Introduction

This plan is required in statute, submitted to the Youth Justice Board annually. It is the sixth strategic youth justice plan for Hampshire Youth Offending Team (HYOT), which was formed on 1st April 2012 following the disaggregation of Wessex YOT. This plan also comprises the youth offending service plan required for Hampshire County Council's Children's Services department. It sets the strategic direction and key priorities for HYOT in 2017/18. This year, the Youth Justice Plan is required by 30th July 2017. Following the General Election a new Secretary of State for Justice was appointed. However to date there have been no announcements in respect of youth justice, so the contents of this plan may need to change and adapt over the coming year.

Summary of Achievements and review of 2016/17:

- Maintained performance across the national indicators, with further reductions in first time entrants
- Continued to develop the triage panels to enable better out of court decision making
- Maintained support and referral to the successful evidence based Wessex Dance Academy
- Delivered three Break for Change (adolescent to parent violence) programmes in conjunction with and funding from OPCC Arts strand
- Embedded the PYP policy into practice and established information and intelligence meetings with Police safer neighbourhood teams.
- Continued to deliver and develop the content of 'Learning Lessons' workshops based on recent Critical Learning Reviews, delivered to all staff.
- Maintained good performance and service delivery during a planned service review and resulting service restructure which is now complete.
- Commended in the JTAI inspection domestic abuse in December 2016.
- Following post inspection action plan significant improvement in timeliness of assessments and reviews.
- Continued partnership with the Willow team (MET/CSE) with regular management attendance at their nominations and team meetings.
- Maintenance of high data protection standards ensuring that all staff have access to a secure locked bag, file logs and operational key lock safes.
- Ongoing Implementation of keeping safe at work practices including home visit assessments and staff check in process.
- The third Summer Arts College project took place in August 2016 with 4 young people achieving their Bronze Arts Award. Funding has been secured to run a new Summer Arts College project in July 2017 with a focus on Mental Health through the use of poetry and photography.
- HYOT achieved the RSQM (Restorative Solutions Quality Mark) for RJ. Press release announcing this was in May 2016.

Major in year changes to service delivery

Following the full service review, the restructuring of Hampshire YOT was completed which included Youth Crime Prevention staff coming under YOT line management from 1 December 2016. The YCP staff remain part of the early help offer in Hampshire but the day to day management now resides with YOT.

The anticipated budget reduction from the YJB grant did not take place, resulting Hampshire YOT commencing the 2017/18 budget year in a healthy position with no further immediate service changes planned.

The launch of Assetplus was delayed from 2016 and the teams have been working hard to train staff for full implementation from 1 July 2017.

The Head of Service (Alison Smailes) went on secondment in September 2016 with interim management arrangements put in place. The secondment was extended leading to the appointment of a temporary Head of Service from May 2017.

Innovative or promising practice

HYOT continue to support the Wessex Dance Academy in partnership with Hampshire County Council and Hampshire Cultural Trust. We have delivered three Break4Change programmes and continue to provide Rapid English support, (now Communicate). HYOT Restorative Justice Programme continues to develop and there are case studies evidencing the positive impact this is having. The ongoing development of the triage panels with the police help to make better informed decisions about out of court disposals. We have delivered two Harmful Sexual Behaviour Intervention Training events in partnership with CAMHS which continue to be revised after each session

Partnership response to inspection reports published in the past 12 months

HYOT was involved in the Joint targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of the multi-agency response to domestic abuse. The report highlighted the following strengths of the YOT:

- The work of the YOT is well integrated into the partnership

- Assessments in the YOT as well as the impact of domestic abuse on the child are well analysed and understood. They lead the appropriate provision of targeted interventions including the use of parenting support, restorative justice and some sensitive one-to-one work with children and young people.
- The YOT ... works well with the police; for example, through the triage process and the flagging of young domestic abuse instigators.

Structure and Governance

HYOT partnership provides youth justice services for the county of Hampshire. The role of YOTs, under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, is to prevent offending and reoffending by children and young people. Under the 1998 Act, four agencies (the local authority, police, probation and health), in addition to a grant from the Youth Justice Board, contribute to the finance, resource and staffing of the YOT. HYOT is supported and overseen nationally by the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, a non departmental public body which is sponsored by the Ministry of Justice. Locally, HYOT is accountable to, and governed by, the HYOT Management Board. The Board consists of representatives from the four statutory agencies (Hampshire County Council Children's Services, Hampshire Constabulary, Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Groups and the National Probation Service), along with representatives from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Community Safety partnerships/district councils, HMCTS, Housing, Public Health and the voluntary sector. The Head of Service for HYOT is line managed by the Assistant Director of Children's Services (Stuart Ashley) who is also the current Chair of the Management Board.

HYOT is structured into four area teams for local delivery, with countywide functions being managed centrally. The four area teams cover:

North West (district council areas of Basingstoke and Deane and Test Valley north)

South West (district council areas of Eastleigh, New Forest, Winchester and Test Valley south)

North East (district council areas of Rushmoor, Hart and East Hants)

South East (district council areas of Fareham, Gosport and Havant).

The countywide services of Restorative Justice, Parenting and Employment, Training and Education are managed by a central manager. The 'prevention arm' of HYOT is the Youth Crime Prevention Team (YCP) who have a close link to the new Family

Support Service and early help hubs in Hampshire. YCP work is currently funded jointly from the HYOT partnership budget (via a proportion of the YJB grant), Children's Services and a grant from the Police and Crime Commissioner (which previously came direct from the Home Office).

Under a strategic five year partnership with the Isle of Wight Council, Hampshire Children's Services have managed the island's Children's Services (social care and education) since July 2013. This arrangement included the YOT from October 2013. HYOT's Head of Service therefore line manages the Isle of Wight YOT's Team Manager and the Island's Team Manager and Assistant Team Manager form part of a joint management team with Hampshire YOT. The Isle of Wight YOT retains a separate Management Board and is directly accountable to the Isle of Wight Council through its elected members. The Chair for both Hampshire and Isle of Wight Boards is the same (Assistant Director of Children's Services).

HYOT's Board oversees and monitors the performance of the YOT against both the national and local indicators on a quarterly basis, including YJB requirements and conditions of grant such as compliance with secure estate placement information, completion of national standards audits and the review of all Critical Learning incidents which come through the Board in the first instance with an annual summary being provided in addition by the Head of Service. An annual report of quality assurance activity and progress/outcomes is also received by the Board.

HYOT has a strong commitment to improving and developing its safeguarding practice. The Head of Service sits on the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Board and attends 2 sub group (Workforce development, serious case review group). All of the other LSCB sub groups are attended by a YOT manager. In addition, HYOT has strong links with the Willow team (Child Sexual Exploitation/Missing, Exploited, Trafficked) Team and is an integral part of the Hampshire Missing Exploited Trafficked Group. HYOT received positive feedback at the recent Section 11 audit interviews.

Resources and Value for Money

HYOT partnership has a current revenue budget of circa £3.7m (both cash and staffing resource from partners) with approximately 67.5fte staff. Appendix One provides an overview of the HYOT funding for 2017/18. The Youth Crime Prevention budget is £565k with 16 staff. The largest percentage of HYOT partnership's funding and resource is contributed by Hampshire Children's Services (50%), followed by the Youth Justice Board (30%), probation (6%), police (6%), health (2%) and other (6%). Hampshire Constabulary and the five Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Groups contribute their resource through staffing (four police offices with oversight of a designated sergeant, and two Child and Adolescent Mental Health Nurses with a half time health team lead respectively), whilst Hampshire Children's Services and the Youth Justice Board

contribute in cash. The National Probation Service has revised and from 2017 is providing four probation staff and a contribution to non-staffing costs. The YOT Management Board oversees the partnership budget. The separate Youth Crime Prevention budget is currently funded by a Police and Crime Commissioner grant (42%), Hampshire YOT's contribution from the Youth Justice Board grant (36%) and Hampshire Children's Services (22%).

An overview structure chart of the whole of HYOT is attached in Appendix 2 – this is a new structure from 16/17 following a service review and restructure, resulting in an estimated £235K saving from the 16/17 budget. B7 and B8 returns to the Youth Justice Board detail staffing by agency, and staffing and volunteers by gender and ethnicity as required

As is the case nationally, the number of young people the YOT works with continues to decrease in number, meaning that caseloads are reducing. However, the complexities of those children in the system are well documented nationally, and replicated locally by our health needs analysis and Community Safeguarding and Public Protection Incidents. Despite decreasing numbers, we continue to require a skilled team of multi-agency practitioners who can use evidence based interventions that respond to current needs and risk displayed by those children who are on the edge of, or who come into the Criminal Justice System. Furthermore with YCP officers now being managed by the YOT since December 2016, we are seeing increased demand for prevention / lower level interventions which is already placing pressure on the YCP officers.

Partnership Arrangements

In addition to the safeguarding partnership arrangements mentioned in the Structure and Governance section above, HYOT has strong links with Hampshire's Supporting Troubled Families Programme (STFP), and is represented within all ten local co-ordination groups; the Head of Service is a member of the STFP management steering group. The Head of Service sits on the Hampshire Children's Trust Board (with team and assistant team managers representing HYOT within the Locality Children's Partnerships and community safety partnership arrangements), on the 'Care Matters' Corporate Parenting Board (with team managers supporting sub groups) Representing the four pan Hampshire YOTs (Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and Isle of Wight) the Head of Service is a member of the Local Criminal Justice Board, the MAPPA Strategic Management Board and the Hampshire Constabulary Youth Strategy Governance Board.

As noted above, Hampshire Children's Services entered into a five year partnership with the Isle of Wight Council in July 2013, becoming responsible for the management of Children's Services on the island. In line with these arrangements, HYOT took

on the management of the Isle of Wight YOT in October 2013. As a result, the Head of Service is also embedded into the specific partnership arrangements of the Isle of Wight, including as a member of the LSCB and chairing one of its sub groups.

HYOT currently commissions one service, relating to the statutory provision of appropriate adults for children in police custody. This contract has just been re-tendered, with HYOT leading on a joint tender with HCC procurement colleagues which collaborated with Isle of Wight, Southampton and Portsmouth YOTs along with Hampshire, Southampton and Portsmouth Adult Services and Hampshire Constabulary. This was in an attempt to enable a consistent and efficient service across the whole geographical area that provides a quality service to both children and vulnerable adults and is value for money, making best use of reducing partner resources.

HYOT meets its duty under 'Prevent' in collaboration with partners. This duty is monitored under both the safeguarding board and a pan- Hampshire Prevent Board of which a lead team manager for Prevent in HYOT is a member. Hampshire Children's Services have a Prevent Strategy and action plan, alongside a training strategy, of which HYOT is a part (currently a multi-agency self assessment Prevent audit is being collated). All YOT staff and volunteers have completed the Prevent e-learning training and will undertake WRAP training alongside Children Service's colleagues. Several HYOT staff/managers are WRAP Trained Trainers. HYOT collaborates with Southampton, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight Youth Offending teams to ensure representation and involvement within regional County Lines (Gang and Serious Youth Violence) forums and the Hampshire Serious and Organised Crime agenda.

Risks to future delivery against the Youth Justice measures

The overarching risks to future delivery for HYOT can be summarised in the following significant areas:

- (i) Future reduction in financial and other resource – any further reductions in finance or resource from partners will present a risk to future service delivery. Hampshire as a local authority is planning to make further efficiency savings required up to 2020 and the future of the youth justice grant is uncertain. There has been no announcement following the appointment of a new Secretary of State for Justice.
- (ii) Maintenance of Prevention and 'non-statutory' work – HYOT Management Board is committed, in principle, to maintain the non statutory 'prevention arm' of the YOT. The proven benefit of early intervention and diversion, along with the continued decrease in first time entrants, has reduced the need for more costly statutory interventions. However, if the

OPCC grant is reduced/ceased and if there is further pressure on the HYOT partnership budget, the funding for prevention would be seriously compromised. The risk is then in a potential increase in the statutory caseload for YOT.

- (iii) Management capacity under pressure due to IOW YOT partnership – Due to service reviews across both YOTs over the past two years, the manager posts left have wider spans of accountability and areas of responsibility than they had before; for Hampshire this includes key responsibilities on the Isle of Wight.
- (iv) An increase in reoffending – as the cohort size of children we are working with decreases, but the risks and needs of these children continues to be complex and demanding, we need to constantly ensure we are using interventions that are appropriate for and achieve the best outcomes.

The above risks, whilst testing, will be mitigated by:

- (i) Continued development, through the HYOT Management Board, of the strategic links with all partners around an understanding of shared outcomes which can be achieved jointly. Maximising opportunities (for example, parenting pathways with Barnardo's, Children's Services Innovation Fund volunteering and other streams, potential Partners in Practice, Supporting Troubled Families Programme). Robust financial planning that accommodates the demand and resource implications from 2017, consideration of ways of working with the Isle of Wight YOT to increase capacity and improve performance across both YOTs.
- (ii) Ensure continued good communication with the Police and Crime Commissioner and his office, highlighting those areas of effective and evidence based practice used by HYOT and Youth Crime Prevention which contribute to the Police Crime Plan objectives. Embedding the triage decision making panels with police partners and the role of the police officers within HYOT. Continuing to develop strong links with the Family Support Service Hubs and the early help offer and Supporting Troubled Families Programme.
- (iii) Continued strong relationship with Children's Services at all levels, especially in relation to the offending of children looked after, remands, resettlement and accommodation for those aged 16 plus. Effective use of all levels of management including the Assistant Team Manager roles and the joint Performance and Quality Assurance Co-ordinator post which sits across both YOTs.

- (iv) Develop further the YOT's quality assurance framework and better use of local data to understand trends and patterns, enabling co-ordination, and using evidence based approaches together with partners to help children and young people stop offending.

Section A: service priorities

Guidance on priorities is provided within the service planning toolkit.

Priority no.	Priority description	Which corporate and departmental priorities does this link to? (e.g. CYPP1 - see priorities list below)
1	Ensure readiness for and plan, respond and deliver within the available reducing resources, youth justice services that maximise opportunities through partnerships.	HCC1, SH3, SH4, CYPP1, CYPP2, CYPP3, CYPP4, CYPP5
2	Continue to improve performance in line with performance framework	HCC1, SH4, CYPP2, CYPP4, CYPP5
3	Implementation of AssetPlus and closely monitor impact on timeliness	CYPP1-5
Page 20	Improve and develop partnerships with Health (including public health) and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and new PCC (regarding prevention and Restorative Justice practice notably)	HCC1, HCC2, SH1, SH3, SH4, CYPP1, CYPP2, CYPP4
	Continue to improve the quality assurance framework within HYOT and ensure the views of children, parents and victims are involved in improving the quality of our services	SH3, SH4, CYPP4
6	Maintain the 'business as usual' partnership with the Isle of Wight YOT; explore further models of delivery both strategically and operationally, that will benefit and enhance performance and outcomes of both YOTs.	SH3, SH4

Priorities list:

Corporate aims		<i>Shaping Hampshire</i> priorities		Children and Young People's Plan 2015-18 priorities	
HCC1	Hampshire safer and more secure for all.	SH1	Health and wellbeing: improving health and wellbeing for all	CYPP1	<p>Outcome - Be healthy</p> <p>Priorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employ strategies with all agencies to promote emotional wellbeing and good mental health. 2. Promote healthy weights and physical activity. 3. Promote health and wellbeing in pregnancy and childhood. 4. Promote access to health services for vulnerable groups of children and young people. 5. Continue to work to reduce the rate of teenage conceptions among girls aged 15-17. 6. Reduce and tackle substance misuse.
HCC2	Maximising wellbeing.	SH2	Economy: Promoting economic prosperity and protecting the environment	CYPP2	<p>Outcome - Stay safe</p> <p>Priorities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve awareness of and responsiveness to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). 2. Reduce the number and improve responses to children who go missing from home or care. 3. Help children and young people understand how to keep themselves safe (recognising grooming, cyberbullying), thereby reducing the possibility of children entering risky behaviour. 4. Work to reduce the incidence of domestic violence and its impact on children.
HCC3	Enhancing our quality of place.	SH3	Communities: Working with communities to enhance local services	CYPP3	<p>Outcome – Enjoy and achieve</p> <p>Priorities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the proportion of children attending good or outstanding schools. 2. Continue to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged children, especially those in care, those eligible for free school meals, those with special educational needs and those who belong to specific black and minority ethnic groups that do not do as well as children in other groups. 3. Examine ways in which we can better engage with the independent schools sector in Hampshire.

Corporate aims		Shaping Hampshire priorities		Children and Young People's Plan 2015-18 priorities	
					4. Target support to parents who need help with their children's education.
Page 22		SH4	Efficiency: delivering high quality, cost-effective public services	CYPP4	<p>Outcome – Make a positive contribution</p> <p>Priorities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce offending and reoffending by young people. 2. Promote the meaningful participation of all children and young people. 3. Promote wider partnership with providers of varying youth services including district, town and parish councils and the voluntary sector. 4. Promote Rights, Respect and Responsibilities (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child), to help children become responsible citizens, understand and promote their own rights and their responsibilities, and respect the rights of others. 5. Promote the range of local activities provided by the voluntary and community sectors including National Citizen Service and Duke of Edinburgh's Award in order to allow children and young people to participate in activities beyond the school day.
				CYPP5	<p>Outcome – Achieve economic wellbeing</p> <p>Priorities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the number of young people in education, employment and training, including those that are Care Leavers. 2. Provide and develop opportunities for young people through apprenticeships and internships. 3. Promote access to high quality careers information, advice and guidance. 4. Work with two Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) to ensure that the development of young people's skills for employment have a high priority. 5. Support Hampshire (Troubled) Families Programme to deliver change for identified children and their families with multiple problems including parents/carers not in work and children not attending school.

Section B – delivery section

The delivery section sets out the key activities that need to take place in order to achieve the service priorities. All activities should be delivered within agreed budgets and levels of workforce. Success measures are used to assess progress against activities and priorities.

Further guidance on establishing activities, success measures and targets is provided in the service planning toolkit, available online at:

<http://intranet.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/pandp.htm>

Note - The full details within this delivery section will form the basis of the content of local area and functional team plans with Hampshire YOT and are not contained here. The plans will be revised, reviewed and adapted throughout the year, especially in light of the Taylor Review and any further changes or reductions to the HYOT budget. The main focus this year is to continue to achieve good performance whilst stabilising the service in the aftermath of the current service review and resulting changes to staffing.

Priority no.	Activity	Lead officer	Success measure	Baseline 2017	Target (or target date) 2017/18	Performance update section (to be completed at quarterly intervals, when requested by Planning & Performance Mngr)		
						Current data	RAG rating	Commentary
1	To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop links with new Family Support Service Hubs - Understanding and monitoring the impact Triage panels on reoffending rates - Ongoing financial monitoring and planning with management board once further funding/direction known. 	HOS with managers and HYOT Board	Attendance of YCP at EHH meetings and data collation around EH cases with YCP involvement. Reduction in reoffending rates / analysis of impact	N/A	100% involvement in EHH process			

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Priority no.	Activity	Lead officer	Success measure	Baseline 2017	Target (or target date) 2017/18	Performance update section (to be completed at quarterly intervals, when requested by Planning & Performance Mngr)		
						Current data	RAG rating	Commentary
2	<p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HYOT HMIP Action Plan actions - Reduce the number of first time entrants into the youth justice system (measured by rate of first time entrants to the youth justice system per 100,000 young people aged 10-17) - Reducing reoffending (measured by number of reoffenders who reoffend within a 12 month rolling cohort) - Reducing the number of children and young people in custody (measured by number of custodial sentences per 1,000 young people aged 10-17). - Develop performance / distance travelled measures for YCP interventions 	HOS and managers with HYOT Board partners	All actions on HMIP Action Plan completed.	<p>Rate of 218 at 2015-16 year end</p> <p>38.1%</p> <p>19 at 2015-16 year end</p>	<p>Rate of <200 at 2016-17 year end</p> <p><36%</p> <p>16 at 2016-17 year end</p>			

Priority no.	Activity	Lead officer	Success measure	Baseline 2017	Target (or target date) 2017/18	Performance update section (to be completed at quarterly intervals, when requested by Planning & Performance Mngr)		
						Current data	RAG rating	Commentary
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitor the implementation of Assetplus following go live date of 1st July, including impact on timeliness as a result of new processes - Ensuring any gaps identified, issues with processes are resolved. - Pilot the short format for Community Resolutions. 	HOS, and leads Karen Golden and Juliette Harcourt with HYOT Trained Trainers	<p>New processes embedded with no long term impact on timeliness.</p> <p>Ongoing training and exception reporting business as usual</p> <p>Decision made with regards to continued use</p>	N/A	Update Sept 17			

Priority no.	Activity	Lead officer	Success measure	Baseline 2017	Target (or target date) 2017/18	Performance update section (to be completed at quarterly intervals, when requested by Planning & Performance Mngr)		
						Current data	RAG rating	Commentary
4	<p>To include-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - update HYOT health needs analysis in 2016/17 - review of mental health provision within YOT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continued development of relationship with new PCC and his office via LCJB and other forums <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake pilot on sexually harmful behaviour in New Forest area and feedback to HYOT on proposals to include review of HSB training pathways in continued partnership with CAMHS. 	HOS, Chair of HYOT Board, Health Team Leader	<p>Fully staffed and functioning health team working with children and young people on identified well being, emotional and mental health needs, updated understanding of health needs of current HYOT cohort</p> <p>Ongoing support of PCC to achieve joint aims in preventing offending and offering restorative interventions. Continued reduction in first time entrants (see priority 2 above)</p> <p>Report to HYOT Jan 2018 with clear recommendations for way forward.</p>	N/A	<p>Report to HYOT Jan 18</p> <p>Report to HYOT April 18</p>			

Priority no.	Activity	Lead officer	Success measure	Baseline 2017	Target (or target date) 2017/18	Performance update section (to be completed at quarterly intervals, when requested by Planning & Performance Mngr)		
						Current data	RAG rating	Commentary
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue Participation and Diversity(PaD) group and the associated annual action plan - Revise and update the HYOT Quality Assurance framework in light of AssetPlus, including new suite of reports. 	Managers/ Performance and QA Co-ordinator.	<p>PaD group action plan delivered and reported to HYOT Board – evidence of the views of children and young people have been incorporated into service delivery.</p> <p>Evidence in annual Quality Assurance report that QA activity and improved performance (e.g. assessment reviews).</p>	N/A	March 2017			
6	<p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joint training (e.g. learning lessons workshops) - Joint management work (e.g. on the continued update and development of policies and procedures for both YOTs) - Exploration of governance functions and future options. 	Managers and HYOT Board/Chair	Increased management capacity and maximise opportunities to streamline any further processes or activities	N/A	March 2017			

Section C – Impact checklist

The impact checklist is based on a series of 'yes/no' questions, designed to assess whether service planning has considered and/or addressed risks; communication needs; and statutory requirements concerning equalities, community safety and biodiversity/sustainability. Further guidance is provided within the service planning toolkit, available online at: <http://intranet.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/pandp.htm>

Key questions		Yes/No or N/A
(a) Risk management (full guidance on all aspects of risk management is available online at: http://intranet.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/risk-and-business-continuity-management/cs-riskmanagement.htm):		
1	Are there any risks relating to the activities in your service plan?	Yes
2	If so, are measures in place to eliminate or reduce any unacceptable risks to an acceptable level? If no, please see the Children's Services risk management toolkit, available online at the above link.	Yes
3	Are contingency plans in place (if needed)? If no, please see the Children's Services risk management toolkit, available online at the above link.	N/A
4	Are there adequate resources to deliver the contingency plan? If no, please discuss with your line manager.	N/A
(b) Communications and participation:		
5	Does your service need any communications support? (e.g. internal or external awareness raising, promotional campaigns etc.) If yes, please contact the Children's Services Communications Lead, Diana Leahy (01962 847368)	No
6	Does your service plan include activities that will involve children, young people and families in planning, delivery and monitoring? Advice and guidance on participation is available from the Participation Team,	Yes
(c) Equality and diversity (full guidance is available online at: http://intranet.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/equalitiesdiversity.htm):		
7	Does your service plan include activities that will improve equality of access, particularly for those with 'protected characteristics'? (see below)	Yes
8	Will the activities in your service plan have a positive impact on any of the groups of 'protected characteristics'? (see below)	Yes

Key questions		Yes/No or N/A
9	<p>Will any groups of 'protected characteristics' be disadvantaged by the activities within your service plan, or unable to use your service? (see below)</p> <p>If yes, then a full Equality Impact Assessment should be completed. Guidance is available online at the above link.</p>	No
(d) Community safety (further information is available online at: http://intranet.hants.gov.uk/saferhampshire.htm):		
10	Does your service plan include any activities that will reduce crime and disorder, or make it easier to prevent, or help to make people feel safer?	Yes
(e) Biodiversity and sustainability (further information is available online at: http://intranet.hants.gov.uk/sustainability/sustain-board.htm):		
11	Will the activities in your service plan help to reduce the County Council's impact on the environment, or help the Authority to adapt to climate change? (e.g. by reducing energy consumption)	N/A

Protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010): The public sector equality duty covers eight protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Race
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion or belief
- Gender
- Sexual orientation

- Marriage and civil partnership are covered, but only for the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination (aim 1 of the general duty)

Hampshire County Council is also committed to reducing inequalities between rural and urban areas of the county. Although not a statutory requirement, it is good practice to consider activities that will improve equality of access for people in rural areas.

