

Public Document Pack



NOTICE OF MEETING

Meeting	Children and Families Advisory Panel
Date and Time	Tuesday, 9th February, 2021 at 1.30 pm
Place	Remote meeting
Enquiries to	members.services@hants.gov.uk

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

FILMING AND BROADCAST NOTIFICATION

This meeting is being held remotely and will be recorded and broadcast live via the County Council's website.

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

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 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 Personal Interest in a matter being considered at the meeting should consider, having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 4 of the Code, whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 5 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 THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 3 - 6)

To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 October 2020.

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. PRINCIPAL SOCIAL WORKER CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (Pages 7 - 14)

To consider a report of the Director of Children's Services providing an overview of the Principal Social Worker role.

7. HAMPSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD 2019/20 ANNUAL REPORT (Pages 15 - 20)

To consider a report of the Director of Children's Services presenting the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Board 2019/20 Annual Report.

8. INDEPENDENT REVIEWING SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20 (Pages 21 - 32)

To consider a report of the Director of Children's Services providing the annual update on the work of the Independent Reviewing Service.

9. UPDATE ON LOCKDOWN 3 (Pages 33 - 56)

To consider a presentation of the Director of Children's Services with an update on activities and approaches throughout the third national lockdown.

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 observe the public sessions of the meeting via the webcast.

Agenda Item 3

AT A REMOTE MEETING of the Children and Families Advisory Panel of
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held on Tuesday, 13th October, 2020

Chairman:

* Councillor David Keast

* Councillor Pal Hayre
Councillor Martin Boiles
* Councillor Ann Briggs
* Councillor Fran Carpenter
* Councillor Peter Edgar MBE
Councillor Floss Mitchell

* Councillor Jackie Porter
* Councillor Malcolm Wade
* Councillor Zilliah Brooks

*Present

84. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Martin Boiles and Floss Mitchell.
Councillor Zilliah Brooks was in attendance as the Conservative deputy member.

85. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate 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 was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Personal Interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 2 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

86. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

87. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations.

88. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman did not have any announcements on this occasion.

89. **ANNUAL FOSTERING REPORT**

The Panel received a report of the Director of Children's Services providing an overview of fostering activity, detailing statistical performance data and highlighting some focus areas for 2020/2021.

In response to Members' question it was confirmed that:

- A legal training workshop organised through the County Council's Legal Services had taken place to assist social workers in understanding court proceedings and challenges.
- Independent agency support was provided to all foster carers who are undergoing any complaint investigation. The County Council's fostering service also makes weekly visits to foster carers who were undergoing this process. Members noted that a number of complaints and allegations were generally received in the context that parents were unhappy with their child being in foster care.
- In terms of recruiting new foster carers, targeted programmes were in place to seek new and transferred carers with previous care experience.
- Emotional and wellbeing support was in place for both foster carers and social workers in a variety of ways and that each set of circumstances were managed on an individual basis to ensure that the correct nature of support was always provided.

RESOLVED:

That the Children and Families Advisory Panel notes the report.

90. **HAMPSHIRE YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM ANNUAL UPDATE**

Councillor Porter declared a Personal Interest in that she has a role as the Chairman of the Winchester Community Safety Partnership.

The Panel received a report of the Director of Children's Services giving an update on the Hampshire Youth Offending Team (YOT).

In response to Members' questions it was confirmed that:

- The YOT continued to work closely with Hampshire Constabulary to ensure appropriate information sharing in terms of tackling anti-social behaviour amongst young people in Hampshire. Community Safety Partnerships were also key partners in terms of developing partnership responses and solutions across organisations.
- If and when any child or young person was taken into custody they would always be assessed for vulnerability and that there are a variety of facilities which could be utilised namely secure children's homes, secure training centres and youth offending institutes.
- Hampshire currently has two 0.5 FTE probation officers and that the recruitment of these officers was part of a national programme and not something that was within local control.

- In terms of service improvements going forward and looking ahead to the 2022 service inspection, key areas of focus would be developing leadership, consistency, participation with children and planning.

RESOLVED:

That the Children and Families Advisory Panel note the report.

91. **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES BRANCH - MANAGING THE SERVICE THROUGH THE PANDEMIC**

The Panel received a presentation of the Director of Children's Services setting out the way in which the Children and Families services had responded to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members praised the work that had been undertaken by officers in tackling the significant challenges presented by the pandemic and thanked them for their efforts.

RESOLVED:

That the Children and Families Advisory Panel notes the presentation.

92. **CHILDREN & FAMILIES OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY UPDATE**

The Panel received a report of the Director of Children's Services with an update on the Occupational Therapy Service (OT Service).

In response to a Member question it was confirmed that:

- The OT Service worked closely with the County Council's private sector partner, Argenti, to explore innovative technical solutions for children and adults with disabilities across the county and that this partnership had proven very successful in doing so thus far.

RESOLVED:

That the Children and Families Advisory Panel note the report.

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HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Panel:	Children and Families Advisory Panel
Date:	9 February 2021
Title:	Principal Social Worker Children and Families
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

Contact name: Kavitha Maxy **Email:** Kavitha.maxy@hants.gov.uk

Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the panel with a high-level briefing of the roles and responsibilities of the Hampshire Children and Families Principal Social Worker and to update the panel on the current and future priorities of this role.

Recommendation

2. That the Children and Families Advisory Panel notes the role and work of the Hampshire Children and Families Principal Social Worker.

Executive Summary

3. This report seeks to provide the Children and Families Advisory Panel with an overview of the role of the Hampshire Children and Families Principal Social Worker.
4. Hampshire's Children and Families Principal Social Worker (PSW) role came into being in 2017. Recommendation 14 of the Munro¹ report of 2011 states that 'Local Authorities should designate a Principal Child and Family Social Worker, who is a senior manager with lead responsibility for practice in the local

¹ Professor Eileen Munro's government commissioned review of child protection (2011) in England urged ministers to back a set of reforms designed to cut bureaucracy and place more trust in professionals. Munro set out 15 recommendations in this report that included reform proposals to enable professionals to make the best judgements to help children, young people and families.

authority and who is still actively involved in frontline practice and who can report the views and experiences of the front line to all levels of management.’

5. In Hampshire, the objectives of this role as agreed by the Children and Families Management Team are listed below:
 - Continuous professional development, high quality practice placements and the creation of a learning environment in which excellent social work can flourish.
 - Quality assurance monitoring of front-line social work practice and the provision of advice, guidance and direction to ensure the implementation of best practice across the whole social work / social care workforce.
 - Become a key communication link between front-line staff and senior management, to ensure that the views and experiences of front-line staff are given due regard in operational and strategic decision-making processes.
6. The core aim of this role is to ensure strategic direction and decision making is informed by the realities of social work practice. The PSW is a key link in the feedback loop and links the real-life experience of those who deliver and manage social work with those on the receiving end of practice. This brief is fulfilled through providing leadership and driving excellent practice through the development of our practice model and the Hampshire Approach which underpins this model, including assessment, planning, decision making and direct work with children and families.
7. It is worth noting that the PSW role profile can vary depending on the local authority, where some appoint to a dedicated Principal Social Worker post, while many other local authorities have a hybrid role. In Hampshire, the functions of the Principal Social Worker are embedded in the Service Development Lead role and shared with the Assistant Head of Workforce Development, who leads on student placements including apprenticeships, training of newly qualified social workers and aspects of the role that fall under the learning and continuing professional development umbrella.

The PSW role - Leading Outstanding Practice

8. The Hampshire Approach - the PSW is involved in the development of the Hampshire Approach which is our strength based and family focused approach to working with families. We have been developing this approach for over three years and have a well established process for assessment. In the autumn of 2020, the PSW supported the work to roll out the new Family Plan and planning process with families. The focus for the coming year is to embed the new plans and support the use of our practice model in direct work with families using motivational interviewing, solution focused practice and restorative practice.