The general equality duty (Equality Act 2010): Public bodies must have *due regard* to the need to:

1. eliminate unlawful discrimination; harassment; and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
2. advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
3. foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The general duty applies to public authorities (including schools) **and** private/voluntary organisations carrying out functions on behalf of a public authority (either commissioned, or funded through grants). The duty applies to all work, including services, policy making, employment, procurement and decision making.

Appendix 1 – HYOT Budget

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Hampshire County Council Funding Streams

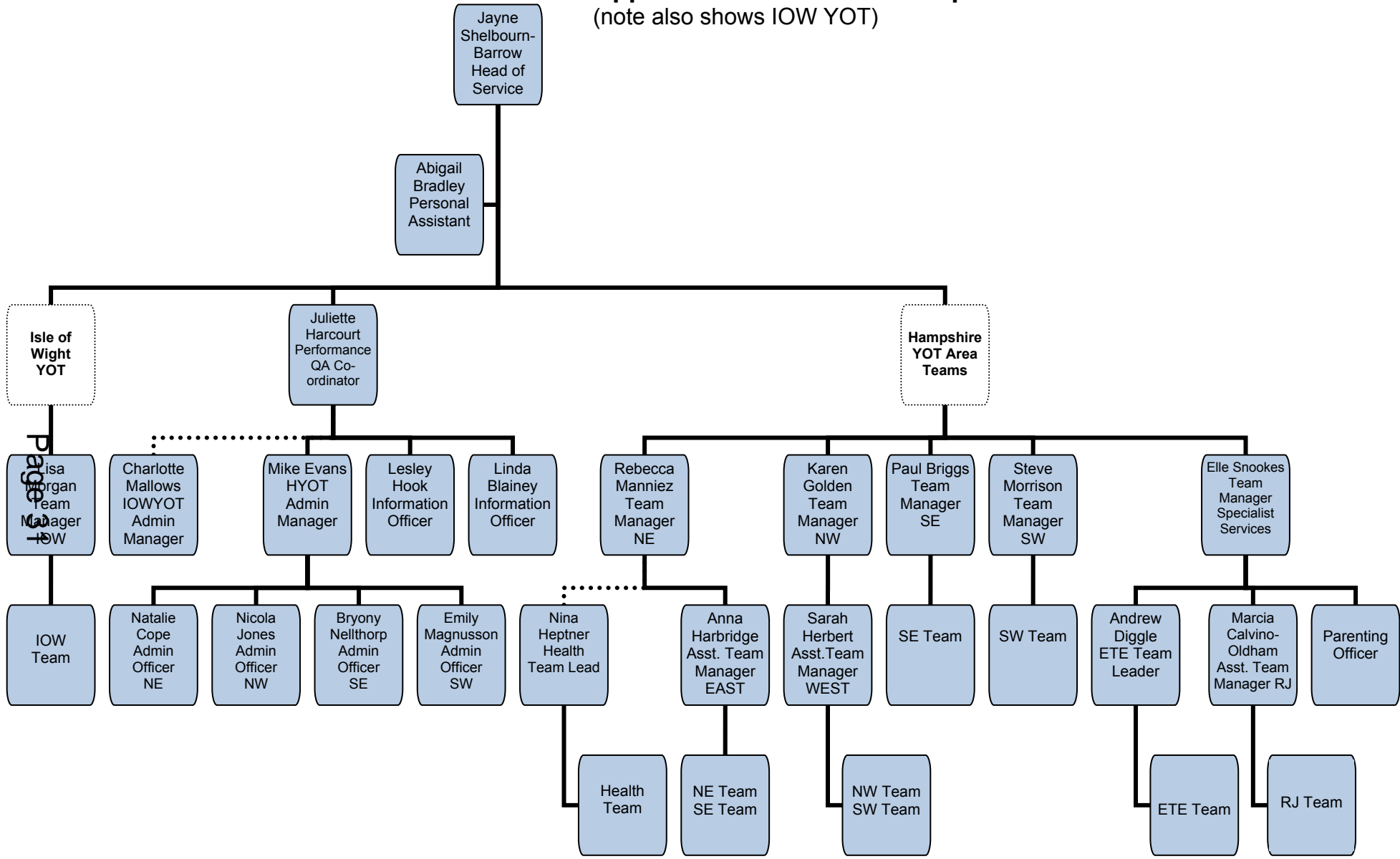
Partner Contributions	
Hampshire County Council	49.99%
- Youth Justice Board Grant	29.73%
- Police	6.03%
- Probation	5.98%
- Health	2.26%
- Other	6.01%

Total budget available

100

Current Budget Contribution	In Kind Contribution from Partners	TOTAL CONTRIBUTION
£'000	£'000	£'000
1,856	0	1,856
1,104	0	1,104
	224	224
20	202	222
	84	84
223		223
3,203	510	3,713

Appendix 2 – Structure Hampshire YOT (note also shows IOW YOT)



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HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee/Panel:	Children and Families Advisory Panel
Date:	17 October 2017
Title:	Independent Reviewing Service and Safeguarding Unit Annual Report
Report From:	Steve Crocker, Director of Children's Services

Contact name: Dave Watson, Head of reviewing Service and Safeguarding Unit

Tel: 01962 876222

Email: Dave.watson@hants.gov.uk

1. Summary

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to update members as to the work of the Independent Reviewing Service (IRS) and Safeguarding Unit in the last year and to produce a document which meets statutory requirements.

2. Contextual information

2.1 The statutory guidance within the 'IRO Handbook' (2010) states that the IRS manager should be responsible for the production of an annual report for the scrutiny of the members of the 'corporate parenting board'. That requirement is discharged through the presentation of this report to the Children and Families Advisory Panel.

The IRS has a key quality assurance role in respect of both planning for individual Children looked after by Hampshire County Council and, though auditing work and aggregation of issues, reflecting back performance issue to the Children's Services Department.

2.2 The report is presented in two appendices:

- Appendix 1 being the annual report on the work of the safeguarding unit and IRS.
- Appendix 2 being the detailed outcome of an annual audit of care plans and care planning for children looked after by the authority.

3. Finance

3.1 No finance issues arise from this report.

4. Performance

4.1 As presented in the main body of the report performance in respect of the Independent Reviewing Service and Safeguarding Unit remains strong. The care plan audit which is incorporated within this report highlights many positive areas and some for improvement in relation to Hampshire's work with and planning for children for whom the authority has a corporate parenting responsibility.

5. Recommendation(s)

5.1 That the Children and Families Advisory Panel;

- Note the continuing sound work of the Safeguarding Unit and Independent Reviewing Service.
and
- Note the outcomes of the Annual Audit of Care Plans and Care Planning for Hampshire's 'Looked After' children.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Strategic Plan**

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	No
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	No
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	No
OR	
This proposal does not link to the Strategic Plan but, nevertheless, requires a decision because:	
N/A	

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

As this report is not recommending any changes no assessment of impact on equalities is necessary.

Impact on Crime and Disorder:

None

Climate Change:

N/A

PART 1. Annual Report: The IRS and Safeguarding Unit

THE IRS

1. Background, context and key facts

- 1.1 The IRO Handbook states that the IRO manager should be responsible for the production of an annual report for the scrutiny of the members of the corporate parenting board. A further report, based on this one will therefore be taken to member's Children and Families Advisory Panel later this year.
- 1.2 In addition the IRO Handbook specifies a further six areas that an annual report should reference. They are as follows:-
- Development of the IRO service including information on caseloads, continuity of employment, the make up of the team and how it reflects the identity of the children it is serving
 - Number of reviews that are held on time, the number that are held out of time and the reasons for the ones that are out of time
 - Extent of participation of children and their parents
 - Outcomes of quality assurance audits in relation to the organisation, conduct and recording of reviews
 - Procedures for resolving concerns, including the local dispute resolution process, an analysis of the issues raised in dispute and the outcomes
 - Whether any resource issues are putting at risk the delivery of a quality service to all looked after children
- 1.3 This report will also identify good practice and issues for further development, including where action is needed.
- 1.4 Particular context is given to the elements of this report relating to the IRS by the continuing high aggregate numbers of children who are 'Looked After' or subject to a CP plans. At 31st March 2016 the CP Plan figure was 1,434; at 31st March 2017 the figure stood at 1,265, a welcome drop over the year of 169, or 12 %. However this was offset in terms of any relief of pressure on the service by an increase in CLA numbers over the same period from 1,313 to 1,439, or a 9% change. An exercise conducted some time ago on IRO use of time equated 2 CLA cases to 3 CPPs. Using this weighting the service has arguably seen a small increase in overall workload over the year.

2. Development of the IRO service, including, information on caseloads, continuity of employment, the make up of the team and how it reflects the identity of the children it is serving

- 2.1 There are currently 20.5 FTE established IRO posts, line managed on an area basis by two Lead IROs. This figure remains unchanged from the year to end March 2014. Some of the pressure on the service has continued to

be absorbed by an increased use of sessional CP chairs and by a small number of CLA reviews being conducted by sessional IROs. This increase in sessional staff use allows a more flexible and targeted approach to workload management and has facilitated the ending of expensive agency staff use, thus also proving to be cost effective.

- 2.2 The IRS staff group has remained stable with one retirement of a full time worker leading to one appointment. The further retirement of a half time post holder has allowed budget to be used more flexibly in the use of sessional IROs, as above. The more significant change for the service in the last year has been the resignation of an established Lead IRO. This post was filled from a strong field of interviewed candidates through the appointment of an ex Hampshire IRO who had left the Hampshire IRS some three years previously to manage the reviewing service in a neighbouring authority.
- 2.3 The planned increase in the use of sessional staff as described above has been successful with two ex senior police officers now chairing some CP conferences alongside three retired C & F branch staff and one ex agency IRO who has agreed to now work for us at Hampshire sessional rates. These latter four are also used to chair CLA reviews when needed.
- 2.4 Overall the service continues to be well served by a stable core of experienced IROs and solid management from the Lead IROs.
- 2.5 The statutory guidance within the IRO Handbook states that an estimated caseload of between 50 to 70 children for a full time IRO would represent good practice in the delivery of a quality IRS for looked after children. The average caseload for IROs in Hampshire at March 31st 2016 stood at 72 CLA, an increase from the 64 reported a year previously.
- 2.6 However alongside their statutory role as IROs these officers also chair Child Protection Conferences; data regarding this work is given at 2.4 above.
- 2.7 These figures translate to the IRS servicing 3,719 CLA reviews and nearly 6,000 CP conferences (1851 ICPC; 4141 RCPC) in the 12 months considered. During this period 4 'Reg 15' placements were reviewed.
- 2.8 Having a dual IRO and CP conference chairing function is still seen as helpful from a safeguarding perspective, delivering continuity for children and families and ensuring that care plans incorporate robust risk management where the same officer has seen cases through CP Conference processes to CLA status. However the continuing high overall numbers of CLA and CP cases bring pressures to the service in respect of full quality delivery of the statutory IRO function.
- 2.9 Changes continue to be made to try to mitigate the effects of these pressures such as the use of sessional staff (cf. 3.3); taking the opportunity afforded by guidance changes to 'desktop review' children in permanent,

linked placements at alternate reviews; working with the department agenda around 'safe' rehabilitation of children to reduce CLA numbers.

- 2.10 The majority of children in care in Hampshire are White British, this being reflected by the majority of IROs within the IRS. 3.5 FTE IROs are male (17% of the IRO staff cohort) compared with over half (57%) of the authority's CLA population.

3. Number of reviews that are held on time, the number that are held out of time and the reasons for the ones that are out of time.

- 3.1 The result for review timeliness in the last twelve months is 79.6%, an increase from the 74.8% reported a year ago. Common reasons for reviews being late, as reported regularly to District Managers by the Lead IROs, still include:

- Initial reviews not being booked
- Lack of necessary documents (Updated Plan/PEP/Health plan)

- 3.2 Nearly all 'late' reviews are held within days or at most weeks of their 'due' date.

4. Extent of participation of children and their parents

- 4.1 The current reported position on participation by young people aged over 4 years in reviews is around 88% according to information from the data team extracted from ICS. This continues to look optimistic when considering the data from the care plan audit which suggests a lower figure in the region of 66% (Considering children aged 5 years or over). It remains unclear why these figures are so variant but it is suggested that greater rigour is applied in the care plan audit when IROs are thinking about whether a positive response to the question is justified.

- 4.2 Child participation in CP processes also remains an area where improvements could be made. An audit of two weeks of November 2016 CP conferences where a child aged over 4 years was subject gave that children were invited to 71% of conferences but attended only 10%. Offset against that was the result that 95% of children's wishes and feelings were represented in reports to conference (including social work reports).

- 4.3 The annual care plan audit further considers the issue of participation in CLA review processes. However an area of particular concern is the signing of care plans. The 14/15 audit gave that 13.5% of children had signed their care plans. In 15/16 this figure had fallen to 10%. The current audit records that just 5 children had signed the care plans associated with the 303 reviews audited (less than 2%). Of these 5 children 4 were aged 17 years. In respect of parents signing, 4 care plans viewed had a parental signature. No care plan audited was signed by both a child and parent.

4.4 There is at present no ongoing mechanism for reporting on figures for general parental participation in reviews.

5. Outcomes of quality assurance audits in relation to the organisation, conduct and recording of reviews

5.1 The audit of care plans and reviews carried out over four weeks in January in 2016 has been completed and comprises part 2. of this report.

5.2 A repeat audit of agency participation in, and report contribution to, CP conferences was conducted in the Autumn, using minutes of the 83 CP conferences held during a week in November of 2015. The results of this audit have been reported to the HSCB Quality Assurance Group and show that overall performance in this area has remained strong, especially from key partners, despite the pressures all are experiencing in the wider systems. This audit will be repeated later this year but be conducted differently, giving headline data but slightly less detail. A more contemporaneous reporting will be facilitated by avoiding the need to await production of CP conference minutes.

5.3 All IROs facilitated children completing the 'Bright Spots' survey, conducted in concert with Coram Voice. Outcomes in headline are that overall children felt well looked after; trusted their carers (who were also seen as interested in their school life); trusted their social workers; liked school. 85% felt life was improving However there are issues which need to be recognised and addressed regarding bullying, feelings of self worth, understanding the felt impact of being in care, numbers of placement moves, children not understanding why they are in care or why contact with parents is limited, participation in decision making and understanding their own circumstances. The results of the survey have been shared with CFMT and will be shortly taken to CFWMT for wider discussion and agreement of a way forward.

5.4 Lead IROs continue to regularly conduct audits of review records and child protection plan quality. The results from this work are shared with individual IROs within supervision and contribute to evidence for the 'Valuing Performance' processes.

5.5 The CLA Review spread sheet maintained by CLA admin is used to provide evidence regarding timeliness of the production of the review record (as opposed to timeliness of the actual review meeting). A recent audit of records not yet produced showed that nearly all IROs were up to date in respect of review record production. Where this is not the case it is dealt with by the Lead IROs through monitoring and supervision.

5.6 Direct observation by the Lead IROs of IROs chairing Conferences is undertaken to provide supporting evidence of practice standards.

6. Procedures for resolving concerns, including the local dispute resolution process and an analysis of the issues raised in dispute and the outcomes

- 6.1 The formal Problem Resolution Process (PRP) was commenced 29 times by 15 different IROs in the reporting year, compared with 22 times by 12 different IROs in the previous year. This represents an increase and more balanced use across the service.
- 6.2 Themes emerging over the last year from use of the PRP have been around lack of planned movement to permanent placements (5); inadequate planning and pathway planning (5); lack of appropriate provision (4) – see 8.3 below; timely progression of plans once in place (3); safeguarding issues not addressed (3). A key issue related to quality of plans is reported by IROs to be the quality of the underpinning assessments. A range of other issues have been addressed.
- 6.3 Below this formal mechanism a raft of work occurs to resolve problems. One indication of this is the use of the 'IRO note' on ICS. (Notes recorded by officers in their role as a CP chair are separately recorded). In the year to 31st March 2017, 2,648 IRO notes were recorded, an increase from the 2,399 the previous year. Use remains unbalanced across the IRS and part of a recent IRS development session focused on this issue, seeking for a more standardised approach to note use. This will be further raised with individuals in supervision sessions.
- 6.4 The issue of permanence is further highlighted through the care plan audit. County wide 91% of children who were being considered at their second or subsequent review had a permanence plan. This is a significant increase from the 75% seen from the previous year's data.

7. Any resource issues putting at risk the delivery of a quality service to all looked after children

- 7.1 There is a continued pressure on the service from the aggregate numbers of children who are looked after or subject to CP plans. This pressure impacts on the capacity of IROs to, for example, contact children between reviews and proactively track progress of all plans.
- 7.2 The issue of finance availability continues to impact on the ability of the wider service to progress SGOs for children who might otherwise not be within the care system. The moves to address this are recognised and welcomed.
- 7.3 Placements for children continue to be made more often on the basis of availability than choice but needs are usually appropriately met. A particular issue is the availability of family placements for adolescent boys. This is recognised to be a national issue, not one which Hampshire can necessarily resolve through use of its own resources.

8. Good Practice

- 8.1 At the point of writing a process has been confirmed to enable IROs to seek independent legal advice when necessary. The Children and Families branch position with regards to IROs being able to see legal advice given to operational colleagues has also been confirmed.
- 8.2 IRS managers have contributed to the development of IRS services in both the Isle of Wight and Torbay.
- 8.3 Response to use of the PRP from operational colleagues remains generally positive and its use properly seen in the context of driving better outcomes for children.
- 8.4 Lead IROs and the Head of Service continue to input to the reconstituted Care Matters Board, its sub-groups and other departmental meetings.
- 8.5 Lead IROs continue to input to area and district PAGs using an agreed data set and analysis format. They attend local management meetings when appropriate. The Head of Service reports relevant data to the County PAG and is part of CFWMT.
- 8.6 These links are important not just in providing an 'IRS voice' but also in ensuring the service does not become isolated or lose sight of operational realities.
- 8.7 The completion of the 'Bright Spots' survey.
- 8.8 The service has ensured continued delivery of an effective CLA reviewing and Child Protection Conference chair service despite the significant volume of work.

9. Issues Identified for Development in the last report

- 9.1 *Complete and implement a strategy in relation to child participation in CLA and CP processes. The Head of the Service is working with the relevant District Managers lead and others to deliver measurable better performance in these areas.*
Audit work shows an increased number of children are now invited to their CP conferences. A letter designed for chairs to send to children, offering contact prior to conferences, is now routinely used. Attendance at conferences by children has also increased although there is still a reliance on the social worker's report to ensure the child's voice is heard in the CP process. Participation in CLA review processes are detailed in the second part of this report. Lead IROs have regularly contributed to the Care Matter's Board Participation sub group.
- 9.2 *Work is required to reconcile DaIT and Audit reports of child participation in CLA reviews. The Head of Service will undertake on this work.*

This has yet to be fully addressed (cf 5.1). The issue will be put on the agenda for further discussion in IRO team and whole service meetings.

- 9.3 *More balanced use of the PRP across the IRS workforce. The Head of the Service and Lead IROs will continue to monitor IRO performance in this area and challenge as necessary. As reported (cf section 7) the position is improved but more work is necessary to reach a fully balanced position.*
- 9.4 *More balanced use of recording by use of IRO note and CP chair note across the IRS workforce.*
This is also reported at section 7. and similarly to PRPs some improvement can be reported but more still needs to be done.
- 9.5 *Ensure processes and supports are in place to facilitate good quality assessments and re-assessments in CP and CLA casework. IRS managers will work with operational colleagues and WDT to progress this.*
The challenge processes (PRP and lower level challenge) have been used to help drive this work. In districts with higher agency social worker use and more staff 'churn' it remains arguably harder to address.

10. Issues for further development over the next year

- 10.1 The drive to ensure all IROs record in ICS and use the PRP process in a consistent way will continue.
- 10.2 Dependent on the success of the branch strategy to safely reduce the number of CLA, the service will strive to reduce use of sessional staff, as service capacity allows.
- 10.3 IROs undertaking reviews will consistently challenge where Care Plans are not signed by children of an age and understanding to do so.
- 10.4 The IRS will continue to work with operational colleagues to best secure increased child participation in processes which affect them
- 10.5 To work with operation and admin colleagues to ensure the successful county wide introduction of the audio recording of CP conferences.
- 10.6 The IRS will work with others to successfully introduce the new CiN/CP plan template with its emphasis on capturing the views of children as well as professionals and parents in addition to demonstrating how well the plan is progressing. The new template will help drive the move towards more outcome focused plans.

THE SAFEGUARDING UNIT

11. Overview

- 11.1 The unit has continued to deliver effective services in the last year. The core staff group has remained stable with one change to admin staff and the 0.5 FTE LADO post holder retiring, the vacancy being filled by the previous Lead IRO for the West.

12. Detail of work within the unit

- 12.1 The LADOs should be informed of all allegations against adults working with children and provide oversight, advice and guidance to ensure individual cases are resolved as quickly as possible. The LADOs also act as safeguarding advisors. There are 2.5FTE established LADO posts.
- 12.2 Referrals to LADOs have increased steadily over previous years (academic years) to an annual total of 679 at the end of August 2015. This represented a 50% increase on the previously reported annual total; the figure climbed further to 761 referrals recorded in the year to end August 2016; 656 referrals have been recorded to date this academic year.
- 12.3 This increase in referrals has come from nearly all types of setting, indicating an ever greater awareness of the LADO role across the broadly defined children's workforce.
- 12.4 In the last year the LADOs repeated a survey of customer's views which demonstrated an exceptionally high level of positive feedback. This has already been shared with CFMT as a virtual report.
- 12.5 Input to key stakeholder groups such as the armed forces, faith and Further Education groups is undertaken by the LADOs which both furthers knowledge of the role and engenders confidence in the service and referral outcomes.
- 12.6 In respect of school communities the LADOs have continued to develop inputs through both responses to referrals and also through well attended and positively received training days for Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) to which all education sectors have been invited. In the South East of the county the DSLs have organised themselves into a local support group; the LADO for the East of the county will help facilitate this group.
- 12.7 LADOs attend the regional LADO forum as well as jointly facilitating the pan Hampshire/IOW LADO group. These provide useful opportunities for sharing ideas of best practice and service development.
- 12.8 A more detailed report on the work of the LADOs is presented annually to the Safeguarding Board's QA sub group.

- 12.9 There are key tasks of a largely admin nature undertaken in the unit. Where there are sensitivities or complexities in the information under consideration the Head of the Unit oversees and takes responsibility for decision making. This work breaks down as follows for the year to end March 2017:
- 892 'Other Agency' checks (Local authority or independent agencies carrying out checks on prospective adopters or foster carers with a Hampshire connection – each check may cover different household members and addresses)
 - 2,046 Ofsted checks (On adults applying to work in regulated child care settings/childminders – may include checks on partners, adult household members, different addresses listed as separate checks)
 - 60 'Child Death' notifications
 - 20 'Pre Inspection' Ofsted/ISI checks – plus 5 such 'ad hoc' requests (A collation of LADO, ICS and occasional locally held 'soft' information on establishments Ofsted plans to inspect) NB The unit has dealt with a further 15 such requests since 1/4/17 as the inspectorates appear to be more routinely asking for CSD information before inspecting.
- 12.10 There are just 3FTE admin staff who undertake all this work. They also act as admin support to the LADOs and give p.a. support to the Head of the Unit.
- 12.11 The role of the Head of Unit has been confirmed in relation to establishments found to be inadequate by Ofsted where safeguarding concerns are noted.
- 12.12 Child Employment and Entertainment Officer activity is subject of a separate report recently considered by CFMT.

PART 2. The IRS Care Plan Audit 2017

Part 2 of this report details the outcomes of the Care Plan Audit conducted by IROs from 6th March to 31st March 2017

INTRODUCTION

This report is an analysis of the responses from the 2017 Audit completed by Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) in respect of every statutory review started and completed between 10th and 31st March 2017 inclusive. The primary audit areas comprised of the following sections:-

- ✚ Survey Population
- ✚ The Care Plan
- ✚ The Personal Education Plan (PEP)
- ✚ The Health Assessment (HA)
- ✚ Overall Needs of the child
- ✚ The Review
- ✚ Equality and Diversity

The raw survey data is available if requested. Whilst it forms the basis of the data and report it has been cleansed to correct small errors in recording. Data in the report may therefore vary very slightly from the raw data but the information as presented in this report represents the most accurate picture. The questions used within the survey are also available if requested.

Two points to note: Q32: 'Is the SDQ score evidenced in the PEP?' Is a new question for the 2017 audit and therefore there is no comparative data with previous surveys. Secondly the County Adoption Team is now a single team and therefore cannot be separated into East or West this year. The 2017 data is split by East, West and Adoption.

SURVEY POPULATION

The first part of the survey established the basic data relating to the audit population.

(1) The Number of Children by Age Group and Area

The table below illustrates the numbers behind the percentage figures used in the remainder of this report; in addition to including information about age group and area.

Age Group	Audit Year and Area						
	2016		2016 Total	2017			2017 Total
	East	West		East	West	Adoption	
0-4	26	28	54	25	13	16	54
5-9	23	21	44	31	27	4	62
10-15	36	48	84	58	58		116
16+	21	27	48	35	36		71
Total	106	124	230	149	134	20	303

The audit in 2017 covered 303 children's reviews - a significant number giving valid data. This represents an increase in the 2016 audit cohort of 230. In part this increase is due to the increased number of children looked after but more significantly due to increased compliance in the East of the County. It is noted that no agency IROs were in post at the time of this year's audit.

Four of the reviews held were for children remanded in to care solely as a result of youth court judgements.

(2) Which type of Review is this?

Returns for children at the 4 month review were of particular interest with regard to evidence of permanency planning, addressed in section 4 of this report. Of the total cohort 12% were in this category. A total of 90% of children covered by the audit had already had at least one statutory review.

Cohort by Review Type and East/West/Adoption

Area	Which type of review is this?			Total
	1 month review	4 month review	10 month review+	
East	12%	4%	84%	100%
West	8%	19%	73%	100%
Adoption	5%	25%	70%	100%
Total	10%	12%	78%	100%

THE CARE PLAN

The second part of the survey established initial information about the care plan adequacy. For all children in the cohort bar two, IROs recorded that a care plan was in place at the review. The two anomalies in this regard are siblings, subject to court proceedings. Court care plans have been submitted. Best practice would be for the IRO to be clear that a local authority care plan needs to be in place.

(3) Is the care plan up to date?

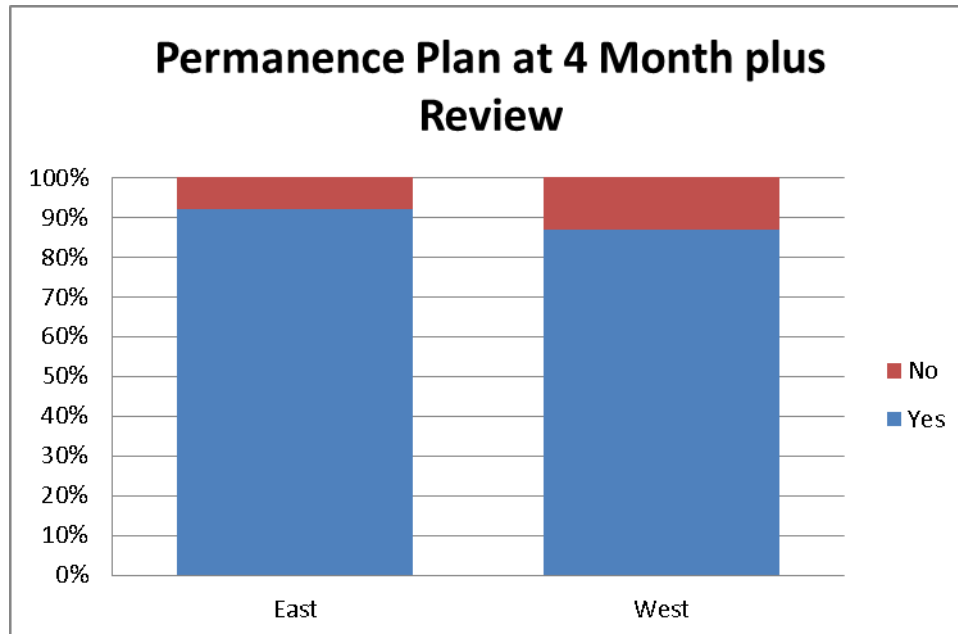
County wide and on average 93% of care plans were assessed as being up to date, a slight decrease from the 97% recorded for the 2016 audit. There was little difference between the percentage of plans not up to date in the East and West, 7.4% and 7.5% respectively. All adoption plans were up to date, as one would hope.

(4) Does the child have a permanence plan?

A key question is whether children have a permanence plan at their 2nd (4 month) or subsequent reviews. Manual filtering of data gives that, excluding those whose first review was considered and those who were remanded to care, 90.5% of children in the cohort had a permanence plan in place. This breaks down as follows: Excluding 1st reviews and 'remands' gives 273 cases: 107 of 123 in the West had a permanence plan (87%); 121 of

131 in the East had a permanence plan (92%); 19 of 19 adoption cases had a permanence plan (100%).

This shows an improvement on the data reported in last years audit report which gave that county wide and on average therefore 79% of children had a permanence plan in place at the 4 month stage or beyond and 21% did not.



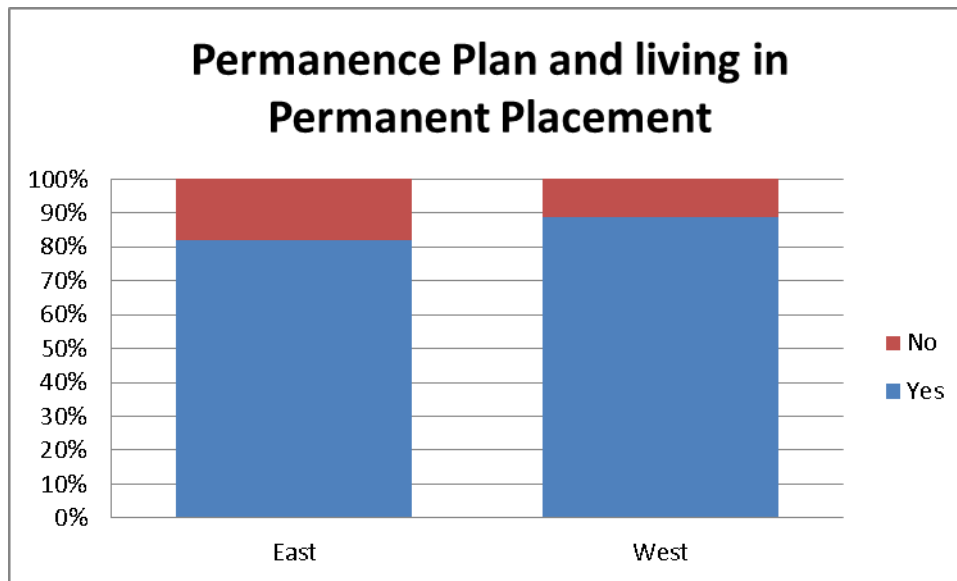
Every child has an entitlement to a permanence plan by the time of their 4 month review. An increased understanding and integration of this in to Social Work practice driven by Team Managers and the uniform implementation of DSM chaired panels is likely to have improved this figure. Additionally, in any case where the permanence plan is absent at the 4 month review or beyond the IRO has a responsibility to initiate an immediate problem resolution protocol (PRP).

(5) Is the Child Living in their Permanent Placement?

In the 15/16 audit County wide, 66.8% of children were assessed as living in their permanent placement. This was an improvement since the 2014/15 audit when the figure was 54.2%. This current 16/17 audit gives a further marginal increase to 67.3% of children living in their permanent placement.

Of the 247 children who had a permanence plan identified 44 were not, at the time of audit, living in their permanent placement – one designed to last until they are at least 18 years old. This means that, for those where a permanence plan had been identified 82% were in what was regarded as a permanent placement.

There is small area variance in this data: In the East 82% of children with a permanence plan were in their permanent placement. For the West the figure was higher, at 89%. The adoption service had a number of children whose plan was clear but for whom permanent placements were not yet achieved with 50% of audited cases showing this status.



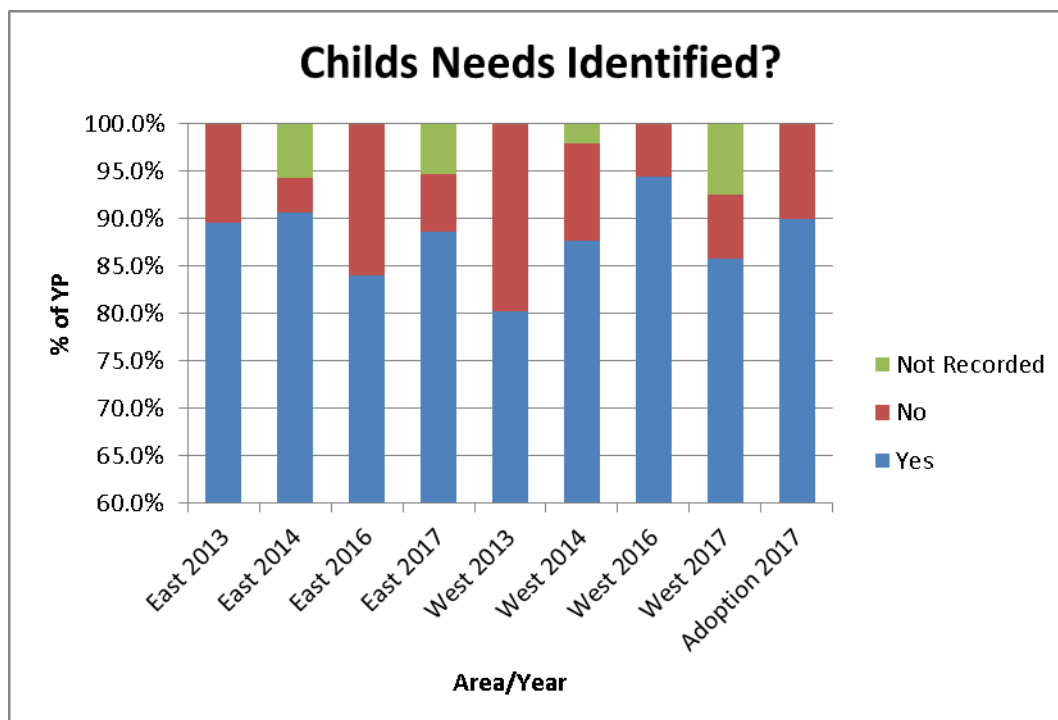
(6) Are all of the child’s needs identified in Their Care Plan?

Across the county IROs assessed that all the child’s needs were met in 88% of cases reviewed. This shows a small drop from the reported figure of 90% from the 15/16 audit.

Area performance in this regard showed less variance than in previous audits with the East cases giving a figure of 89%; the West 86% and adoption 90%.

As previously reasons given by IROs for care plans not identifying all of the child’s needs centred chiefly on care plans with missing information and incomplete sections or needs being only partly identified.

Trend data in this regard can be seen in the following:



(7) Has the Child and/or Parent Signed the Care plan?

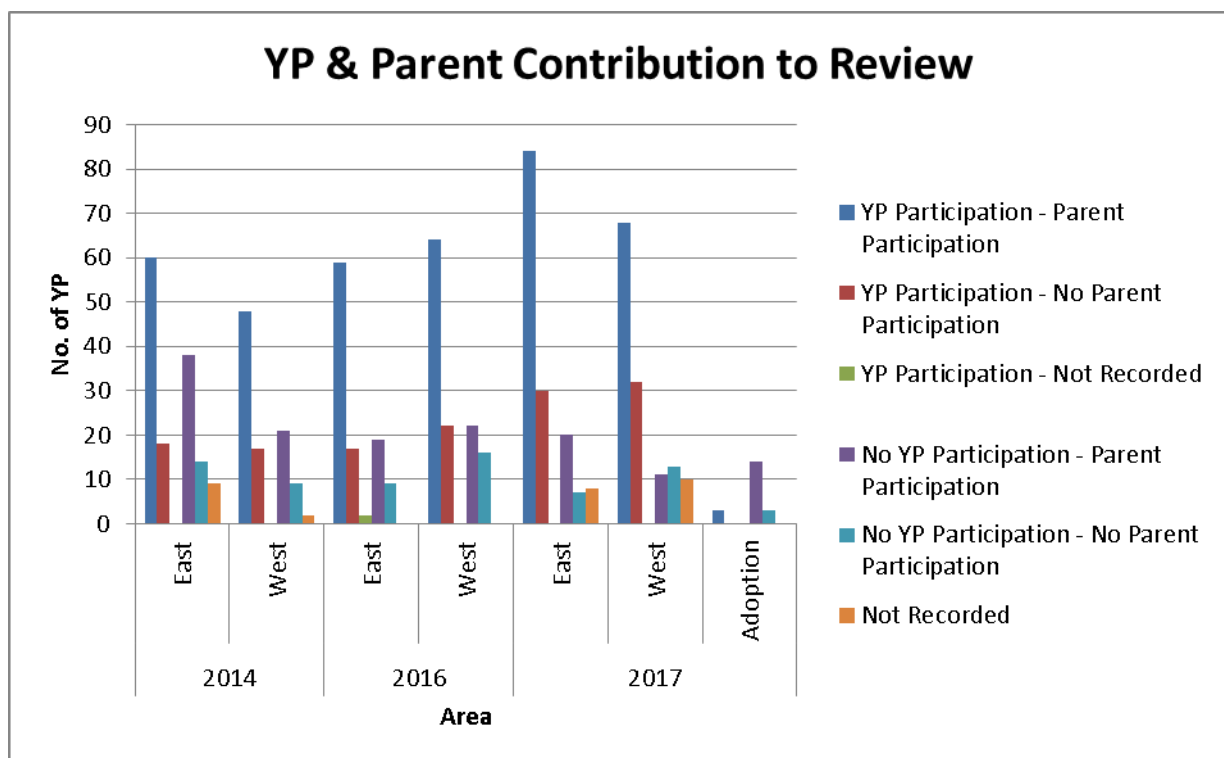
Children and parents signing care plans remains an increasingly significant challenge for the authority at a time when this could be a useful tool to formally show engagement of those most affected by care planning. Whilst younger children and those with disabilities may not be able to meaningfully demonstrate participation in this way and not all parents will willingly engage in such an exercise, the data below highlights the scale of the issues faced in this regard.

The 14/15 audit gave that 13.5% of children had signed their care plans. In 15/16 this figure had fallen to 10%. The current audit records that just 5 children had signed their care plans – 2% of those audited. Of these 5 children 4 were aged 17 years. In respect of parents signing, 4 care plans viewed had a parental signature. No care plan audited was signed by both a child and parent. Of the 9 plans with a signature 8 were in cases held by teams in the West of the county.

(8) Aside from signatures, within the Care Plan is there evidence of participation/contribution by the Child/Young Person?

Whilst there has been a significant decrease in the percentage of plans formally signed by children and parents other evidence of participation in care planning and contribution to plans shows a more positive trend. Just over half of plans were underpinned by evidence of participation by both the child and parent (51%); in respect of evidence of parental participation the figure was 66%; child participation remained at 72%, the same as last year.

Year on year trend and area breakdowns can be seen in the following graph:



THE PERSONAL EDUCATION PLAN (PEP)

This set of questions determined the adequacy of the PEP.

(9) Has the PEP meeting been held?

Of the cases audited where a PEP meeting was required due to the child's age (224 cases) the meeting had been held in 190 (85% of) cases. This is an improvement on the figure of 77% reported in the 15/16 audit.

In the majority of cases where the meeting should have been held and had not been the review was the first or 4 month point review. However in 11 cases no PEP had been held when the third or a subsequent review was reached; in only one of these cases can this be explained by the child then reaching the age when a PEP is mandated.

There is some small area variation in the data: In the East 83% and in the West 87% of cases where a PEP meeting should have been held evidenced that this had happened. In the adoption 11 cases should have had a PEP and 8 (73%) actually evidenced this had happened.

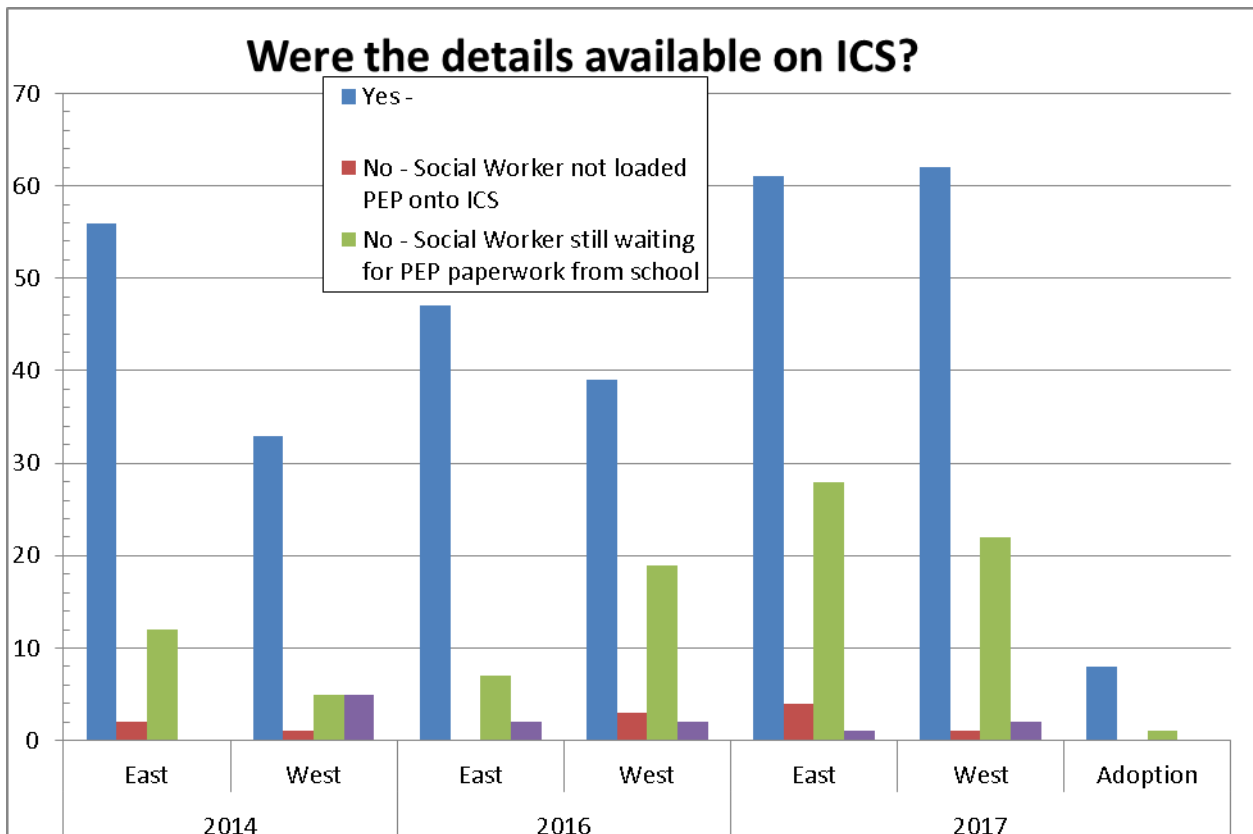
(10) Has the PEP document been loaded on to ICS?

In the 190 cases where a PEP meeting should have been, and had been held, the PEP document could be found on ICS/ESCR in 131 (69% of cases). This is a further decrease from the 73% reported in 15/16 and the 78% in 14/15.

Of the 59 where the PEP paperwork was not found in ICS by far the most common reported reason was that the document had not been received from schools following the PEP meeting. This was the case for 51 (86%) of the 59 cases.

As also reported last year this issue represents nothing more than a failure to collate and transfer information within reasonable timescales, but it has significant ramifications since it leaves the Local Authority care plan effectively incomplete.

Data is shown graphically below:

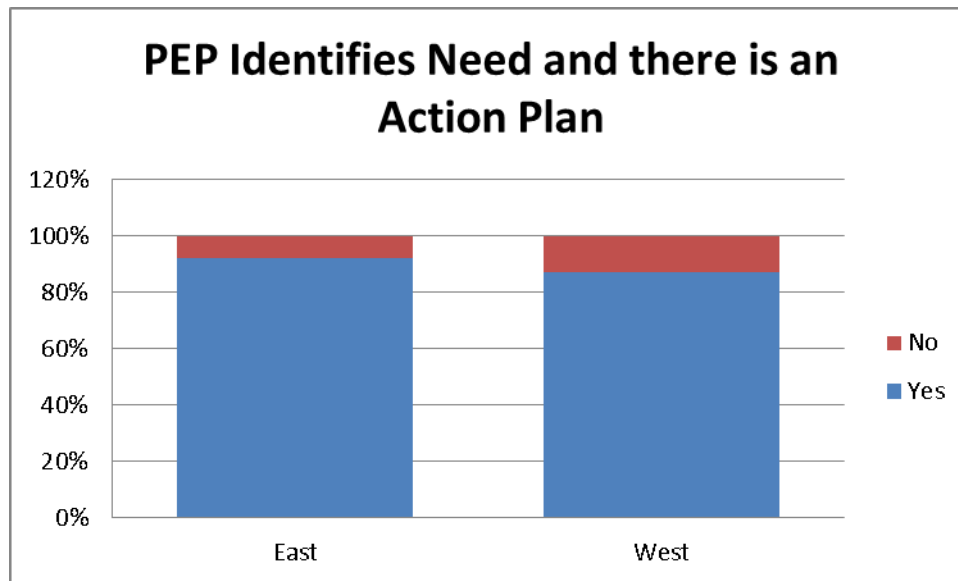


(11) Were the Key People in Attendance at the PEP?

County wide 92.4% of PEP meetings held were verified as having had the key people in attendance in cases where paperwork could be seen. This is an increase in the figure of 82.4% reported last year. Both East and West had reported data of over 90% in this regard and adoption case PEPs (small in number) recorded 100%.

(12) Is section 7a of the Child/Young Person's PEP good enough? i.e. Does it identify the Child/Young Person's needs and is there an action plan to meet them?