9. Case File Audits and Practice Observations – The PSW remains close to front line practice through interactions with social workers, completing case file audits and undertaking practice observations regularly.
10. Identity, ethnicity and culture - there has also been a timely focus on the area of Identity in case work (this is identified as an area for continuous improvement and is also reflective of the national focus and discussion of the 'Black Lives Matter' movement) – with practitioners welcoming reflective discussion on the impact of ethnicity and culture on the lived experiences of children and families. The PSW has completed thematic file audits and is leading on a key piece of work in this area – which includes sharing the learning from the audits with staff and strengthening the recording of identity, ethnicity and culture in case work to reflect the understanding of the lived experiences of children from Black, Asian and Ethnic minority backgrounds.
11. Service Development - the PSW is well positioned within the organisation to respond to priorities in continuous improvement and service development. In the role of Service Development Lead in the Sector Led Improvement and Service Development Team, there is scope for the PSW to influence service planning, to contribute to the self-assessment and response to Ofsted inspections, to support the management team in the creation and updating of policies, procedures and guidance, to shape priorities for the future of the service based on need and resources available and most importantly, receive and analyse feedback from the most important stakeholders, the children and families we work with.
12. PSW Buddy Network - The size and reach of Hampshire County Council's services to children in need of help and protection means that the PSW must influence the practice of a wide range of staff in all the districts undertaking the core business of safeguarding, county services such as Fostering and Adoption, the Youth Offending Service, our residential Children's Homes and the Independent Reviewing Service. This is achieved by having members of staff who work in these districts and services, acting as PSW buddies. They form the feedback channel between their colleagues and the PSW, and in turn the senior management team, thus ensuring that any strategic decision making takes into account and is responsive to the realities of frontline work.
13. PSW Regional and National Networks - the PSW is part of the regional PSW network with the Isle of Wight, Southampton, Portsmouth, Wokingham, Bracknell Forest and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. The PSW also provides consultation to colleagues from other local authorities in respect of best practice and raising the profile of Hampshire and the status of social work as a profession. The PSW is a member of the Community Care

²Advisory Council, a select group of PSWs from eight local authorities who advise Community Care on practice and service priorities.

The PSW role - Supporting our Staff

14. PSW Health and Wellbeing Events - these events are run by the PSW and are opportunities for operational staff in the Children and Families Service across the county to share successes, practice challenges, examples of excellent practice and any issues with regard to their wellbeing. In the last year, these events have focussed on the wellbeing of staff in relation to working during a pandemic and adapting their work with children and families in a safe and responsive manner. The PSW has facilitated reflective sessions with staff which have enabled open dialogue about what is working well and what could be better, with suggested solutions where possible. The PSW buddies form part of this picture and link with their colleagues to take forward wellbeing initiatives. Staff are also invited to complete a health and wellbeing questionnaire which gives the leadership team measurable and reportable evidence on how staff view their working environment.

15. Social Work Survey - there are various means for Hampshire as an employer to understand the views and thoughts of our staff. The Social Work Survey takes place annually in which social work staff can respond to survey questions about workload, wellbeing, management support and learning and development opportunities. The findings of the survey are analysed and informs staff wellbeing and development initiatives, and importantly, our work with children and families.

16. Exit Interviews – these are another valuable source of feedback and the information we receive is analysed by the PSW and used to develop our retention strategy including any staff support programmes.

17. Black Asian and Ethnic Minority (BAME) Development Group for Newly Qualified Social Workers - the PSW has set up a working group of district and service managers, workforce development managers and the Chair and Vice Chair of the HCC Staff BME network. This group looks at the support needs of our newly qualified BAME social workers and the setup of a development programme to address these. This work forms part of the commitment from John Coughlan and the Children and Families Management Team to keep the conversation about Inclusion and Diversity alive and provide opportunities for BAME and non BAME staff to take action to promote racial equality in the council. There is a wider piece of work in train in this area and the PSW is part of the Inclusion and Diversity Working Group.

² Community Care is a social care publication run by the Mark Allen Group. They are involved in publication of news articles and research, alongside supporting the sector in recruitment and continuing professional development.