Section 7a identifies the child's needs and details the tasks required to meet them. County wide the percentage of PEPs viewed where section 7a was considered good enough was 92.5% - a similarly high figure to the 93.2% reported from last year's audit. Both East and West recorded data of over 90% in this regard (91% and 95% respectively) with adoption cases recording 7 of 8 (88%) of PEPs meeting that standard.



(13) Is the PEP clear about what actions all stakeholders must take to ensure the child reaches their targets?

Of all the PEPs viewed, across all the team's cases, on average 88% were clear about what actions all stakeholders had to take to ensure children reached their targets. This is barely changed from the 89% reported last year. West performance in this regard was slightly better than East (92% and 87%).

(14) Does the PEP show how the available funding streams will be used to improve education outcomes?

Again focusing on those 131 PEPs where the PEP document could be seen 54% showed how the available funding streams would be used to improve education outcomes. This is a reduction on the previous two years reported figures of 59% in 15/16 and 56% in 14/15.

In the East the percentage of PEPs showing how the available funding streams would be used to improve education outcomes was not significantly changed at 57% (58% last year). In the West the percentage of PEPs showing how the available funding streams would be used to improve education outcomes decreased from 60% in the 2015/16 to 55% in this audit.

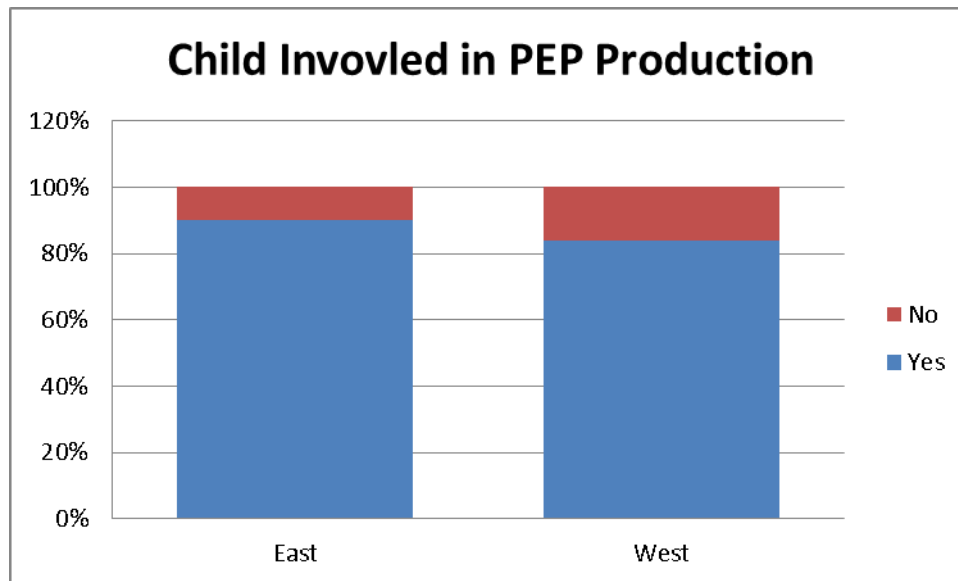
(15) Is the SDQ score evidenced in the PEP?

This is a question included for the first time in the care plan audit so no trend data is available. The SDQ score is clearly not being routinely used as part of understanding a child's educational needs. County wide, of PEPs seen, 37% evidenced the SDQ score. This was more likely to be the case in the East (42%) than in the West (31%). Only one adoption case of the 8 seen on ICS had the SDQ score referenced in the PEP.

(16) Is there Evidence that the child has been involved in their PEP?

Of all PEPs viewed county wide, 85% evidenced child involvement, an increase on the 78.5% reported last year. Performance improved across East (90% from 85%) and West (84% from 72%). In adoption cases 3 of 5 evidenced involvement.

Lack of involvement is not confined to DCT cases or younger children: There is no discernible pattern to the cases where involvement is not seen.



THE HEALTH ASSESSMENT (HA)

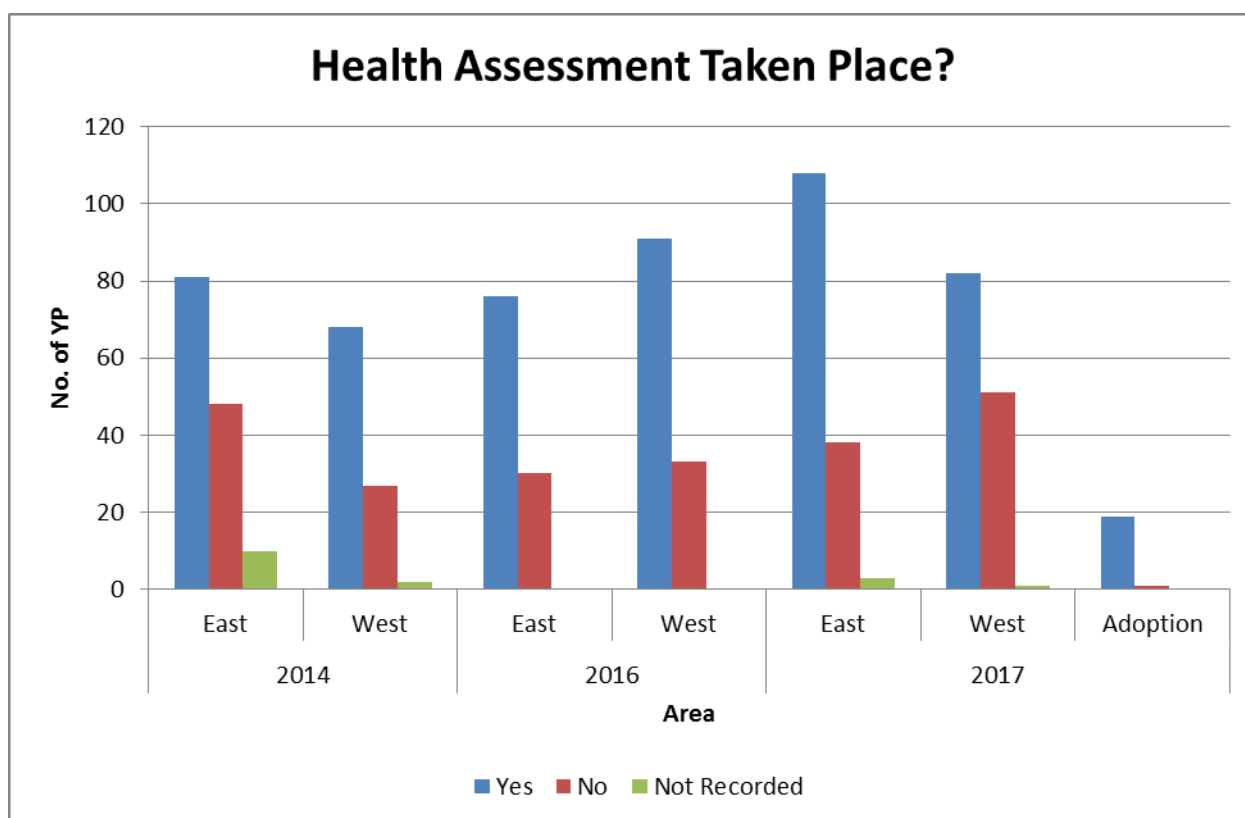
This section focusses on the adequacy of the Health Assessment (HA).

(17) Has the Health Assessment taken place?

County wide the audit gave that 69% of health assessments had taken place (209 of 303 cases audited), a drop from the 15/16 audit figure of 73%.

Of the 94 cases where no health assessment had taken place 29 were at the 1 month review point, 46 recorded as having reached their third review with no assessment in place. The remainder were at their second review point bar a handful which had no data recorded. Of these 46 it is notable that 31 were aged 15 years or older.

In respect of area performance 72% had taken place in the East, as recorded last year, but 61% - a drop from 73% - in the West. All but one adoption case had a completed health assessment. This related to an initial review for a child just weeks old.



(18) Was the Health Assessment Available on ICS?

Where they had been completed nearly 90% are filed on ICS (ESCR). Where this has not happened the reason for delay in all but 3 instances was recorded as the completed assessment not yet having been sent to the social worker.

(19) Is the health plan as seen appropriate to the child's needs?

Of the 187 health assessments seen 157 (84%) were seen to be appropriate to meet need. All the adoption health plans were in this positive category; 79% in the East and 85% in the West. Less plans were seen to be appropriate to meet need in the East, West and county wide than in the previous audit. (15/16 audit: County wide 89%; East 87%; West 91%).

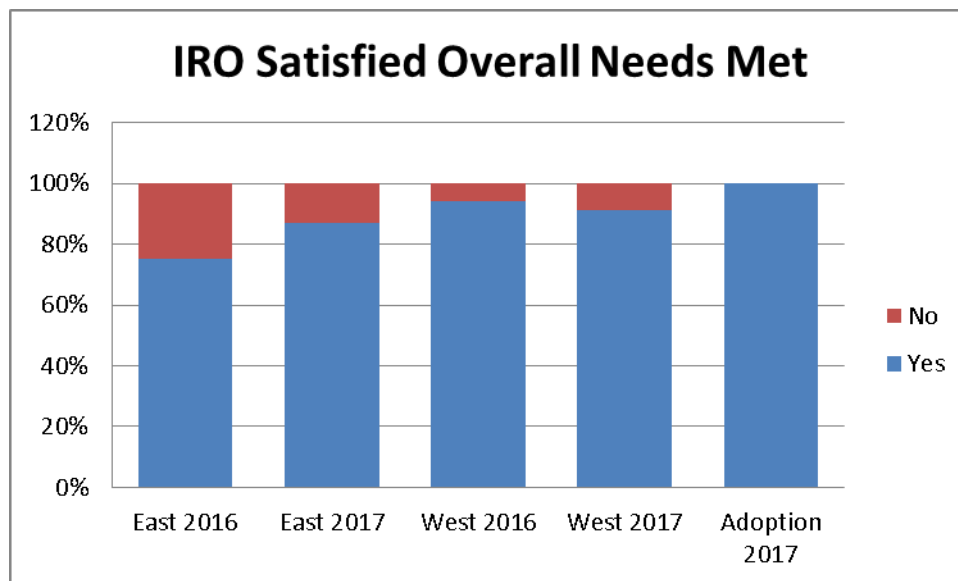
OVERALL NEEDS OF THE CHILD

This section focussed on the overall needs of the child and whether they were being met.

(20) Having held the Child's review are you satisfied that their overall needs are being met?

Of the 303 cases audited the IRO assessed that overall the child's needs were being met in 271 cases (89%). This is an increase on the 85% reported from the 15/16 audit.

In the East the percentage of cases where the IRO was satisfied that the child's overall needs were met increased significantly from 75% in the last audit to 87% in this one. For the West the figure remained high at 91% (previously 94%). The IROs were satisfied that needs were met in all adoption cases.



(21) Why are the child's overall needs not being met?

Where the IRO did not feel that overall needs were met they could use a 'free narrative' box to record reasons. These were diverse and for some children multiple, but can be clustered under broad headings. The most common issues related to education/PEP issues; the need for long term or permanency planning and provision (including progression on SGOs); Plan quality and task definition and progression and health assessment and provision issues. All issues recorded are shown in the chart below.

Why are the Child's Overall Needs not Being met? (Issues Categorised)

Ed/PEP	19
L/Term planning or resources/SGO	19
Plan quality/task definition	13
Health/Health assessments	11
Placement breakdown/lack of placement	8
Contact issues	6
Recognition/management of risks	5
Communication of plan to child	3
CAMHS needs	3
Review decisions not progressed	2
Other	2

THE REVIEW

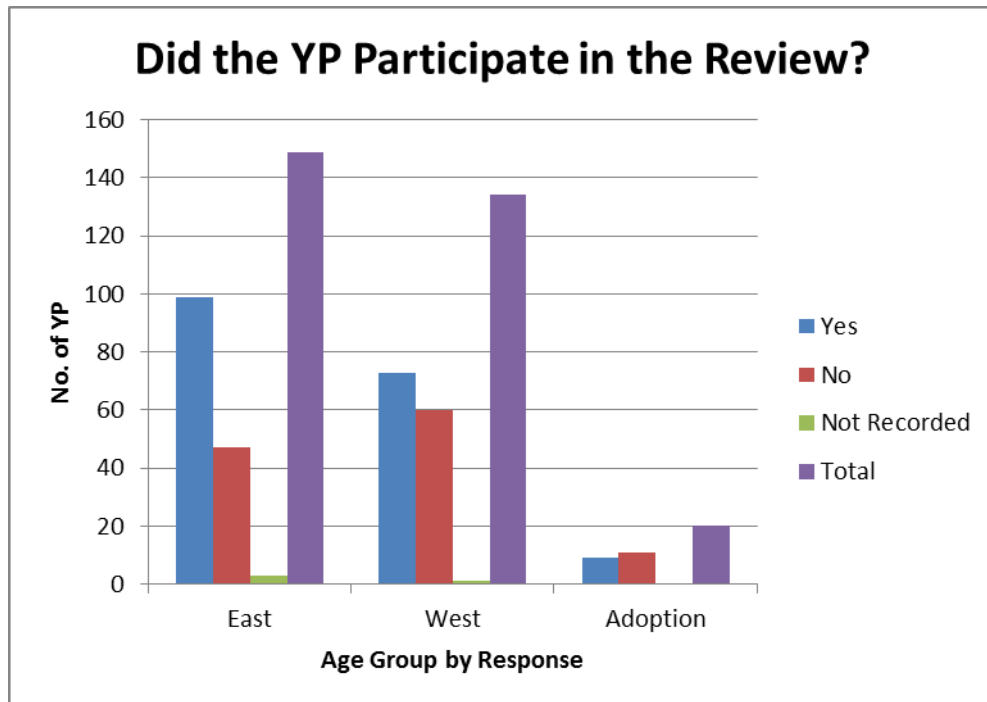
This section focussed on the Review.

(22) Did the Young Person Participate in their Review?

Countywide a total of 181 (60%) of children participated in their review, a slight increase on the 2015/16 figure of 58%. In the East the percentage of children who participated in their review increased to 66% from 54%; in the West the figure fell from 61% in the 2014/15 audit to 54% in this one. For adoption cases participation was seen in 9 of 20 reviews, largely due to the age of the children.

Filtering to consider only children aged 5 years old and above gives a county headline figure of 66% for participation in reviews.

Of those 122 children who did not participate 66 were deemed to be of insufficient age and understanding; 38 actively chose not to. For the remaining 18 reasons varied from an unexpected party invitation taking understandable precedence to a misunderstanding as to whether or not the child would be on school holiday.



(23) Did the Child Attend their Review?

This presents a challenge: The data records that 55% of children attended their reviews; a decline from the 65% recorded last year. The tables below give numbers and percentages.

Numbers

		Did the YP attend the review?			
Period	Area	Yes	No	Not Recorded	Total
2014	East	84	45	10	139
	West	60	35	2	97
2014 Total		144	80	12	236
2016	East	70	36		106
	West	81	43		124
2016 Total		151	79		230
2017	East	90	56	3	149
	West	64	69	1	134
	Adoption	13	7		20
2017 Total		167	132	4	303

Percentages

Period	Area				Total
		Yes	No	Not Recorded	
2014	East	60.4%	32.4%	7.2%	100.0%
	West	61.9%	36.1%	2.1%	100.0%
2014 Total		61.0%	33.9%	5.1%	100.0%
2016	East	66.0%	34.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	West	65.3%	34.7%	0.0%	100.0%
2016 Total		65.7%	34.3%	0.0%	100.0%
2017	East	60.4%	37.6%	2.0%	100.0%
	West	47.8%	51.5%	0.7%	100.0%
	Adoption	65.0%	35.0%	0.0%	100.0%
2017 Total		55.1%	43.6%	1.3%	100.0%

(24) How did the Child Contribute to their Review?

Children used a range of methods to contribute to their review. The favoured methods were that the child spoke for themselves, used the consultation form or their foster carer advocated for them. See the table below.

Methods of Contribution	Period		
	2014	2016	2017
Child/Young Person spoke for themselves.	101	114	128
Consultation form.	43	46	46
Personalized written format.	0	4	0
Use of Email/Text.	0	1	0
Through Family Member.	48	27	29
Through Carer.	95	96	44
Through Advocate service.	2	3	2
No contribution given.	18	19	31
Other	31	0	19
Total	338	310	299

(25) Did the IRO meet privately face to face with the Child/Young Person prior to the commencement of the statutory review?

Positive responses to this question have not changed countywide over the last three audits, being around 30/31%. In the current audit more are recorded as “No because YP declined / did not wish to.”

Data in respect of numbers and percentages is given in the tables below:

		Did your (IRO) meet privately face to face with the YP prior to the commencement of the statutory review?				
Period	Area	Yes	No	No because YP declined / did not wish to.	Not Recorded	Total
2014	East	53	64		12	139
	West	21	39		35	97
2014 Total		74	103		47	236
2016	East	39	45		22	106
	West	34	66		24	124
2016 Total		73	111		46	230
2017	East	49	60		37	149
	West	34	52		47	134
	Adoption	8	12			20
2017 Total		91	124		84	303

		Did your (IRO) meet privately face to face with the YP prior to the commencement of the statutory review?				
Period	Area	Yes	No	No because YP declined / did not wish to.	Not Recorded	Total
2014	East	38.1%	46.0%	8.6%	7.2%	100.0%
	West	21.6%	40.2%	36.1%	2.1%	100.0%
2014 Total		31.4%	43.6%	19.9%	5.1%	100.0%
2016	East	36.8%	42.5%	20.8%	0.0%	100.0%
	West	27.4%	53.2%	19.4%	0.0%	100.0%
2016 Total		31.7%	48.3%	20.0%	0.0%	100.0%
2017	East	32.9%	40.3%	24.8%	2.0%	100.0%
	West	25.4%	38.8%	35.1%	0.7%	100.0%
	Adoption	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
2017 Total		30.0%	40.9%	27.7%	1.3%	100.0%

The issue of meeting children between and at a reasonable time before reviews remains problematic for IROs due to overall service capacity issues. IROs report contacts with children but not necessary face to face meetings. This question needs to be better framed for subsequent audits to reflect children and young peoples increased use of various e-communication and social media as part of their normal communication with peers and others.

(26) Were any changes made in respect of the review meeting at the request of the young person?

County wide there were 18 cases where changes were made in respect of the review meeting at the request of the young person, double the 3% percentage figure as reported in the 15/16 audit.

Numbers are too small to meaningfully quote district/adoption service positions, but 6 changes related to venue, 4 to invitees, 1 to the date of the review. Of the 'other' category most related to a young persons wish not to discuss contact in front of family members.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

This section focussed on the identification of issues of equality and diversity.

(27) Did the Care Plan Identify Issues of Equality and Diversity?

Of 303, 105 did identify such issues (35%)

Of the 105 there were 6 adoption cases, 60 in the West and 39 in the East.

Given the diversity of response from East and West further thought may need to be given to the framing of this question in future audits to ensure a consistency of response.

Range of Equality and Diversity Issues Identified

Religion	25
Language	29
Culture	10
Gender	15
Sexuality	6
Disability	39
Race/ethnicity	27
'Other'	6

Other includes: Impacts of health related and behavioural issues

(28) Is the IRO satisfied that any needs arising from equality and diversity are being met?

Positively in all but one case the IRO assessment was that the needs identified arising from issues of equality and diversity were being met.

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee/Panel:	Children and Families Advisory Panel
Date:	17 October 2017
Title:	Establishing a Corporate Parenting Board
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

Contact name: Laura Mallinson 01420 545638

Tel: 01962 891623

Email: laura.mallinson@hants.gov.uk

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 It is proposed that the Children and Families Advisory Panel (CFAP) form a sub-committee, known as the "Corporate Parenting Board". The purpose of this paper is to outline the proposed function and governance arrangements for a Corporate Parenting Board (CPB); promoting the best outcomes for our children in care and care leavers. The Board will enable detailed Member led engagement and advice to CFAP and to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services on the key area of corporate parenting.
- 1.2 Every County Councillor has a responsibility, as a corporate parent, to act for the children and young people in the council's care as a parent would their own child. Looking after and protecting children and young people is one of the most important jobs that councils do. Corporate parents have the responsibility to ensure that children in care, care leavers and other vulnerable children are supported well in order for them to achieve their full potential.
- 1.3 Those County Councillors on the CPB will have a particular responsibility to review County Council policies effectively and improve corporate parenting within Hampshire. The CPB will act through recommendations to CFAP and the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services, to ensure that all of the services to children in care and care leavers are of a high standard, and to ensure that they are being well supported in all aspects of their life, including:
 - support and encouragement to achieve in school;
 - support and encouragement to after their mental health and wellbeing;
 - having opportunities for positive social integration; and
 - enabling the most vulnerable children and young people in society to flourish into the successful adults they can become.
- 1.4 The proposed CPB will comprise three Members of CFAP and three co-opted Care Ambassadors. Other young people who are in care or care leavers and foster carers will be invited to attend as necessary. Regular support and advice

will be offered by Officers as outlined in the terms of reference, attached as Appendix 1.

- 1.5** The Corporate Parenting Board will make recommendations to CFAP and to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services regarding:
- the review and monitoring of outcomes for children in care and care leavers;
 - the steps required to ensure that the views of Hampshire's children in care and care leavers are listened to and acted upon, including ensuring those views are incorporated into key plans, policies and strategies throughout the County Council;
 - ensuring sufficient resources are available for the 'Care Ambassadors' to directly engage with all children in care and care leavers, and to commission and deliver agreed projects on behalf of the Hampshire County Council;
 - raising awareness by promoting the role of Elected Members as corporate parents and the County Council as a large corporate family with key responsibilities;
 - raising the profile of the needs of children in care and care leavers through support for a range of actions & events, to recognise their achievement and contribution;
 - ensuring that children and young people are clear about what they can expect from the County Council as corporate parents;
 - ensuring that the views of children and young people on the development of services which affect them are regularly heard through the Care Ambassadors, including those with special educational needs (SEN) and learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD).
 - reviewing the children in care/care leavers Pledge annually;
 - ensuring all staff working with children in care and care leavers have the appropriate support and training needs identified.

2 Background

- 2.1** Hampshire County Council is one of the country's leading local authorities, with many services rated as high performing. Elected Members have a crucial role to play in ensuring that we provide an excellent service to some of the most vulnerable children and young people in society – specifically those children and young people in care or care leavers. Due to their vulnerabilities, we know that these children and young people are at increased risk of poorer outcomes than their peers, they are more likely to have poorer academic outcomes, increased risk of mental illness, increased risk of offending and increased risk of not being in education, training or employment as they transition into adulthood. As a corporate parent, the responsibility is on the Council to ensure that these children have the same opportunities and aspirations as any other young person in order to achieve good outcomes for children, by championing the welfare of children and young people in care and care leavers, drawing on the principle of "If this were my child, would it be good enough?"
- 2.2** Whilst the role of a corporate parent has been introduced since the Children Act 1989, the Children and Social Work Act 2017 (s1.1) defined for the first

time in law what corporate parenting should be looking at to ensure, as far as possible, secure, nurturing and positive experiences for children looked after and care leavers. This being:

- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people;
- to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;
- to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;
- to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;
- to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;
- for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work;
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

3 Corporate Parenting Board (CPB)

3.1 The proposed Corporate Parenting Board will be a sub-committee of the Children and Families Advisory Panel and will produce an annual report on the progress of its work, specifically to evidence improved outcomes for children and young people in care and care leavers.

3.2 The Local Government Association has produced a resource pack for elected members to assist in understanding the role and function of Corporate Parenting Boards; this is attached as Appendix 2. A guide to some questions that may be asked by board members in carrying out their role is attached as Appendix 3.

4 Membership of the Board

4.1 It is proposed that the CPB is made up of three County Councillors appointed by and drawn from the membership of the CFAP on a politically proportionate basis. In addition to this, it is recommended to the County Council that three Care Ambassadors are co-opted to the Board and that Officers will attend to support and advise the CPB, as detailed in the terms of reference (Appendix 1).

4.2 The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Board will be identified by CFAP from the appointed County Council members.

4.3 The Executive Lead Member for Children's Services will have a standing invitation to attend and observe meetings of the Board.

5 Officer Support and Resources

- 5.1 The Director of Children's Services will be responsible for ensuring that the Board has sufficient Officer support and resources to carry out its functions and may delegate this responsibility as required.
- 5.2 Currently the functions of the CPB are already in existence but come under different strategic pathways. Therefore the CPB will provide a coordinated response to improving the outcomes of children in care and care leavers through the development of effective services

6 Frequency of meetings

- 6.1 It is proposed that meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board are held quarterly, working to an agreed forward programme of business which will be reviewed and amended by the Board as required; led by the views and priorities identified by children in care and care leavers. In reviewing the programme, the Board may request reports on particular matters of their own preference or as advised by the lead officer.

7 Functions of the Board

- 7.1 The agenda and reports for the CPB will be available in accordance with the County Council's Constitution.
- 7.2 The Board will receive regular reports in relation to adoption, fostering, commissioning, children looked after services, care leavers and the virtual school with a view to identify any areas of under performance and recommending any changes.
- 7.3 Through recommendations to the relevant Executive Member or to CFAP, the Board will seek to ensure that the profile of the corporate parenting priorities are incorporated within key plans, policies and strategies of the County Council, including interagency working arrangements. Reports relating to complaints/comments from looked after children or care leavers will be reviewed to enable the Board to assure itself that Officers have dealt with these appropriately and made any necessary changes.
- 7.4 The Board will raise awareness within Hampshire County Council's partner agencies and the wider community by promoting the role of members as corporate parents and the Council as a corporate family with key responsibilities.
- 7.5 The Board will raise the profile of the needs and achievements of children looked after and care leavers through support for a range of celebratory events /activities determined by children looked after and care leavers.
- 7.6 The Board will seek to ensure that leisure, culture, further education and employment opportunities are provided and taken up by our children in care and care leavers.

- 7.7 The Board will seek to ensure that the views of children and young people are regularly heard through the CPB to improve care arrangements, educational, health and social outcomes.
- 7.8 The Board will meet with children and young people in care/care leavers, frontline staff and foster carers to enable it to inform CFAP of the standards of care and improvement outcomes for children in care and care leavers.
- 7.9 The Board will monitor the ongoing commitment to providing support, training and clarity of expectations for foster carers / residential workers to provide excellent and high quality care.
- 7.10 The Board will consider the possible role of Member Champions in respect of a number of areas and make recommendations accordingly in the following key areas:
- Housing
 - Employment and training opportunities within council department and with partner agencies
 - Health and emotional well being
 - Educational Attainment and access to Higher Education
 - Foster Carer Recruitment and retention
 - Response to those who go missing
- 7.11 The CPB may agree the appointment of working groups of Members and Officers to provide advice on specific matters within its remit. Such working groups may be appointed for a fixed period, on the expiry of which they shall cease to exist.

8 Care Ambassadors

- 8.1 The Care Ambassadors represent the views of children in care and care leavers and representatives will be co-opted by the County Council.

9 Performance Monitoring

- 9.1 The Corporate Parenting Board will regularly analyse and monitor outcomes for children in care and care leavers. The Board's work will be underpinned by a core data set considered at each Board meeting. Additional detailed monitoring reports will be presented in accordance with the agreed work programme.

10 Training

- 10.1 Appropriate training will be provided to members of the CPB as required – this could be training provided by the Care Ambassadors or by Officers or other agencies.

11 Impact that the Corporate Parenting Board has on the performance of the County Council

11.1 The impact of a Corporate Parenting Board will highlight and promote the Council's responsibility as a corporate parent to ensure that the very best care is provided to all of our children in care and care leavers. The introduction of a CPB will raise the profile of children in care and care leavers throughout the whole council.

12 Recommendation(s)

12.1 That the Children and Families Advisory Panel agrees to the formation of a sub-committee known as the Corporate Parenting Board on the basis set out in the report and in the attached draft terms of reference.

12.2 That the Children and Families Advisory Panel agrees to the adoption of the proposed Terms of Reference for the Board.

12.3 That the Children and Families Advisory Panel appoints three Members to the Board, on a proportionate basis and identifies one of them as Chairman and another as Vice-Chairman. In addition, that the Children and Families Advisory Panel appoint a substitute member for each political Group.

12.4 That the Children and Families Advisory Panel recommends to County Council the appointment of three co-opted Care Ambassadors as Members of the Board as set out in the Terms of Reference.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Strategic Plan**

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

Equalities Impact Assessment:

The establishment of the Corporate Parenting Board will not have any direct impact on equalities, and any future recommendations of the Board to the Executive Member will be subject to Equalities Assessment at that time.

Impact on Crime and Disorder:

Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

No Impact

- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

No impact

(DRAFT)

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

1. The Children and Families Advisory Panel (CFAP) has established a sub-committee, known as the Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) to enable detailed Member led engagement and advice to CFAP and to the relevant Executive Member on the key area of corporate parenting.

Membership

2. The CPB shall consist of three elected County Council Members of CFAP, on a proportionate basis, as appointed by that Panel.
3. Three Care Ambassadors to be co-opted to the Board by the County Council, following nomination from an outside organisation where appropriate.
4. Regular support and advice to the Board will be offered to the Board and may include the following:
 - Assistant Director,
 - Area Director,
 - Service lead for participation,
 - Participation Officer,
 - Lead for Children in Care,
 - Service Manager for residential care,
 - The Virtual School,
 - Procurement,
 - the lead Independent Reviewing Officer
 - Health – (Designated Nurse for Children Looked After, CAMHS),
 - Foster Carers,
 - Public Health,
 - The Youth Commissioner and
 - The Local Safeguarding Children’s Board (LSCB.)
5. Each appointed County Council Member shall cease to be a member of the CPB if he or she ceases to be a member of CFAP or if CFAP removes the appointed Member.
6. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the CPB shall be appointed by CFAP from amongst the three elected County Council Members.
7. A substitute member may be appointed for each political Group as appropriate.
8. The Executive Lead Member for Children’s Services shall have a standing invitation to attend and observe meetings of the Board.

Functions and remit of the CPB

9. The CPB is established to support the work of CFAP in the specific area of corporate parenting. CFAP is constituted to “advise the relevant Executive Member on a number of policy areas”. The CPB is delegated to make recommendations on matters falling within its remit to the relevant Executive Member. It may also advise and report to the CFAP.
10. The Corporate Parenting Board will make recommendations to CFAP and to the Executive Lead Member for Children’s Services regarding:
 - the review and monitoring of outcomes for children in care and care leavers;
 - the steps required to ensure that the views of Hampshire’s children in care and care leavers are listened to and acted upon, including ensuring those views are incorporated into key plans, policies and strategies throughout the County Council;
 - ensuring sufficient resources are available for the ‘Care Ambassadors’ to directly engage with all children in care and care leavers, and to commission and deliver agreed projects on behalf of the Hampshire County Council;
 - raising awareness by promoting the role of Elected Members as corporate parents and the County Council as a large corporate family with key responsibilities;
 - raising the profile of the needs of children in care and care leavers through support for a range of actions & events, to recognise their achievement and contribution;
 - ensuring that children and young people are clear about what they can expect from the County Council as corporate parents;
 - ensuring that the views of children and young people on the development of services which affect them are regularly heard through the Care Ambassadors, including those with special educational needs (SEN) and learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD).
 - reviewing the children in care/care leavers Pledge annually;
 - ensuring all staff working with children in care and care leavers have the appropriate support and training needs identified;

Proceedings

11. The CPB shall normally meet four times per year in order to discharge its functions. All meetings of the CPB will take place at a suitable venue, usually in the County Council headquarters in Winchester.
12. The Chairman of the CPB may call an additional meeting of the Board at any time for the purpose of discharging its functions.
13. The County Council Standing Orders as set out in its Constitution shall apply to meetings of the CPB and in particular, those Standing Orders in respect of voting and access to information. The quorum for a meeting of the CPB shall be three, including at least two County Councillors.

14. Meetings of the CPB shall be open for members of the public to attend unless the Board determines that it is necessary to exclude members of the public in accordance with Part VA of the Local Government Act 1972 or the Board determines that it is necessary to close the meeting to the public because of a disturbance.
15. Copies of the agenda and any reports for the CPB's meetings shall be open to inspection by members of the public at the offices of the authority. This is with the exception of any report which the County Council's Monitoring Officer determines relates to items which are likely to be determined to include exempt information and result in a resolution at the meeting to exclude the public. Categories of exempt information are set out at Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act.
16. The CPB may agree the appointment of working groups of Members and Officers to provide advice on specific matters within its remit. Such working groups may be appointed for a fixed period, on the expiry of which they shall cease to exist.

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10 questions to ask if you're scrutinising services for looked after children

Revised June 2012





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Introduction

This guide has been produced by the Local Government Association in partnership with the National Children's Bureau. It follows on from a previous guide produced by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) for Local Government Improvement and Development and forms part of a suite of offers for elected members and others working in children's services.

The Centre for Public Scrutiny is an independent national charity which carries out research, supports online networks and provides training, development and events to promote and improve public scrutiny and accountability across government and the public sector.

The Local Government Association has sector-led improvement as a key corporate priority. Councils are the most improved part of the public sector, and local politicians and senior managers lead the transformation of place. A significant sector-led improvement programme is established in children's services with governance provided through the children's improvement board and funding to the board from the Department of Education (DfE).

The National Children's Bureau is a leading research and development charity working to improve the lives of children and young people, reducing the impact of inequalities. It works with children, for children to influence government policy, be a strong voice for young people and frontline professionals, and provide practical solutions on a range of social issues.

The National Children's Bureau has been funded by the Department of Education to develop materials that will support councils in their role as corporate parents. More detailed briefings on specific topics of relevance to corporate parents and self-audit tools are being developed by the National Children's Bureau and will be available shortly. A National Voice, an organisation providing a voice for looked-after children and care-leavers, is also producing 'top tips' for corporate parents on working with their children in care council.

This guide aims to provide clear and succinct advice for scrutiny members and officers on the key issues to cover in a scrutiny review of corporate parenting, as well as jargon-busting, links to further information and case studies.

The ten question areas can be used by overview and scrutiny committees (OSCs) to scope a review that takes an overview of all services relevant to looked-after children, or to focus on an area of particular interest. They can also be used by corporate parenting groups or other elected members to support them in their ability to scrutinise and challenge the service provided by their council to looked-after children.

If corporate parents are to assess whether the standard of care would be good enough for their own children, they need good quality information on which to base their judgements. These questions will provide a framework to structure this information.

Key points

Children in the care of a local authority are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of children in care are there because they have suffered abuse or neglect. At any one time around 65,000 children are looked after in England, although over 90,000 pass through the care system each year. There has been an overall increase in the numbers of children entering care since 2007 and a rise in the proportion who are removed through the intervention of the courts as opposed to coming into care by agreement with parents.

When they are elected, all councillors take on the role of 'corporate parent' to children looked after by their local authority. They have a duty to take an interest in the wellbeing and development of those children, as if they were their own. Although the lead member for children's services has particular responsibilities, the role of corporate parent is carried by all councillors, regardless of their role on the council.

Overview and scrutiny offers a key way in which councillors can fulfil this responsibility, by giving them the opportunity to ask searching questions of a range of service providers and assure themselves that children in the care of the local authority are being well looked after.

Overview and scrutiny also offers opportunities for councillors to hear directly from children looked after by the authority and to ensure that their voices are heard

when considering the effectiveness and impact of services. This should include not just children's social care, but other services which may have an impact on the lives of children in care (including care-leavers and those on the edge of care), such as housing provision, crime and feeling safe in the community, access to public transport and the quality of schools and leisure activities.

In April 2011 the government introduced new regulations and guidance to improve the quality and consistency of care planning, placement (where and how children are looked after) and case review for looked-after children. It includes statutory guidance on independent reviewing officers, the 'sufficiency duty' requiring local authorities to ensure there is enough accommodation locally for looked-after children, as well as guidance on improving their educational attainment. This was part of the implementation of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008, and it updated and consolidated previous guidance on the Children Act 1989 and other legislation.

Local authorities are required to collect data about their performance in relation to looked-after children, and to report this to the Department for Education. This data is published annually and, although it is no longer accompanied by targets, provides a useful benchmark for comparisons between an authority's present and past performance and with that of other authorities.

Jargon busting

‘Looked-after children’, ‘children in care’

The terms ‘looked-after children’ or ‘children in care’ refer to all children under the age of 18 being looked after by a local authority. It includes both those subject to a care order under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 (see below); and those looked after by a voluntary agreement with their parents under section 20 of that Act. Once they become looked-after, children may be placed by the local authority with family members, foster carers or in a residential children’s home. The purpose of the ‘care’ system is to look after children where parents are unable to do so, for a variety of reasons. These include situations where parents are abusive or cannot provide adequate care for them, or where there is no parent or relative available, such as asylum seeking children or those whose parents have died.

‘Care leavers’

Care leavers are those who have been in ‘care’ for at least 13 weeks from the age of 14 onwards and therefore qualify for services to support them once they leave. This support should be provided up to the age of 21 or until they have completed their education if this is longer.

Care order – Section 31 Children Act 1989

Care orders are made by the court if a ‘threshold of significant harm’ is reached and there is no likelihood of improvement in the standard of care provided for a young person. The local authority then shares parental responsibility with the parent(s) and can make the decisions that a parent would normally make. A care order expires when the young person reaches 18 or when another Order is made placing the child with an alternative family, such as an adoption or ‘special guardianship order’. It can also be discharged by the court before the age of 18 if it is considered that the child would no longer be at risk of harm if they returned home.

Children ‘at risk’ of harm

These are children where there are concerns that they are suffering or are likely to suffer harm through abuse or neglect. Children considered ‘at risk’ have a ‘child protection plan’ which should be regularly reviewed.

‘Children in need’

Children in need are a wider group of children and young people who have been assessed as needing the help of services to achieve a reasonable standard of health or development. They have a ‘child in need plan’ to address the difficulties identified in the assessment

Interim care order – Section 38 Children Act 1989

If the local authority is concerned that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer ‘significant harm’, they can apply to the court for an ‘interim care order’, which is a time-limited order renewed while care proceedings for the child continue through the courts.

Emergency protection order section 44 Children Act 1989

An ‘emergency protection order’ removes a child into accommodation provided by or on behalf of the local authority and is granted by the court (or magistrate outside court hours) if there is reasonable cause to believe that the child is likely to suffer significant immediate harm. It is to be used only where the child is thought to be at immediate risk and for a maximum of eight days, although this can be extended by the court for a further seven days. It allows the child to be cared for in a place of safety whilst further enquiries are made.

The pledge

Each local authority is required to develop a ‘pledge’, setting out its commitments to the children in its care. The Care Matters Initiative envisaged the pledge as a key communication tool between children and young people and the authority responsible for ensuring they receive the parenting they need. Every child and young person’s care or pathway plan should reflect how the commitments made in the pledge will be delivered for that individual child and it is monitored by the local ‘children in care council’ (see below).

Regulation 33 visits

These are the scrutiny visits that have to be made at least once a month to children’s homes in order to quality-assure the service being provided. This includes checking that the home is compliant with regulations, that the environment is suitable and seeking the views of staff and residents. Where an authority operates its own children’s homes, councillors may be involved in undertaking these visits.

Children in care councils

The Care Matters Initiative created the expectation that local authorities should set up a ‘children in care council’ to represent the views of looked-after children and to enable them to be involved in developing services. There should also be mechanisms in place for involving young people in care in the recruitment of key staff members, such as the director of children’s services. The local children in care council is also responsible for helping to develop and monitor the implementation of the pledge.

The ‘sufficiency duty’

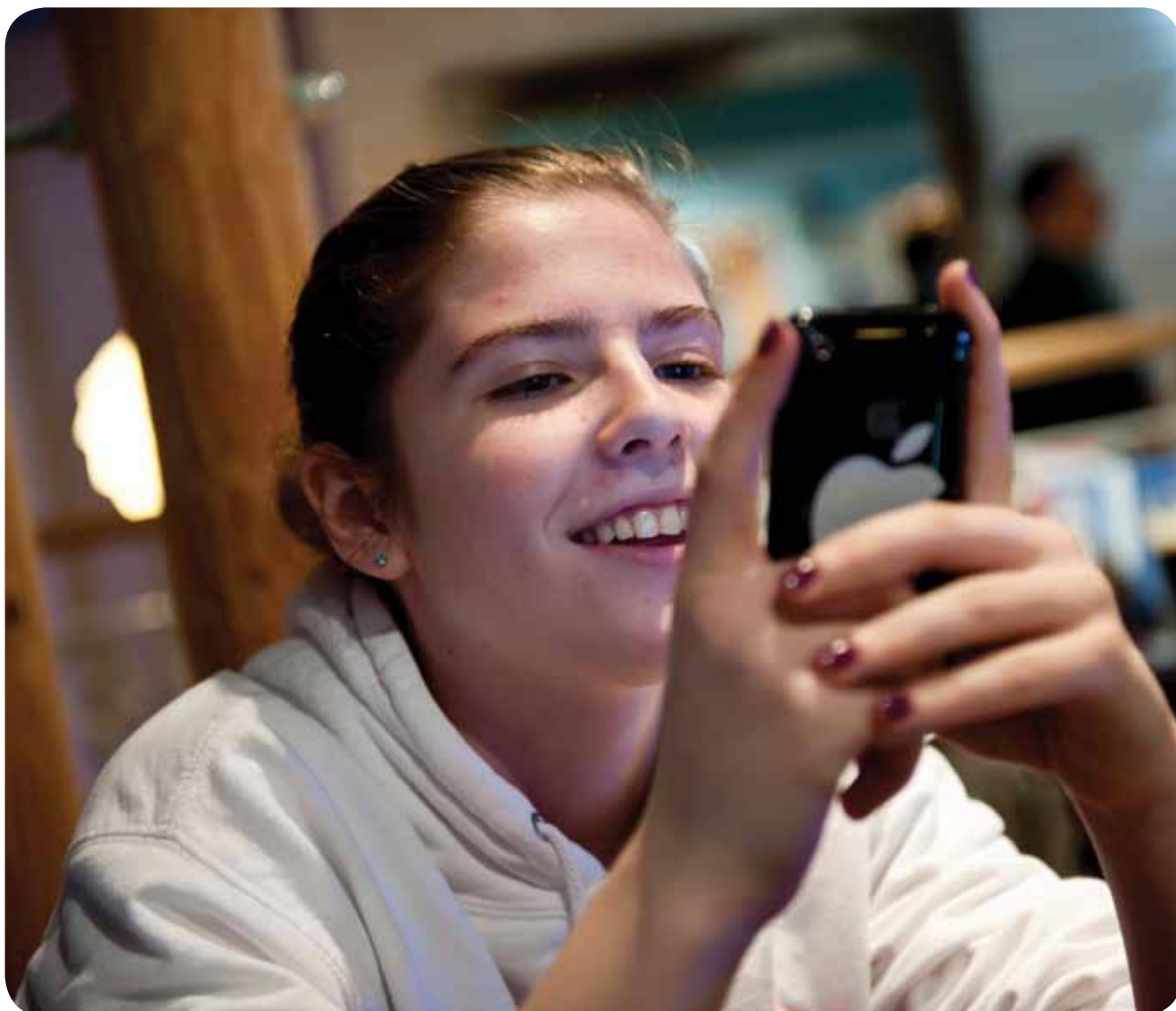
This is a duty placed on local authorities under 22 (G) of the Children Act 1989 (amended by the 2008 Act) to ensure there is sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of their looked-after children. Sufficient accommodation must be provided “where reasonably practical” (lack of resources is not considered a barrier), and having “regard to the benefit of having a number of providers and a range of accommodation”.

Commissioning

The process by which an authority decides what level and type of services it wants in order to meet identified needs, and seeks providers of those services, often through a competitive process. Increasingly this is done jointly, for example with the local health service, and in the context of looked-after children should be based on an analysis of their needs. Commissioned services should be monitored and evaluated, and constantly reviewed to make sure they are continuing to meet changing needs.

Independent reviewing officers (IROs)

The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 requires local authorities to appoint a named IRO for each looked after child. Their role is to oversee the child's care plan, monitor the case and challenge the local authority if the plan is not meeting the child's needs or is not being implemented effectively. The IRO must communicate directly with each child they are responsible for to establish the child's wishes and feelings and ensure that these are taken into account.



1

How well does your authority do in commissioning or providing services for looked after children?

Policy context

As corporate parents, members need access to information to enable you to identify how well your authority is doing in relation to outcomes for your looked-after children, and to any areas for improvement. National performance data will enable you to assess how well your local authority is doing in comparison with others. It is also useful for analysing trends within your own authority.

Ofsted inspections provide an independent perspective on the quality of your service.

As part of the sector-led improvement programme for children's services, the Safeguarding Children peer review is on offer to all authorities. This peer review can be tailored to the requirements of individual authorities and can have a focus on looked-after children. It is important that scrutiny members participate in the peer review process in their authority and also consider the findings of the peer review team. This will provide valuable insight from a 'critical friend' perspective.

Whatever these sources of information tell you, there is always a need for additional local mechanisms for you to judge whether the quality of care provided would be good enough for your own child. Statistics alone are not enough: it is important to ask questions of those responsible about the factors that affect your authority's performance, and to seek qualitative

information about the experiences of the children themselves.

The circumstances and needs of looked-after children vary widely, with some children just spending a short period in care during a family crisis while others effectively grow up in care. Each child must have a 'care plan' that sets out the long-term plan for the child and the action that needs to be taken to provide them with good quality care.

Questions to ask

Who are your looked-after children in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, religious or cultural background and disability, and what needs and challenges does this profile present?

- Do you have a system for seeking feedback from looked-after children and care-leavers about the services they receive?
- Do you receive a copy of the annual report from the IRO service, and is it used to identify gaps in services?

The services provided must meet the identified needs of the children, while offering 'value for money'. Members need to ensure that arrangements for commissioning services are effective.

- Do arrangements for commissioning services involve all relevant council departments and other agencies?
- How will any changes in local health service structures, for example the move to GP commissioning, impact on any joint commissioning arrangements?
- Does your local joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA) include information on the needs of your looked after children and care-leavers?
- Do you have mechanism for reviewing the effectiveness of the services you commission, based on outcomes?

Cost comparisons can be one indicator of how your authority compares with others, for example:

- What is the cost of your residential provision by comparison with other areas?
- How much do you spend on out-of-area placements for looked-after children? Is this rising or falling?

London Borough of Enfield developed a commissioning strategy for looked-after children which had the reduction in the number of children placed in residential care as one of its aims. The implementation of this strategy has been effective in this aim, reducing the numbers of looked-after children in residential placements from 17 per cent in 2004 to 6.5 per cent in 2010. This has ensured that more of the most complex young people can benefit from a family setting. The financial efficiencies achieved have been reinvested into preventive services to allow more children and young people to be cared for within their own families¹.

¹ <http://www.c4eo.org.uk/themes/vulnerablechildren/vipdetails.aspx?lpeid=381>

2

How well do your children in care do at school, both academically and in terms of other kinds of achievements?

Policy context

A better education for children in care (Social Exclusion Unit 2003) identified five reasons why looked-after children may underachieve in education

- their lives are characterised by instability
- they spend too much time out of school
- they do not have sufficient help with their education if they fall behind
- primary carers are not expected or equipped to provide sufficient support and encouragement for learning and development
- they have unmet emotional, mental and physical health needs which impact on their learning.

Statutory guidance makes it clear that corporate parents must tackle this, and have high aspirations for the children they care for.

”Though some do well, the educational achievement of looked-after children as a group remains unacceptably low. That is why the Children Act 1989 (as amended by the Children Act 2004) places a duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked-after children.”

The way in which local authorities should fulfil this duty is set out in Promoting the educational achievement of looked-after children: statutory guidance for local authorities (DCSF 2010), with a specific section for corporate parents. Responsibility is shared by all schools, including free schools and academies, and the schools admissions code describes the priority governing bodies must give to looked after children.

Personal education plans (PEPs) are completed for all looked-after children within ten days of becoming looked-after and are part of the care plan. There is a joint responsibility for the PEP between the child’s school and the local authority children’s service.

Ensuring looked-after children have the right support to be able to participate fully in school life, and that their school career is not disrupted by constant placement moves can make a big difference. Looked-after children tell us that they value education and want support to do well.

In one authority looked-after children often missed out on after-school activities and trips because of delays in getting permission from social workers and their managers. As a result of the scrutiny review which brought this to light, the authority changed the system so that social workers could delegate the decision to foster carers, ensuring that looked-after children were not missing out.

- What do looked-after children and young people themselves say about their education and aspirations?

Celebrating the non-academic achievements of children in care and enabling them to benefit from all the opportunities school can offer is also important. Children in care should be cared about and not just cared for.

Questions to ask

- What results are achieved by looked-after children compared with other children at local schools, and with looked-after children in other authorities?
- How well are children placed outside your local authority area doing at school?
- What plans does the council have to raise the educational attainment of looked-after children?
- Do you have a 'virtual school head', designated teachers and designated school governors in place? How effective are these arrangements?
- How are individual children and young people supported to achieve, both within and outside school?
- How are children supported to continue in further and higher education?
- How do schools' admissions policies treat looked-after children, for example are they able to attend the same school as other children in their foster family, and how many looked-after children get into the highest performing schools?
- Do all looked-after children have a PEP and are these audited for quality?

In one authority a young person was unable to attend an after-school photography course because for two years no-one would buy her a camera: when this came to light during a scrutiny review, councillors intervened and got action taken to sort it out.

- Are looked-after children able to participate in after-school activities and enjoy learning and achievement in all its forms? If not, what are the barriers?
- Does your council have a way to celebrate the achievements (whether sporting, academic, musical, attendance, personal bests) of looked-after children, and are councillors given regular updates?
- Do you monitor the numbers of looked-after children excluded from school, and do you know what alternative provision is available for them?

3

How good is the health and wellbeing of children in your care?

Policy context

Looked-after children and young people share many of the same health risks and problems as their peers, but they frequently enter care with a worse level of health due to the impact of poverty, abuse and neglect. Evidence suggests that looked-after children are nearly five times more likely to have a mental health disorder than all children.

As with educational attainment, there is statutory guidance on Promoting the health and wellbeing of looked-after children (DCSF 2009). This applies to local authorities, primary care trusts and strategic health authorities but consideration will need to be given to the impact of the NHS reforms.

The health needs of each looked-after child must be assessed within four weeks of a child becoming looked-after and should form the basis of their health plan. As with the PEP, this feeds in to the child's care plan.

Local authorities are also required to make sure that a 'strengths and difficulties' questionnaire is completed to assess for emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Questions to ask

- What proportion of children's health assessments and dental checks are carried out on time?
- Is there a designated doctor and nurse for looked-after children?
- Are looked-after children a priority group for getting access to child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and how long are waiting times for referrals?
- As an at-risk group, what access do looked-after children and young people get to services to help with substance misuse, sexual health and teenage pregnancy?
- What support is given to foster carers and young people themselves about promoting healthy lifestyles?
- Do you receive regular reports on the health needs and outcomes of looked-after children?
- What do looked-after children and young people themselves say about their health needs and priorities and how well they are met?
- Is this evidence about outcomes and experiences used to inform the commissioning of services?

4

How stable and secure are the lives of your looked-after children while they are in your care?

Policy context

When children and young people enter care and are placed either with foster carers, in residential homes or even at boarding school, they risk losing regular contact not only with family members but also with friends or other significant people in their lives.

This is exacerbated if the 'placement' has to be out of the area, perhaps because of a lack of local foster families or children's homes. If the placement breaks down, they may have to move again, causing yet more anxiety and disruption. Yet children themselves tell us that stable and supportive relationships are crucial if they are to thrive in care.

Ensuring placements are stable and work well for children and young people is therefore key to their wellbeing. The 'sufficiency duty' requires local authorities to take steps to secure sufficient accommodation within the authority's area which meets the needs of its looked-after children, and they must demonstrate how they are fulfilling this responsibility. To do this, there must be a good understanding of who your children are and what they need.

Every council has to collect data on how far placements are from the child's home and the number of placements that children experience but the quality of the care offered must also be taken into account. It is not good enough to place a child in a stable placement, within the local authority boundary, if the child is unhappy there.

There are important links with safeguarding: children who come into care should do so at a point where their experiences have not been so damaging that they cannot settle.

Questions to ask

How stable are your placements? How many children move placements three or more times during a year or remain in the same placement for two or more years?

- What do you know about the children who experience changes of placement?
- What are the needs of children that require them to be placed out of the area of the authority?
- If additional services were provided either by the local authority or by partner agencies, could they be looked after within the area of the local authority?
- How are you fulfilling your 'sufficiency duty'?

- What choice and information do children and young people have about their placements, for example, do they get to meet potential foster carers or visit children's homes before they go to live there?
- If children have to move placement, what arrangements are made to keep them at the same school, for example transport?
- Are you satisfied that children are supported to maintain relationships with people that are significant to them?
- What do looked-after children say about their placements?

As a result of one authority's scrutiny review, a looked-after children and care leavers' drop-in centre was developed, to provide a safe space for looked-after children and young people to go to find out information and meet support workers and others in one place.



5

How well does your authority do at finding appropriate adoptive families for children for whom it is decided this is the right option?

Policy context

If a child or young person's birth family have completely broken down or it has been decided that they will never be able to care for the child safely, the best option for a long-term stable family environment may be adoption. The law governing adoption is in the Adoption and Children Act 2002, which aligned adoption practice with the 1989 Children Act, making the welfare of the child the paramount consideration.

The government has recently announced An Action Plan on Adoption (DfE 2012) to increase the numbers of children being adopted from care, and to speed up the process. The measures it proposes include considering the suitability of adoption for children at an earlier stage; streamlining bureaucratic processes that can lead to delay and encouraging a broader range of potential adopters. This includes the relaxation of expectations about matching the ethnicity of children and adopters if this will cause delay.

These changes will be accompanied by stronger systems for holding local authorities to account, with a new framework for inspection and a new 'adoption scorecard'. This will indicate how each local authority has performed in relation to placing children for adoption and in responding to prospective adopters.

It is important not to forget that there are other ways of securing a permanent home for children within the care system. For some, family and friends may be able to care for them if the right support is available. For others, particularly older children, adoption may be unsuitable but foster carers make the commitment to offer the child a permanent home. These alternative routes to permanency can be secured legally through arrangements such as 'residence orders' or 'special guardianship'.

South Tyneside Council routinely places over 12 per cent of its looked-after population for adoption and is one of the best performing councils in placing them within one year of the decision being made. This has been achieved through the use of 'concurrent planning' in which, if children are not rehabilitated to their birth family, they are adopted by their foster carers².

² <http://www.c4eo.org.uk/themes/vulnerablechildren/vlpdetails.aspx?lpeid=363>

Questions to ask

- What percentage of children have a permanence plan by their second review?
- What percentage of children are placed for adoption within 12 months of the decision to adopt and are subsequently adopted?
- How long does it take to make the decision to place a child for adoption, particularly for new-born babies?
- What is the profile of your children in care compared with prospective adoptive families, and if there is an imbalance, what steps are being taken to address this?
- How are sibling groups treated and what steps are taken to ensure they stay together, whether in adoption, fostering or residential care?
- What is the profile of children waiting for a permanent placement and what are the barriers to finding them a home?
- How long does it take to respond to prospective adopters and what are their views on how they have been treated?
- What do children and young people, for example in your local children in care council, say about adoption processes?



6

How well do your foster care arrangements work?

Policy context

Nationally, the proportion of children in care placed with foster carers as opposed to children's homes or other placements is about two thirds. Fostering is generally seen as a preferable option because it enables children and young people to live in a family environment.

Foster carers can play a valuable role in stabilising and caring for children from disrupted backgrounds for both short and longer periods of time, but nationally there is a shortage of people willing to take on the role. In the 1990s, independent or private fostering agencies developed and there is now a mixed economy. The way in which foster carers are supported, the fees they receive and their access to information may all play a role in making them feel valued, ensuring that they in turn can value and support the children they look after in the most effective way. The extent to which they hold delegated responsibility for day-to-day decisions on matters such as 'sleep-overs' or school trips can make a difference to their role satisfaction and the child's sense of belonging.

The Foster Carers' Charter sets out the expected commitment that foster carers and local authorities will make. It is designed to be used locally to develop a shared understanding and to encourage challenge.

Some 'family and friends' foster carers are approved only for a specific child, where they have an existing relationship and the local authority has decided that it is in the child's best interests to stay with them.

'Private' foster placements are those where the child's parents have made the arrangement directly with the foster family. The local authority should be informed in these situations so that they can check the suitability of the arrangement and monitor the care being provided.

Dreamwalls project in Southampton provides 'time-out' breaks for foster carers and has reduced by 95 per cent the proportion of foster carers leaving fostering. The cost equated to £674.43 per child per year, and 182 children received the service. Using the social return on investment (SROI) method of calculating value and benefits as well as costs, there was a £1.63 return for every £1.00 invested in the project.

Questions to ask

- Do you have a sufficient pool of suitable foster carers locally to meet the needs of children needing placements? If not, what steps are being taken to address this?
- What support is given to your foster carers, including family and friends carers, and how easily can they access it, both for themselves and the child in their care?
- What do foster carers themselves say about the support they receive, including out-of-hours support and about their relationships with social workers and other professionals?
- Are there clear arrangements for delegating responsibility to foster carers for day-to-day decisions?
- Is there more 'in-kind' support that would facilitate and make the fostering role easier, such as bus passes, access to leisure centres etc?
- What do looked-after children and young people themselves say about their experience of fostering?
- What is the turnover of foster carers and do you know the reasons why carers leave?



7

How good is the standard of residential care provided or used by your authority?

Policy context

For some children, a placement in a children's home may be more suitable than a foster home. For example, they may find it difficult to cope with family-based life as a result of their experiences, or because of a strong sense of loyalty to their birth family.

DfE has a challenge and improvement programme for children's homes to support good practice. As part of the programme, it produced a data pack to enable local authorities to examine and compare their use of children's homes (DfE 2011)³. Some local authorities operate children's homes themselves but 76 per cent of placements are in the private or voluntary sector. About nine per cent of looked-after children are in residential care and most are over the age of 12. The placements are more likely than foster care to be out of area. Interestingly, some authorities use residential care much more than others.

Councillors have said that taking part in 'Regulation 33' visits or other arranged visits to homes can really bring to life what it is like to live in residential care, although they have to be carried out with sensitivity. Ofsted inspects residential homes and these reports (along with the reports from Regulation 33 visits) should provide a source of information and assurance to scrutiny about the standard of care provided there.

Questions to ask

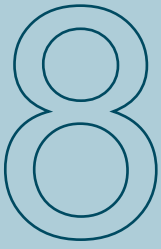
- What is the profile of the children placed in residential care by your authority?
- Who provides the residential placements used by your authority and what is their Ofsted rating?
- What are the outcomes of children in residential care compared to the rest of your looked after children?
- Do you have any children placed in 'secure care'?
- How is the experience of children placed in residential care outside the authority monitored?
- How does your use of residential care compare with other similar authorities?
- If your authority operates its own children's homes, what are the arrangements for undertaking Regulation 33 visit and how effective are these?

³ <http://tinyurl.com/82p2qda>

- What do looked-after children and young people themselves say about their experience of living in residential care?
- How are any complaints about standards of care in residential homes and issues such as bullying dealt with? How many are there and what happens as a result?

In Kirklees, looked-after children can access the KicK (Kids in care Kirklees) website. From here they can go on a virtual tour of all the residential homes by watching a video made and narrated by looked-after young people who live there, to tell them what it's like. The website also enables them to 'rate' their reviews and foster placements online, as well as read, listen to and watch first-hand accounts of children and young people's experiences of care.





What support does your authority provide to young people leaving care and how effective is it?

Policy context

For many young people, leaving care can be daunting: they are expected to be independent at an earlier age than their peers, in spite of the additional difficulties that many face. Care leavers are over-represented in prison populations and the unemployed, demonstrating that the experience of being in – and leaving – care still does not prepare young people well for adult life. If looked-after children followed the same paths as other children into further education, training and jobs, it could save the economy £50 million each year.

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 sets out local authorities' responsibilities to develop a 'pathway plan' within three months of every looked-after child's 16th birthday to help them towards independence, with the support of a personal adviser.

Young people cease to be looked after at the age of 18, although some may choose to leave before this. The local authority continues to have responsibilities towards them at least up to the age of 21 and longer if they are receiving education or training. Young people eligible for adult services, such as those with a disability, are also entitled to extended support as care leavers.

Statutory guidance on local authority responsibilities towards care leavers is contained in Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations: Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers (DCSF 2010). Support may be financial, practical and emotional.

The Staying Put programme enabled children in 11 pilot authorities to remain with their foster carers beyond the age of 18, replicating the experiences of most families. The evaluation was broadly positive⁴, particularly in enabling the young people to remain in education.

In Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, scrutiny called representatives from Job Centre Plus, the council's Revenues and Benefits and Care Leavers Services to a hearing following concerns expressed by care leavers about distress caused by late payments of benefits. The NCH Bridges Project reported that since the intervention of scrutiny, delays in processing benefits for care leavers were much reduced. As well as reducing the further risk of social and financial exclusion to vulnerable care leavers, there was also a reduction in the number of emergency payments to care leavers.

⁴ DfE (2012) Evaluation of the Staying Put: 18 Plus Family Placement Programme: Final report

Questions to ask

- How many care leavers is your authority still in touch with a year after they have left the care of the authority? How many are they in touch with after three years?
- What do you know about the outcomes of the children who were formerly in your authority's care?
- How many formerly looked-after young people are NEETs (not in education, employment and training)?
- What support do young people leaving care receive to access housing, tenancy support, employment, access to benefits, further and higher education and training?
- Do you make any provision for young people to stay in their placement beyond the age of 18?
- What do former looked-after children and young people themselves say about their experience of leaving care and the support that is or was provided?

In one authority a specialist scrutiny group on corporate parenting enabled looked-after young people to feed views directly to scrutiny. As a result of this group, the 'care leavers grant' (given to all young people leaving care to buy things for setting up home when they left care) was increased from £750 to £1000. Young people said £750 wasn't enough, members agreed and although officers were initially reluctant, comparison with other authorities showed that the grant level was low, so it was agreed to increase it.



9

How effective is your professional workforce of social workers and others responsible for running services for and working with looked-after children?

Policy context

It is essential that each child has an individualised care plan based on a thorough assessment of their needs, and this is the responsibility of their allocated social worker. Many authorities have struggled to recruit and retain sufficient numbers of suitably qualified social workers to do the difficult job of working with vulnerable children. This can be a key cause of poor performance but will also have an adverse effect on the experiences of the children and their carers. Children find it distressing to have frequent changes of worker and can feel uncared for as a result.

The IRO service is important both in terms of its ability to challenge individual instances of poor practice and to have an overview of the effectiveness of care planning across the authority. The IRO may be the most constant figure in some children's lives.

While senior officers are responsible for managing staff and services, members can play an important role in checking that there is a skilled and stable workforce in place. Although social workers are key, other council officers should also be aware of their responsibilities to looked-after children, such as those in housing departments, environment and leisure services, education, legal services and the public health service.

Questions to ask

- What are the levels of social work vacancies, turnover, stress-related sickness, use of agency staff and ratios between newly qualified and experienced social workers and what action are management taking to address these?
- What continuity of social worker support is there for looked-after children and what are the case loads carried by social work staff?
- What proportion of social workers' time is spent doing face-to-face work with looked-after children as opposed to paper work and could this be improved?
- What does the annual IRO report say about the effectiveness of care planning in the authority and is action taken to address any weaknesses that it identifies?
- Are there enough opportunities for social workers to develop their skills and to engage in reflective learning?
- Is there evidence that staff from across the authority and other partners are working together to deliver what looked-after children need?
- What do looked-after children and their carers say about their experience of engaging with social workers and other professionals?
- Are looked-after children and young people involved in recruitment and development of services?

10

What more could be done to fulfil the council's responsibilities as a 'corporate parent'?

Policy context

Although elected members will not all have the same level of involvement with the service for looked after children, they all share responsibility for satisfying themselves that is good enough. As former Secretary of State Frank Dobson MP's original letter to all councillors about their role as corporate parents, launching the Quality Protects Programme said:

“Elected councillors have a crucial role. Only you can carry it out. You can make sure that the interests of the children come first. You bring a fresh look and common sense. As councillors you set the strategic direction of your council's services and determine policy and priorities for your local community within the overall objectives set by government.”

This is as valid today as it was then. All councillors should be made aware of their responsibility as a corporate parent, and what this means in practice. As part of this process, it is crucial to ensure that councillors can hear directly from looked-after children about what matters to them. This could be through informal discussions, visits by elected members to children's homes or involving looked-after children when reviewing services.

It is not only councillors who are corporate parents. Council officers across the council (not just in children's services departments) share in the responsibility and other partners also have a duty to cooperate to ensure looked-after children's needs are met.

Questions to ask

- Does your council have an effective structure for the governance of corporate parenting, including councillors?
- Do looked-after children know who their 'corporate parents' are? What do they
- say about what they expect from local councillors and others acting as their 'corporate parents'?
- Do all members receive mandatory training on their roles and responsibilities as corporate parents when they are elected and is this refreshed during their term of office?

- Are there appropriate opportunities for elected members to meet and listen to looked-after children and young people, and to celebrate and praise their achievements when they do well?
- Is there an active children in care council which regularly meets with elected members and others in authority (across the council and other partners) to express the views and needs of your looked-after children?
- Is the children in care council happy with the way in which its views influence policy and practice?
- How are children and young people's complaints responded to and what is learnt from them?

One authority has encouraged councillors to 'adopt' a residential home in order to encourage greater responsibility for, and interest in, each home by elected members and provide continuity between visits. These members could be important witnesses to any scrutiny inquiry.



Case studies

London Borough of Newham

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission carried out a review of the council's new approach to corporate parenting – in particular its targets to reduce the number of children in its care, and improve provision for those who remain in care. The commission endorsed the families directorate's investment of intensive resources into those families with children on the edge of care, at an early stage alongside the immediate removal of children where there are risks to their safety, followed by a permanent placement wherever possible. The commission made a number of recommendations, including increased support for foster carers, and closer working arrangements with partnership agencies. The report is available in the CfPS library: <http://tinyurl.com/7ko94k2>

Cheshire East Council

The Children and Families Scrutiny committee undertook a review of fostering services. They identified a need to improve systems and recommended a number of measures to improve the experience of foster carers. They also stated that, in line with the corporate parenting strategy, all corporate policies must consider their impact on looked-after children. The review also suggested related topics for review, such as the 16 plus service. The report is available in the CfPS library: <http://tinyurl.com/6v4kr3r>

Buckinghamshire County Council

The Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertook a review 'Maximising the potential of looked-after children' – examining issues affecting educational attainment of looked-after children in the county, including post-16 and their ability to participate in other aspects of school life. Recommendations focus on support at transition stages and support for foster carers to enable them to better support the children they look after. The report is available in the CfPS library: <http://tiny.cc/g1dt6>

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Rotherham Looked-After Children Scrutiny Sub-Panel has undertaken two reviews of corporate parenting. The most recent review made a number of recommendations in three main areas:

- looked-after children council and pledge
- governance arrangements
- training and guidance to elected members.

The report is available in the CfPS library: <http://tiny.cc/6pfck>

Hartlepool Borough Council

The Children's Services Scrutiny Forum undertook an investigation into the provision of support and services to looked-after children and young people. It took evidence from a range of stakeholders including children and young people, frontline staff and carers. It also invited a presentation from a neighbouring authority. A detailed profile of the looked-after population was undertaken to inform the investigation. It arrived at a number of recommendations for improvement. The report is available in the CfPS library: <http://tinyurl.com/7fzanrz>

Bracknell Forest Council

The council has a specific overview and scrutiny panel that regularly monitors the performance of the children, young people and learning department mainly through review of its quarterly service reports (QSRs), inspection reports and the children's social care statutory complaints report. The QSRs enable the panel to question executive members and officers in detail about trends, pressures and priorities. Specific areas considered recently have included the stability of foster care placements. The report is available in the CfPS library: <http://tinyurl.com/6r4dpgr>



References and further information

Key legislation and guidance

Children Act 1989

<http://tiny.cc/qrzro>

Adoption and Children Act 2002

<http://tiny.cc/lf98m>

Children and Young Persons Act 2008

<http://tiny.cc/951i3>

Care planning, placements and case review regulations (England) 2010 and statutory guidance

These documents specify the current requirements for care plans, including health and education plans, placement decisions and monitoring, and case reviews. They consolidate previous regulations and guidance, providing a central source of reference for local authorities' work with looked-after children and can be found on the DfE website: <http://tiny.cc/7xt9g>

Promoting the educational achievement of looked-after children: statutory guidance for local authorities (DCSF 2010)

Statutory guidance setting out the responsibilities of local authorities and their partners in relation to the education of looked-after children. <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/promotingtheeducationalachievement.pdf>

Promoting the health and wellbeing of looked-after children (DCSF 2009)

Statutory guidance setting out the responsibilities of local authorities and their partners in relation to the health of looked-after children. <http://tinyurl.com/yaevzg2>

Resources

Welcome to corporate parenting – a councillor development learning resource

A booklet and audio CD was produced by Kirklees, Bradford and Calderdale Councils working with a group of looked-after young people.

Contact: Angie Aspinall, Councillor Development Officer, Kirklees Council, angie.aspinall@kirklees.gov.uk or 01484 416 930
<http://tinyurl.com/726mylr>

Improving educational outcomes for looked-after children and young people, and improving the emotional and behavioural health of looked-after children and young people

Two useful knowledge reviews containing detailed evidence of what works, produced by the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children's Services (C4EO), September 2010, available on www.c4eo.org.uk

Putting corporate parenting into practice: developing an effective approach

Materials to support corporate parents, by Hart, D and Williams, A National Children's Bureau and currently being updated.
www.ncb.org.uk

LILAC

LILAC is a project run by a National Voice. It involves care experienced young people in carrying out assessments of how well services involve and consult with their children and young people, and delivering training on participation and the LILAC standards. www.lilacnv.org

What young people from CiCCs say... ten top tips for corporate parents

Suggestions from children in care councils about how corporate parents can work most effectively with them

ANV (forthcoming)

Must knows for lead members in children's services – Local Government Association

<http://tinyurl.com/726mylr>

3. How do you know your council is serving the most vulnerable children and young people well?

[Top tip three \(PDF, 8 pages, 554 KB\)](#)

4. How do you know your council is being effective in keeping children and young people safe?

[Top tip four \(PDF, 8 pages, 528 KB\)](#)

Data profiles for local authorities – LG Inform. Register through the LGA website.
www.local.gov.uk

Improvement support

Information on children's improvement board

<http://tinyurl.com/892zfcu>

LGA support for members

<http://tinyurl.com/7bzpxod>

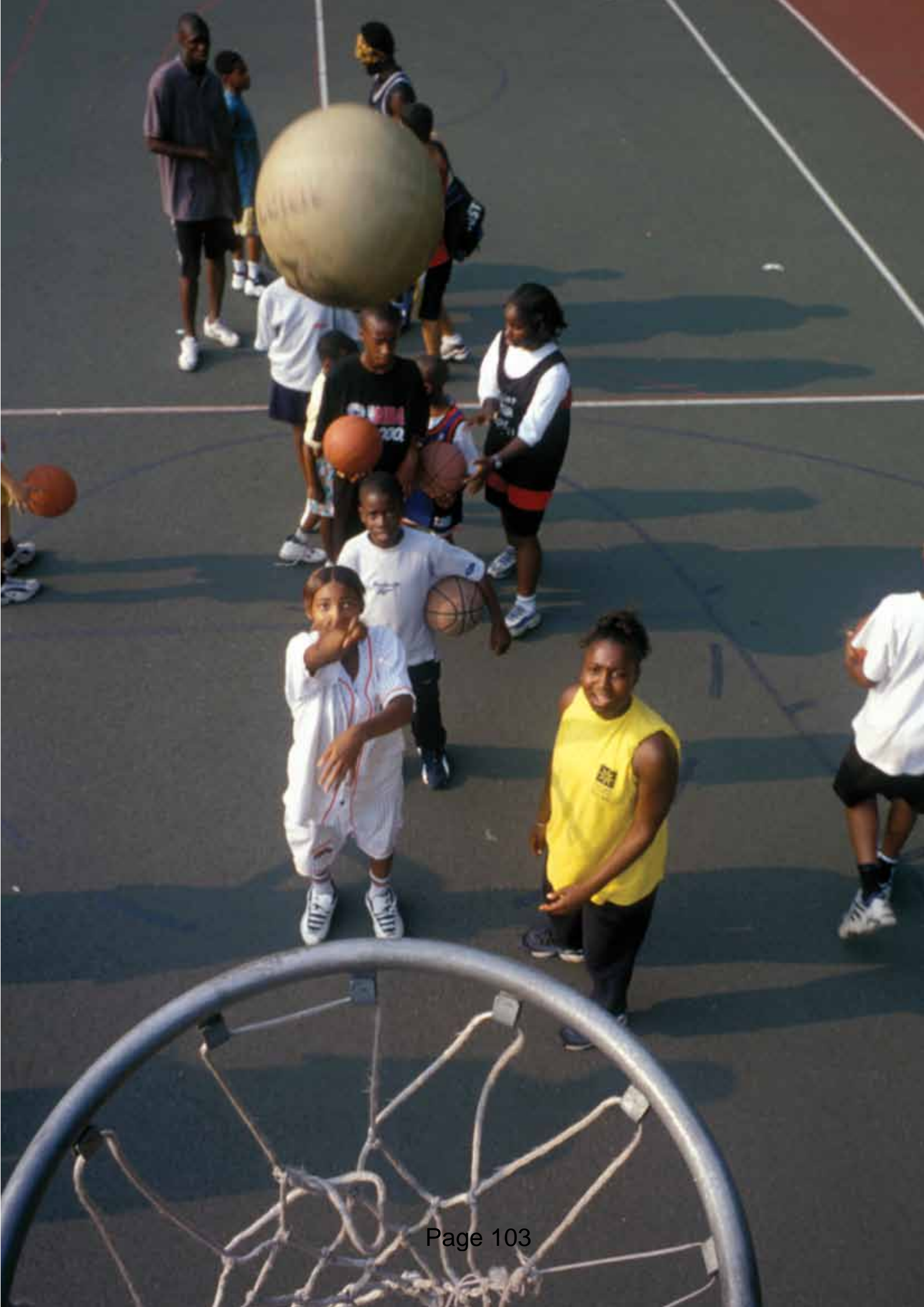
Safeguarding children peer review

<http://www.local.gov.uk/safeguarding-children-peer-reviews>

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Local Government House
Smith Square
London SW1P 3HZ
www.local.gov.uk

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8 Wakley Street
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For a copy in Braille, larger print or audio,
please contact us on 020 7664 3000.
We consider requests on an individual basis.

Corporate Parenting Resource Pack

Foreword

Looking after and protecting children and young people is one of the most important jobs that councils do and when a child, for whatever reason, can't safely stay at home, it is up to us as the local authority to step in and give them the care, support and stability that they deserve. This isn't just up to the lead member or director of children's services – we need everyone looking out for our most vulnerable children and young people, so every councillor has a role to play. This pack aims to help them fulfil that role as effectively as possible.

Being a corporate parent means doing everything we can for every child in the council's care – and every care leaver - to give them the opportunities that other children get. This covers everything from keeping an eye on their progress at school, to looking after their health and wellbeing, to preparing them for life as independent adults – and supporting them when they get there. We need to be ambitious for the children in our care, encouraging them to dream big and take chances even if they don't feel like that's been an option in the past.

It's also about the smaller things that make life more fulfilling. It's about making sure children receive birthday cards, are rewarded when they do well (and supported when they don't), and get to take part in the activities they

enjoy. It's about making sure someone's on the end of a phone when a care leaver is having a hard day at work or university, or is there to help them navigate an application form. It's about doing the things you'd do for your own children.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 defined for the first time in law what corporate parents should be looking at to ensure, as far as possible, secure, nurturing and positive experiences for looked after children and young people, and care leavers. Authorities across the country already do a fantastic job of this, and we've highlighted some examples in this pack. We'd be delighted to hear of any others to add to our online database of good practice for others to learn from, to make sure every councillor has the tools they need to be a good corporate parent.

No child asks to come into care, and many of them will face more challenges before they reach adulthood than any child deserves. It is our duty and our privilege to fight their corner and give them every opportunity to reach their potential.

Councillor Richard Watts
Chair, LGA Children and Young
People Board

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Corporate Parenting: an introduction

What is a Corporate Parent?

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 says that when a child or young person comes into the care of the local authority, or is under 25 and was looked after by the authority for at least 13 weeks after their 14th birthday, the authority becomes their corporate parent. This means that they should:

- Act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people;
- Encourages them to express their views, wishes and feelings, and take them into account, while promoting high aspirations and trying to secure the best outcomes for them;
- Make sure they have access to services;
- Make sure that they are safe, with stable home lives, relationships and education or work; and
- Prepare them for adulthood and independent living.

Children can be in care in a range of placements, with the authority acting as corporate parent to all of them. This includes foster care, children's homes, secure children's homes, special guardianship and kinship care.

Every councillor and officer within a council has a responsibility to act for those children and young people as a parent would for their own child. Lead members, those on Corporate Parenting Panels and Overview and Scrutiny Committees will have particular responsibilities, but for all

councillors, this is where your role as the eyes and ears of the community is vitally important. Are there youth services in your ward that provide a vital service for looked-after children, and if so, how are you supporting them? Is there a children's home or care leaver accommodation in your ward? If foster carers in your ward provide care for disabled children, do they need any help to improve accessibility of local services? What feedback are you getting from residents?

For both officers and councillors, being a corporate parent means that when any service is being looked at that could impact upon looked after children and care leavers, or when you're hearing feedback from or reports about children in your care, consider the question:

"What if this were my child?"

It is important to remember that, just as not all children are the same, looked-after children and care leavers are not one homogenous group. While it is true that some will have experienced trauma and disruption in their lives and need support to cope with those experiences, others will have adjusted well to being in care and may be flourishing. As corporate parents, councillors need to recognise the differences in the children in their care, and make sure each child is getting what they need to do their best.

Corporate Parenting Panel

As corporate parents, all councillors should seek to stay informed about

children in the council's care, and care leavers. However, the establishment of a Corporate Parenting Panel can provide a useful forum for regular, detailed discussion of issues, and a positive link with children in care forums. Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel can also use their position to raise awareness of the role amongst colleagues, and provide support to the lead member for children's services.

The Corporate Parenting Panel does not replace the duty of all councillors; members of all committees have a responsibility to consider how reports before them impact upon children in care and care leavers.

Working with partners

Under the Children Act 2004, local authorities have a duty to promote co-operation between 'relevant partners', including the police, the NHS and education providers, while those partners have a duty to cooperate. Councils should consider how their partners can help them to deliver their corporate parenting role, especially in relation to the provision of services. The NHS can help to make sure looked after children receive the mental health support that they need, for example, while close working between schools and the Virtual School Head will help to improve outcomes for children and young people in care.

Information and data

The lead member for children's services and those on the Corporate Parenting Panel should receive regular reports updating on progress with regard to looked after children and care leavers, while data will be available to all members through

reports presented to Full Council and scrutiny committees.

Data will be able to provide an overview of medium-to-long-term trends, but statistics on their own are not enough. Make sure that you are getting the necessary context and explanations – for example, if fewer children are going missing, is this the result of a positive intervention that you will want to continue using? Or are there issues with reporting? Also look for direction of travel, and comparisons with your statistical neighbours and national data to see where you're performing well and what could be better.

However, as any parent will know, situations with children and young people change quickly, and statistics will not provide all the real-time data that you need. Keep in close contact with the Children in Care Council, Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) and your Director of Children's Services to make sure that you're receiving up-to-date information and can respond quickly if you need to.

Safeguarding

Local authorities have a responsibility for safeguarding all children, but there are certain risks that particularly affect children in care and care leavers that corporate parents need to be aware of.

Children in care are three times more likely to go missing than children not in care¹. Processes must be in place to report missing children, and then to follow up with them when they are found to find out the underlying reasons for going missing. Corporate

¹

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/missing-children>

parents should be monitoring instances of children going missing, and how regularly follow up interviews are taking place, as well as any emerging themes, to properly safeguard these children.

Child victims of modern slavery are particularly vulnerable, with nearly two thirds of trafficked children in local authority care going missing at some point; nearly a third of these go missing within one week². Councils need to make sure a strong multi-agency approach is in place to protect victims from further risk from their traffickers and preventing trafficking from taking place. In particular, there should be a clear understanding between the local authority and the police of roles in planning for this protection and responding if a trafficked child goes missing. Council representatives on local area multi-agency safeguarding arrangements should make sure there is oversight of those arrangements, and monitor how well they are being implemented.

Children in care are also more likely to be at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE) than those in the general population. While issues that lead young people into local authority care may put them at risk, the experience of care itself can also be significant, especially if the child's placement lacks stability. Those at risk of CSE will need to have clear plans in place to protect them, and all social workers should know how to spot signs of risk and deal with them appropriately.

The LGA's resource pack for councillors on tackling CSE is available on our website.

²

http://www.ecpat.org.uk/sites/default/files/trafficked_children_and_missing_ecpat_uk_and_missing_people_joint_briefing_october_2014.pdf

Sources of information

Children in Care Council and other feedback mechanisms

There should be mechanisms in place for you to hear from children in your care (see page 10), with this information being reported regularly to the Corporate Parenting Panel. There may also be an annual report submitted to Full Council. The format for reporting should be discussed with children and young people; some may wish to meet with councillors to discuss issues face to face, some may prefer to use mediators, and others may prefer online methods.

This feedback can provide you with rich information to act upon to make sure children in your care and care leavers are getting what they need – from concerns about how they're kept informed about their placements, to how often they can see any siblings they aren't placed with, right down to whether they're happy with their pocket money!

Independent Reviewing Officer annual report

Amongst other duties, IROs are responsible for making sure that the local authority, as a corporate parent, give proper consideration and weight to the child's wishes and feelings in their care plans, and that they genuinely responds to a child's needs.

The IRO manager should produce an annual report for the consideration of the Corporate Parenting Panel, which should include areas of good practice, and areas for development. It should include commentary on issues including the participation of children and their parents, and whether any

resource issues are putting the delivery of a good service to all looked after children at risk.

Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Joint health and wellbeing strategies (JHWSs) are developed by local leaders to enable the planning and commissioning of integrated services that meet the needs of their whole local community. They particularly work to reduce health inequalities and support the needs of vulnerable groups and individuals; the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment underpinning the JHWS should include specific consideration of children in care and care leavers. The strategy (or associated delivery plan) will include targets, actions and who is responsible for implementing those actions.

The JHWS will be agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Board, which should also monitor its implementation. Board meetings should be public, with the JHWS, reports and minutes all available on the council website.

Performance reports

Reports should be published once a quarter updating on key indicators in relation to children in care, including direction of travel. These indicators are part of a nationally collected dataset reported to DfE, and include information on placement stability, outcomes for children in care and adoption. Your authority may also report on other indicators according to local priorities.

These reports should be publicly available, and should also be

presented to a locally agreed committee – for example the Corporate Parenting Panel, the relevant scrutiny committee or Cabinet.

Feedback from foster parents

Most children who are in care live with foster parents, and the quality and experience of those foster parents is key to ensuring good outcomes for children. Each authority will have different ways of gathering feedback from foster parents, including surveys and focus groups, along with different ways of reporting that feedback. The Corporate Parenting Panel should receive updates on foster parent feedback, and this should be used to help inform support for foster parents, and to improve recruitment and retention.

[Stability Index](#)

Stability for children in care is an important element in helping them to secure positive outcomes. To help support improved placement stability, the Children's Commissioner is developing a Stability Index to measure three aspects of children's experiences of care - placement moves, school moves, and changes in social worker. This was first published in April 2017 on the Children's Commissioner website, with the intention of annual publication going forward to provide analysis and support for local authorities to improve provision and outcomes for children in care.

Updates to legislation and practice

National Quality Standards for Children's Homes

The [Children's Homes \(England\) Regulations 2015](#) set out nine Quality Standards which outline the aspirational and positive outcomes that all children's homes are expected to deliver.

These quality standards are:

- Quality and purpose of care
- Children's views, wishes and feelings
- Education
- Enjoyment and achievement standard
- Health and well-being
- Positive relationships
- Protection of children
- Leadership and management
- Care planning

Further information on each standard is outlined in the Department for Education's [Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations](#).

New rules for Out of Area Placements

Statutory guidance³ has strengthened the responsibilities of local authorities to notify other local authorities if they placed a looked after child within their area. Children's homes are also now required to notify their host local authority when a child is placed with them by another authority.

An 'out of area' placement is classified as one outside of the council's

³ [The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review](#)

geographical boundary, but within an authority that it shares a boundary with. If a child is placed in an authority that doesn't share a geographical boundary with the placing authority, that is classed as an 'at a distance' placement.

A responsible officer should be formally appointed by the DCS to approve out of area placements; this will often be an Assistant Director. All at a distance placements must be signed off by the DCS. This does not apply where the placement is with the parent, a connected person or a foster carer approved by the responsible authority.

The child's IRO should always be consulted prior to an out of area placement being made, and the wishes of the child should be taken into account. The host authority should also be consulted in advance in the case of distant placements.

Staying Put and Staying Close

'Staying Put' is an arrangement that allows a looked after child to continue to live with their foster carer after their 18th birthday, when they cease to be 'looked after' by the local authority. This can take place where the council considers it appropriate, and both the young person and the carer want to enter a staying put arrangement.

A 'Staying Put' duty was introduced in the Children and Families Act 2014, which requires local authorities to monitor arrangements and provide advice and support (including financial) to the foster parent and young person to facilitate the arrangement until the young person reaches 21.

The Government has committed to introducing 'Staying Close' – a variant of Staying Put for young people leaving residential care. Approaches are currently being trialled using Department for Education Innovation Funding.

[Sir Martin Narey's Independent Review of Residential Care](#)

Sir Martin Narey was commissioned by the Prime Minister in 2015 to carry out an independent review of children's residential care, to make sure that they were doing the best job they possibly could.

The final report was published in July 2016 and contained 34 recommendations. These included ways to improve commissioning of children's home beds, and to encourage development of the right sort of provision in the right places.

Sir Narey also recommended a review of fostering provision, and the need for sharing of best practice across a range of areas.

Several areas of national policy were also singled out as needing review, including guidance around planning, the use of restraint, and the recording of criminal offences to avoid the criminalisation of children in care. Changes to Ofsted inspections and guidance were also recommended.

Finally, Sir Narey highlighted ways to improve staffing, including making sure social work students spent part of their placement within a children's home to make sure new staff are getting experience across the sector.

Fostering Stocktake

Following Sir Martin Narey's recommendation in July 2016, the DfE has announced a Fostering Stocktake, which is to be conducted by Sir Narey and Mark Owers. The aim of the stocktake is to understand what is working well and why, where improvements are needed to achieve better outcomes for children and to identify areas where further research is needed.

Evidence has been sought from a wide range of stakeholders, and the final report is due at the end of 2017.

[Care Leaver Strategy 2016](#)

The Government published a new Care Leaver Strategy in July 2016, entitled *Keep On Caring: Supporting Young People from Care to Independence*.

The strategy strengthens the role of the corporate parent, paving the way for the provisions in the Children and Social Work Act 2017; pledges to use Innovating Funding to trial new ways to support young people leaving care; and looks at improving the measurement of outcomes for care leavers.

[Statutory Guidance - Children who go Missing from Care](#)

New statutory guidance was issued in January 2014 on children who run away or go missing from home or care.

The guidance highlights the need for a children's services authority to name a senior children's service manager as responsible for monitoring policies and performance relating to children who go missing from home or care. The responsible manager should understand the risks and issues facing

missing children and review best practice in dealing with the issue.

Local authorities should agree with the police and other partners a protocol for dealing with children who run away or go missing in their area. Protocols should be agreed and reviewed regularly with all agencies and be scrutinised by local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Where appropriate, agreed protocols should also be in place with neighbouring authorities.

Statutory Guidance - Promoting the Education of Looked-After Children

The Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on every children's services authority in England to appoint a Virtual School Head - an officer employed to make sure that the council's duty to promote the educational achievement of its looked after children is properly discharged.

This statutory guidance, issued in July 2014, details that duty, and highlights that as corporate parents, local authorities should have high aspirations for the children they look after. The guidance outlines the ways in which authorities should work to close the progress gap between looked-after children and their peers, and to make sure that looked-after children have access to high quality education.

Statutory Guidance - Special Guardianship

New guidance was issued in January 2017 on Special Guardianship, outlining the issues local authorities should take into account when preparing reports for the court to apply for special guardianship orders. This includes information about the child's needs, and more detailed assessments of the child's relationship with, and the parenting capacity of, the prospective special guardian.

Key lines of enquiry for all councillors

1. What is our cohort of children in care and care leavers?

Understanding the characteristics of children and young people is the first step to making sure that you are able to act in their interests. Your Children in Care team will have information on the children in the council's care, including:

- Age and length of time in care
- Where children are placed
- Number of children in foster care, secure units, children's homes or other placements
- Number of children awaiting adoption
- Unaccompanied asylum seeking children
- Placement stability
- Accommodation and employment information about care leavers

You should also have information about social worker caseloads, to make sure that these are manageable and social workers are able to dedicate sufficient time to children, regardless of their needs.

Find out how this information compares to that of other authorities in your statistical group, and to the national picture, and look at direction of travel to help spot trends and areas of concern.

2. Do all of our councillors and officers know about their corporate parenting responsibilities?

Every councillor should ideally have training when first elected on their corporate parenting role. It is every councillor's responsibility to consider how new plans and policies might affect children in care, and to ask questions to ensure that those children are getting the best outcomes.

There are certain departments within a council that this will be particularly important for, such as education, housing and skills, however every section of the council needs to consider how its work impacts on children in care and care leavers. Look at how business plans and reports are structured – are officers proactively considering the needs of children in the council's care, or could this be improved?

Consider ways of raising awareness about the corporate parenting role, for example inviting all councillors to any celebration events, or inviting the Children in Care Council to give feedback at Full Council or relevant committee meetings.

3. How are we giving children and young people the chance to express their views, wishes and feelings? How do we know those are being acted on?

Children should be involved in developing their care plans, and provided with advocates to help them do this wherever necessary. Likewise, care leavers need to be integral to the

development of their Pathway Plans. Social workers make the necessary arrangements for this to happen, and Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) should ensure children and young people are listened to, and their views taken seriously. What feedback are you getting from your IROs on how well this is happening?

Most local authorities have established Children in Care Councils, comprising any looked after children and care leavers who want to take part (though you may wish to hold a separate Care Leavers' Forum, depending on what young people ask for); if your authority hasn't done so, consider establishing this or an alternative method of feedback that's appropriate for your looked after children. They should be able to set the agenda so that they can talk about what matters to them, and they should also decide how they would like to engage with the Corporate Parenting Panel – whether that's through joint meetings, feeding back via a mediator, or something else.

Don't forget, however, that not all children will want to take part in group forums – there should be mechanisms set up to allow all children and young people to express their views in a way that they're comfortable with.

Also consider how you engage with children with special educational needs and disabilities, or those who may face cultural or language barriers to engaging in feedback processes. In some cases, there may be some safeguarding concerns about children with particularly complex needs being asked to take part in certain ways of giving feedback – there should be sensitive discussions between the children's carers, the complex needs team, social workers and any other

relevant professionals to find the best ways of engaging these children, who should still have the opportunity to say how they feel about their care.

Very young children may also find it harder to explain their wishes and feelings, and there will inevitably be children and young people who actively disengage from review meetings or feedback forums. Consider also those children placed out of area. All looked after children and care leavers have a right to be heard, and support must be put in place to give them every opportunity.

Consider also how feedback from children in care and care leavers is fed back to the whole council so that it can be factored into all relevant decisions – from housing and employment to education and public health.

Regardless of how feedback is collected, make sure that you report back to children and young people on what has been done as a result of that feedback – show the young people that their voices are being heard, and changes are being made as a result.

4. How do we show children in our care that we have high aspirations for them?

Children in care are less likely than their peers to do well at school for a variety of reasons, from instability and a lack of support at home, to early traumas, but providing the appropriate support can help them start to overcome some of these difficulties. Your Virtual School Head will be able to keep you updated with how looked after children are progressing in school, and what action is being taken to help them reach their potential.

Children and young people thrive on recognition and reward, and it's important to make sure that children in care receive this in the same way children in the rest of the population do. Award ceremonies, money for carers to take children for a celebration of a sports game win, or a congratulations card from the lead member for a good school report will all reassure children that their efforts are recognised, supported and cared about.

As young people approach leaving care, they should be getting support from their social worker and a personal adviser to consider their future options. You can make sure that young people are encouraged to think broadly and ambitiously about their options, and how to get there, by speaking to your Virtual School Head.

5. What are we doing to look after the health and wellbeing of children in our care?

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment should include consideration of the needs of children in care and care leavers⁴, with an accompanying Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) in place to meet those needs and minimise inequalities. The Health and Wellbeing Board is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the JHWS. Particular issues to look out for include:

- Mental health services - Children in care are four times more likely to have a mental health difficulty than children in the general population⁵.

⁴ [Statutory Guidance on Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies](#)

⁵ <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/children-in-care/emotional-wellbeing-of-children-in-care/>

- Sexual health and family planning services – A quarter of young women leaving care are pregnant, and nearly half become pregnant within two years⁶.
- Drug and alcohol prevention services – a third of young people leaving care report problems with drugs or alcohol within a year⁷.

In 2016, 57.3% of children in care had a special educational need, compared to 14.4% of all children⁸. Your Virtual School Head will be able to let you know what support children with learning difficulties are receiving in school.

If a child has experienced one or more placement moves, check whether health records are being passed between carers so that things like regular dental check-ups and standard vaccinations aren't being missed. Looked after children should receive an annual health assessment (every six months for under-fives)⁹, but make sure these are being carried out in a child-friendly way – some children find these intrusive and feel they are unnecessary, so make sure they understand why they are taking place and that they know their right to opt out. Pass on feedback about assessments to the CCG, which carries them out, and check whether this is being acted on.

Consider also issues like access to sports facilities and music lessons or other activities outside of school, which will contribute to a child's wellbeing

⁶ HM Government (2016) [Keep On Caring: Supporting Young People from Care to Independence](#)

⁷ Ibid

⁸ DfE (2017) [Outcomes for children looked after by local authorities in England](#)

⁹ DfE (2015) [Promoting the Health and Wellbeing of Looked-After Children](#)

and sense of belonging. What happens to these if a child changes placement? Are you helping care leavers to continue accessing activities to support their wellbeing?

A significant issue for looked after children and care leavers is having a support network. Many won't be able to rely on family, and if they've experienced multiple placement or school moves, they might not have had a chance to build up a network of their own. Look at what's being done to help them develop relationships that will support them both now and when they leave care, and see what help is available locally – are there volunteer mentors or support groups, for example? All looked-after children should be offered the chance to have an independent visitor – a volunteer to befriend and support them consistently, providing a relationship with an adult who isn't their foster carer or social worker. Having stable placements and social workers will also help children to feel more secure and help them learn to develop positive relationships.

6. Are we providing stable environments for children in our care?

Stability for children and young people is linked to improved mental health and educational attainment¹⁰. It also helps children to develop relationships, feel more secure, and develop a sense of belonging.

Despite this, 10% of looked after children had three or more foster care placements in 2015-16¹¹. Analysis by the Office of the Children's

¹⁰ Children's Commissioner (2017) [Stability Index for Children in Care: Technical Report](#)

¹¹ DfE (2016) [Children looked after in England \(including adoption\) year ending 31 March 2016](#)

Commissioner also found that 24% of children experienced at least one school move that year, and 35% saw their social worker change at least once¹². One child in twenty experienced a change of placement, school and social worker over the course of a year¹³.

Clearly, statistics alone cannot be taken on face value. A child or young person should not stay in an unsuitable placement, while a change of social worker in order to improve caseloads may ultimately be positive for the child – provided this is well managed. However, you need to understand the reasons for any instability experienced by children, and take action to limit this where it is not in their best interests.

7. What are outcomes like for our care leavers?

As a corporate parent, it's up to you to make sure that care leavers get the support they need to lead successful lives.

Care leavers can face a wide variety of challenges, and depending on their individual needs, they might need the support of their personal adviser and social worker to overcome their own hurdles to progress – and they need to know that support is there as they make the transition from a looked after child to independent living.

Each young person's pathway plan should consider their options for when they've left school, whether they want to go on to further study, or want to go straight into the world of work.

¹² Children's Commissioner (2017) [Stability Index for Children in Care: Technical Report](#)

¹³ Ibid

For those aiming for university, find out what support children in your care are receiving at school to help them get achieve the best results they're capable of, and speak with your Virtual School Head to learn about what interventions are working best or could be expanded. It's also important to look at pathway plans to see how children are reassured about university – it's a scary prospect for children still living with their own families, so care leavers need to know how they'll manage their finances, and where they can go during the long university holidays.

For those that don't go on to university, how many are not in education, employment or training – and what is your authority doing to change that? Are the statistics getting better or worse? Find out how care leavers factor into your authority's recruitment, skills and economic development strategies.

For more information on outcomes for care leavers, please see our "support for care leavers" resource pack.

8. How many children are we placing in out of area placements?

What proportion of your looked-after children are being placed out of area, and why?

Every children's services council has a 'sufficiency duty', which states that it must take steps that secure, as far as possible, sufficient accommodation within its area to meet the needs of children that it is looking after. If you are placing a higher proportion of your children out of area than your statistical neighbours, or than you were two years ago, is this because the children need very specialist

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placements that can only be found elsewhere, or because there are not enough placements locally? If the latter, what is being done to improve this? If children are moved out of area, this means moving them away from their school, their friends and family, and the area they're familiar with – it's important that if that happens, it's for the right reasons.

9. How are we planning for the future/commissioning services?

If you have what you consider to be too many children and young people being placed out of area, you will need to revisit your authority's sufficiency plan and revise plans and commissioning to address this. You will need a strong understanding of what your needs are now and into the future, which you can identify by looking at the data and feedback available to you, and analysing local and national trends. You can then use this information to better manage the market in your area, whether through recruiting and training more foster carers; evaluating the use of in-house and external provision; and considering the balance of children's home places or foster care with high levels of support for children with complex needs.

Consider also the way in which services for looked-after children are commissioned; are services better commissioned at a local (how local?) or regional level? Would children and young people's outcomes be improved if you pooled resources with partners for specific outcomes, such as early intervention or wellbeing? Are young people involved at any point in commissioning processes, to make sure that services meet their needs?

Gloucestershire

The voice of children and young people is at the heart of Gloucestershire's approach to corporate parenting. A significant drive over the last two years has seen a culture change across the council, with children in care, young people with experience of children's social services and corporate parents working together on everything from strategic planning and service delivery to training and consultation.

One of the key ways that Gloucestershire incorporates the voice of children and young people is through their Ambassadors for Vulnerable Children & Young People. These young people, aged 16-25, all have experience of children's social services – whether through being in care, experiencing early help, or receiving support for a disability, for example – and play a central role in developing the council's services. They also act as a link between children and young people and the rest of the council, making sure those voices are heard.

As Participation Manager Della Price highlights, "Ambassadors help us to keep our focus on, and communicate effectively with, children and young people; they challenge us, work with us, and often identify areas of our work that can be neglected. Most importantly, they've changed our attitudes, understanding and awareness of the issues that are important to children and young people."

Ambassadors are recruited annually, with 12 currently in post, and are paid for both their time and expenses whenever they attend meetings or events. They attend the Children in Care Council so that they can feed back to the Corporate Parenting Group, which they are co-opted onto, and have led consultation with looked after children to help improve everything from the activities children do with their social worker, to issues around contact with family; their own experiences make them ideally placed to help communicate the needs and wants of children back to corporate parents. They have also been part of task groups to improve the quality of care plans, improve questions on fostering panels, and to secure a pilot of personal budgets for children in care who need mental health support. The early involvement of young people in the latter was instrumental in gaining the support of NHS England for the pilot, highlighting the way in which the council places the voice of young people at the heart of their work.

The council has involved the Ambassadors in the design of information for young people, which has been highly successful, for example leading to more young people attending fostering panels as they now understand better what goes on, and improving the use of the MOMO app so that children in care can get help with things they are worried about more easily.

Working with the Ambassadors means that the whole council understands their corporate parenting role more clearly. This year, all councillors will receive training from the Ambassadors about the role of members as Corporate Parents, while each year, Ambassadors run workshops as part of the Virtual School Designated Teacher training. The Ambassadors have also helped the Children in Care Council to host meetings with councillors, which have had excellent feedback from both the children, who feel listened to, and the councillors whose understanding of being a child in care has improved significantly.

Improving interaction between young people and councillors has been crucial to the success of Gloucestershire's corporate parenting approach. It has not only placed corporate parenting at the forefront of people's minds and helped to improve understanding of the key issues, but has shown children and young people that the council genuinely listens to their needs, and acts on them to make things better.

For more information, please contact Della.Price@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Lambeth

Any good parent will know that the needs of their children always come first – and Lambeth Council is committed to putting that philosophy into practice with all the children for whom it is a corporate parent.

Where children are placed in residential care, the council works hard to develop and maintain strong partnerships with those providers to make sure that the children's individual needs and wants are properly taken care of.

In the case of 14-year-old Amy, this has meant support to feel stable in her children's home, and honouring her wish to stay in that home with those she describes as 'family', rather than transferring into foster care. The authority and the children's home have worked together to find ways to help her develop her confidence and self-esteem, including providing piano lessons to nurture her passion for music.

Amy is now considering whether she wants to move on to foster care as she gets older, so both the children's home and the authority are starting to plan with her. Most importantly, they are working at a pace that suits her, rather than trying to rush her, making sure that her voice is at the forefront of any decision – as any parent knows, children and young people need support and encouragement to work through big decisions, to make sure that they can come to the right decision long-term.

The relationship between the council and the provider is a vital one – much like the relationship between two parents. Trust, mutual respect and good communication mean that both parties can concentrate on working towards the same outcome – a successful and positive care experience for all children being looked after.

Hampshire

Being a good corporate parent means getting involved, asking questions and making sure the voices of children and young people are being heard.

When the children's residential service was under review in Hampshire, the Lead Member for Children's Services took the opportunity to find out exactly what children wanted and needed, and to make sure their voices were at the centre of any new proposals. This included visiting existing homes – owned both by the local authority and other sectors – to find out about the experiences of the children living there, and to see what they thought made a "homely environment".

At the same time, work was underway to implement the evidence-based Pillars of Parenting model, an approach to move from “looking after” children to “caring for” them, and providing strong support for staff including access to an educational psychologist. Children were involved in board meetings as the new care model was put in place, ensuring that they could flag up any issues with the model and let officers and councillors know how they felt about the changes.

In one small children’s home using the Pillars of Parenting model, stability for the children living there was found to be better, involvement in crime was reduced, and engagement in education was good. The improved outcomes for children as a result of the new care model and the small, well-located home provided a good evidence-base to support what young people were saying.

The Lead Member took those views and the evidence directly back to his fellow elected members, emphasising the benefits the council could realise – both in terms of outcomes for children in care, and financially thanks to those long-term outcomes – by selling old, larger children’s homes with poor community links to support new homes more suited to caring for children. As a result, he was able to successfully bid for considerable investment from the council to provide six new homes.

The Lead Member has continued to champion children’s views as the process has continued, attending workshops where children contributed to the design of the new homes, and regularly visiting the homes during the build process to make sure they met the varied needs of the children he’d been speaking to. He has also worked with officers on keeping his fellow corporate parents engaged, with many visiting children’s homes, and some even taking their dogs along to meet the children – a great ice breaker!

Stockton-on-Tees

In Stockton-on-Tees, councillors and officers have worked hard to make sure that the voices of looked-after children and care leavers are not only listened to – they are seen to make a real difference to services.

Virtually all care leavers – 93%, well above the national average - move on to suitable accommodation of their choice, thanks in no small part to careful listening to the needs of care leavers, and the work of ‘Young Inspectors’. These young people review all semi-independent accommodation to check that it’s somewhere they would like to live, and make sure the corporate management team takes action to tackle any areas found to be in need of improvement.

The ‘Let’s Take Action’ group, part of the Children in Care Council, is a group of young people who meet fortnightly to develop projects and initiatives to support the voice of the young people they represent. Their work has included developing a pledge for children in care for senior leaders to work to, delivering workshops on finance and budgeting challenges and speaking at Corporate Parenting events. One of the members of this group recently won a Civic Award in Stockton as ‘young person of the year’.

The council also took part in The Fostering Network's 'Inspiring Voices' project to raise awareness of, and engagement with, children in care councils. In Stockton-on-Tees, the group consists of young people, who chair the meeting, foster carers, senior council officers and key partners. The group has worked together on a range of projects to respond to the needs of children in care and care leavers, from developing welcome packs for children coming into care, producing information packs on corporate parenting for councillors, and reviewing both how young people are engaged, and what is then done with that information.

During Ofsted's latest visit, inspectors commented on how children's voices were clearly heard, praising the "very healthy culture" promoted by senior managers and political leaders to make sure that learning from the views of looked after children and young people was taken on board, and to involve them in shaping services.

Contact: Martin Gray, Director of Children's Services martin.gray@stockton.gov.uk

Trafford

When a young person presents as homeless to a local authority, and they have not been in care before their 16th birthday, the authority's responsibilities in law are very limited, requiring only advice, assistance and befriending. In Trafford, the Corporate Parenting Board and officers felt that, despite not being corporate parents in such cases in legislative terms, they still had a responsibility to these vulnerable young people, who were homeless and in need of trusted professional support; doing the bare minimum was not good enough.

They agreed to provide these young people with a full leaving care service, with support from a personal adviser, a pathway plan, safe and appropriate accommodation, support to live independently and help to engage in education, employment and training. The leaving care grant could also be awarded in certain circumstances. Ofsted was very supportive of the approach, which is an example of how councillors and officers can and do still step in to help young people – even where they don't have to, and where it isn't easy, just as other good parents would.

Key resources and further reading

This will include the statutory guidance when it's out!

LGA Modern Slavery Guide

[Tackling child sexual exploitation: LGA resource pack for councils](#)

[Children and Social Work Act 2017](#)

[National Children's Bureau Corporate Parenting Took Kit](#)

[Draft DfE guidance on trafficked children](#)

[Safeguarding Children: A Practical Guide for Overview and Scrutiny Councillors - Centre for Public Scrutiny](#)

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Glossary

CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services - all services that work with children and young people experiencing emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties.
Care order	A court order approving the case for a child to be taken into care.
Care plan	A care plan should be developed for every child and young person when they come into care. This should identify how the child will be accommodated, how long it is anticipated that the care order will last, and formulate planned outcomes for the child with associated actions. The plan should be reviewed at least every six months.
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group – these commission most hospital and community NHS services in their area, including mental health and learning disability services.
Child sexual exploitation (CSE)	CSE involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (aged under 18) receive ‘something’ (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, affection, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. This can occur in physical situations or through the use of technology, for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet or mobile phones.
Children’s home	A residential facility where groups of children are cared for by qualified workers.
Former relevant child	A care leaver aged 18-21 who was a relevant child or was in care until the age of 18. Young people who are still getting help with education or training remain ‘former relevant’ until their training has finished.
Foster care	Foster care is a way for children to be cared for within a family setting when their own family is unable to care for them. It is considered temporary in that there is no legal split from the family (as with adoption), but can be long term where this is in the best interests of the child.
Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)	An IRO chair’s a looked-after child’s review(s) and monitors the child’s case on an ongoing basis. They ensure that the care plan for the child fully reflects their current needs, wishes and feelings, and that the actions set out in the plan are consistent with the local authority’s legal responsibilities towards the child.
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)	JSNAs identifies the current and future health needs of the local population to inform and guide commissioning of health, well-being and social care services within local authority areas.
Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS)	The JHWS outlines how local partners will work to improve health in the local population and reduce health inequalities.
Kinship care	Kinship care is where a child is looked after by a relative

	or a friend, but the local authority still has legal responsibility for them
Modern slavery	Modern slavery encompasses slavery, servitude, and forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking. A person is trafficked if they are brought to (or moved around) a country by others who threaten, frighten, hurt and force them to do work or other things they don't want to do.
Pathway Plan	A Pathway Plan is developed by the local authority with a young person in care as they approach their 16 th birthday to help them effectively make the transition from care to living independently. It includes areas such as accommodation, education, life skills and health.
Personal Education Plan (PEP)	The PEP is a statutory part of a child's care plan, making sure that all relevant partners are engaged in a child's education, tracking their progress and giving them the support they need to achieve and be aspirational in their education.
Private arrangement	An informal arrangement where a child or young person is looked after by a close relative such as grand-parents, aunts or uncles.
Private fostering	An informal arrangement where a child or young person is looked after by someone who is not their parent or close relative. The local authority should ideally be informed of the arrangement, but is not responsible for the child and is therefore not the corporate parent.
Relevant child	Young people aged between 16 and 17 who are still in care; or who were in care for at least 13 weeks between their 14 th and 16 th birthdays (unless this was planned respite care)
Secure children's home	Secure children's homes offer specialist care and intensive support in a secure setting to young people sentenced by the courts and to young people detained for their own welfare (for example, where children are at risk of child sexual exploitation, and likely to place themselves in risky situations). These are referred to as youth justice beds, and welfare beds respectively.
Special guardianship	Special Guardianship means that a child lives with carers who have parental responsibility for them until they turn 18, but legal ties with the parents are not cut as with adoption. The child is no longer the responsibility of the local authority.
Staying Put	An arrangement whereby a looked after child can stay with their foster carer after the age of 18, as long as both the young person and the foster parent is happy with this arrangement, and it is in the young person's best interests. The council has a duty to support the arrangement up to young person's 21 st birthday.
Sufficiency Duty	The duty for a council to take steps that secure, as far as possible, sufficient accommodation within its area to meet

	the needs of children that it is looking after.
UASC	Unaccompanied asylum seeking children.
Virtual School Head	All local authorities must have a virtual school head (VSH) in charge of promoting the educational achievement of the children looked after by that authority. Their role is to know how the looked-after children are doing, and help school staff and social workers to find out about the extra needs of these children and any additional support available to them. VSHs also work with the children's services department and all schools in the area on initiatives to promote the education of children in care.

DRAFT

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee/Panel:	Children and Families Advisory Panel
Date:	17 October 2017
Title:	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
Report From:	Steve Crocker, Director of Children's Services

Contact name: Sarah Marston, Service Manager – Children's Services

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1. Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this short report is to Children and Families Advisory Panel on the number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) being cared for by Hampshire Children's Services. The report will also highlight activity in this area and consider any issues in relation to this work.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1. Number of new UASC arriving placed in Hampshire April 2016 to July 2017;

	Apr-Jun 2016	Jul-Sept 2016	Oct 2016	Nov 2016	Dec 2016	Jan 2017	Feb 2017	March 2017	April 2017	May 2017	June 2017	July 2017
	7	19	17	8	2	4	7	9	3	5	5	5
Quarterly Data	7	19	27			20			13			

- 2.2. The majority of new UASC looked after by Hampshire as of 31 July 2017, have been accepted through the South East Dispersal Scheme. This scheme ensures that responsibility is taken as a region for UASC who are entering the country. A number of local authorities such as Kent or Portsmouth have high numbers of UASC and as a way of alleviating pressure on services in these areas, UASC are transferred to neighbouring local authorities through the South East Dispersal scheme. It is suggested that each local authority should support a number of UASC that equates to 0.007% of the population (for Hampshire this would be 195 USAC).
- 2.3. In addition to those children transferred through the dispersal scheme a number of UASC enter Hampshire of their own accord or have been trafficked into the country. Typically these young people are often found on the motorway having been transported in on lorries.

- 2.4. Hampshire was also proactive in offering placements at the time of the closure of the Calais refugee camp in October/November 2016. Ten UASC were also taken outside of the transfer scheme from Portsmouth, as they were significantly over numbers. It was felt that by taking these young people outside of the scheme from a neighbouring local authority, the young people could remain in their existing placements as most were placed within Hampshire or local to Hampshire.
- 2.5. In respect of allocation to social worker teams in Hampshire, young people arriving through the dispersal scheme are allocated directly to Children in Care teams. Those arriving of their own accord generally are allocated initially within R&A teams. The Willow Team are involved with all cases, ensuring that appropriate trafficking assessments are completed and safety plans are in place. A section 47 investigation is undertaken on all new UASC arriving in Hampshire.
- 2.6. There are a number of challenges that Children in Care teams report in caring for and supporting these young people. The main challenges are in terms of placements, interpreters, health care and immigration.

3. Placements

- 3.1. A large number of UASC are placed with Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) carers. These placements are expensive, costing on average over £730 per week. A large proportion of these placements are outside of Hampshire. Hampshire now has a number of UASC placed in Croydon, Southall, Bracknell and the surrounding areas. The distance has an impact on the social workers ability to build a relationship with the young person or their carer, although it is acknowledged this applies to all children in care placed at distance. Potentially the issue of local placements could be more significant for UASC where there are concerns that the young person has been trafficked into the country, with the risk being increased with a higher proportion of placements in certain areas.
- 3.2. Teams being allocated young people arriving through the dispersal team have often encountered some challenges in contacting relevant professionals from the transferring local authority to verify information.
- 3.3. In addition, it is often more difficult to access resources for a young person residing outside of the responsible local authority.

4. Education

- 4.1. The virtual school provides a good service to UASC up to year 11, however, Children in Care teams report difficulties being experienced when the young person is due to transfer to college. Some colleges require all attendees to speak English and ESOL courses can be difficult to source. These issues can mean that some young people are sometimes forced to travel long distances to attend.

- 4.2. Some colleges do not allow entry mid year having only one intake in September, leading to some UASC being out of education for long periods. Some Children in Care managers, have reported positive support from other local authorities in accessing placements, for example Bracknell has assisted when Hampshire have not been able to source education.

5. Interpreters

- 5.1. Good practice determines that interpreters are required every time the social worker meets with the young person. Obviously, the demand for interpreting services has increased and the preferred provider (Lingland), is also finding the demand for their services a challenge. With a large proportion of placements occurring out of county, arrangements for transport for the interpreter are also falling to the social worker. In addition social workers are often visiting a number of UASC in the same day which also requires the coordination of several interpreters. It has been reported by Children in Care teams that the service is not always able to provide an interpreter for all languages e.g. Mongolian.

6. Health/Therapy

- 6.1. Although the initial health assessment is carried out by the CLA nurse, appointments can be difficult for UASC. For some children who have never been to see a doctor or a dentist the experience may be harrowing to them and therefore, extra appointments or time at appointments may be required. An interpreter is also required for medical appointments. On a positive note the Children in Care Team managers did not report any issues in being able to register a young person with a doctor.
- 6.2. In terms of accessing therapy through CAMHS, this is largely linked to the area where a young person is placed. Some Children in Care Teams reported that the local CAMHS were working with UASC, whereas others spoke of long waiting lists. It is acknowledged that the therapy would need to be individually tailored and at this stage. These young people have experienced difficult journeys, often travelling through conflict areas and have been exploited and abused. At this stage, their therapeutic needs are unlikely to be clear, however, they are expected to be significant.

7. Immigration

- 7.1. The immigration process has recently changed, meaning that the majority of cases are dealt with via an appointment through the Home Office. There have been some recent difficulties in securing appointments and ensuring that a young person has legal representation at any identified appointment. In one case, a UASC was placed from the dispersal system after 3 months in placement, when it became evident that no checks had been undertaken by the previous local authority, this resulted in the immigration process being delayed.

7.2. Whilst the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for trafficked young people is accepted as being important, social workers feel that the form is time consuming. The Independent Child Trafficking Advocates (ICTA) service may assist with this issue. Hampshire is an early adopter site for this service and is working closely with Barnardo's and other neighbouring local authorities.

8. Finance

8.1. Hampshire County Council is able to claim back some of the costs associated with caring for UASC and those who go on to become care leavers. However, the amount that can be claimed is not enough to cover costs and work is being undertaken currently to ensure that the total cost is better evidenced with a view to influencing decision making in this area in future.

8.2. A further consideration is that the age of UASC tends to be late teens and therefore, a number of young people quickly reach the age of eighteen and transfer over to care leavers. Accommodation and support costs for this group of care leavers tend to be higher with limited funding from government.

9. Performance

9.1. Some performance indicators in respect of Children in Care may be affected for example those around health and education.

9.2. It is often difficult if not impossible to ascertain medical history in respect of immunisations, there may well be delays due to availability of interpreters to accessing Child Looked After medicals.

9.3. In addition, indicators in respect of placement stability are affected as young people are placed within emergency placements and subsequently are required to move onto more permanent placements.

10. Further DUBS arrivals

10.1. Hampshire have received notification that the UK will be accepting the transfer of a further 250 DUBS arrivals in the coming months. No specific timescale has been provided for these arrivals therefore, it is difficult to proactively secure placements.

10.2. An initial placement search has been undertaken which has identified a number of IFA placements, however, at this stage; it is not possible to secure the placements without retainers. Given there is no identified date for the agreed transfer of these children to the UK, Hampshire has not retained any placement. The majority of placements identified are outside of Hampshire. It is unlikely local authorities will receive much notice in order

to identify and coordinate placements for any young people that are accepted. One of the Out of Hours Team managers was instrumental in coordinating staff, transport and placements at the time of the closure of the Calais Camp. It is suggested that some of the learning and arrangements used previously are utilised to manage the next cohort of DUBS arrivals.

11. Recommendations

- 11.1. That the Children and Families Advisory Board note the contents of the report.
- 11.2. That an updated report to be provided in February 2018.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Strategic Plan**

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes
OR	
This proposal does not link to the Strategic Plan but, nevertheless, requires a decision because:	

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u> Not aware of any previous member decisions	<u>Date</u>
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u> Children Act 1989 Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 Immigration Act 2016 and Dubs Amendment (S67)	<u>Date</u> 1989 2000 2016

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
Not Applicable	

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

See guidance at <http://intranet.hants.gov.uk/equality/equality-assessments.htm>

*Inset in full your **Equality Statement** which will either state*

- (a) *why you consider that the project/proposal will have a low or no impact on groups with protected characteristics or*
- (b) *will give details of the identified impacts and potential mitigating actions.*
All UASC accommodated and cared for by Children's Services will be provided with support in order to access services in the same way as any other child in care in order that they are able to reach their full potential. As part of ongoing assessment all UASC will have their cultural and religious needs assessed and reviewed and positive actions will be taken to support these needs.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

Not Applicable

3. Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

Not Applicable

- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

Not Applicable