18. Communication Site and Yammer Page – The PSW has a presence on the Children and Families communication site and also runs a Yammer page to maximise the reach of corporate, practice and wellbeing messaging to staff.

Conclusions

19. The Hampshire Children and Families Principal Social Worker role is an active, evolving and responsive role and champions a strength-based approach in social work.
20. The role has a symbiotic relationship with other senior operational roles like the district managers and service managers in the Children and Families Branch and works through enabling and influencing best practice and supporting the wellbeing of all staff. Accountability for excellent practice and wellbeing of staff is shared and owned by all. The PSW presents a half yearly update report to the Children and Families Management team which captures all the activity for the preceding six months.
21. The future trajectory of this role is guided by priorities identified through legislation and guidance, direction from elected members and senior leaders, and input from colleagues and the children and families we work with and for.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND 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	
<p>This proposal does not link to the Strategic Plan but, nevertheless, requires a decision because:</p> <p><i>NB: Only complete this section if you have not completed any of the Strategic Plan tick boxes above. Whichever section is not applicable, please delete.</i></p>	

NB: If the 'Other significant links' section below is not applicable, please delete it.

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents	
<p>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.)</p>	
<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

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 by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

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

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

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

See guidance at <https://hants.sharepoint.com/sites/ID/SitePages/Equality-Impact-Assessments.aspx?web=1>

Equalities Impact Assessment:

This is a report informing/updating the Panel on the work of the Hampshire Children and Families Principal Social Worker and as such has no impact on groups with protected characteristics.

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Panel:	Children and Families Advisory Panel
Date:	9 February 2021
Title:	Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership 2019/20 Annual Report
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

Contact name: Tim Sandle

Tel:

Email: Tim.sandle@hants.gov.uk

Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) Annual Report 2019-20.

Recommendation

2. That the Children and Families Advisory Panel note the Annual Report of the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and in particular the assessment that arrangements remain effective.

Executive Summary

3. The attached [Annual Report](#) from the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) provides an independent analysis of the safeguarding services provided to children and young people in Hampshire over 2019/20. It contains a summary of the work undertaken to deliver the HSCPs Business Plan and outlines the priorities over the next year.
4. Safeguarding remains a firm priority for all partner agencies, demonstrated by consistently good levels of attendance, effective engagement in subgroups, and a strong culture of constructive challenge and debate.
5. Key to the success of the HSCP is the focus on the different safeguarding contexts that exist across Hampshire, with the emphasis being placed on children and young people being safeguarded in their lives at home, in their friendship circles, in health, in education and in the public spaces that they occupy both offline and online.

6. Multi-agency work within the HSCP's groups and subgroups continue to promote work to drive a range of improvements to both the safety and welfare of children and young people. Partnership membership extends across several working groups to provide continuity.
7. The Hampshire statutory safeguarding partners for the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, and Southampton known locally as 'HIPS' continue to collaborate over the wider geographical area. This benefits professionals working across more than one of the local authority areas, ensuring greater joined-up working on strategic issues and common themes.
8. The annual business plan and work programme is developed in partnership with all agencies. The HSCP had four Business Plan priorities during 2019/20. Information on key highlights delivered under each priority is contained in the Annual Report and a summary is detailed below.

Priority 1: Further embed and evaluate HSCP initiatives.

- a) Formally launching the Family Approach Protocol and Toolkit with the other LSCPs and Local Safeguarding Adults Boards (LSABs) in the Pan-Hampshire area. Running a programme of multi-agency briefings and agree evaluation criteria for an end of year evaluation.
- b) Developing and embedding the ICON programme, completing the public launch of the programme. Including undertaking first stage professional and public evaluation of impact of the programme to date.
- c) Launching the 'Safe Sleep' campaign with the other LSCPs and Child Death Overview Panels (CDOPs) in the Pan-Hampshire and Isle of Wight area by Summer 2019. Conducting a first phase evaluation by the end of the reporting period.
- d) Reviewing the joint HSCP/IOWSCB Neglect Toolkit and consider additional information to include. Conducting an evaluation of the understanding, use of the Strategy and Toolkit by frontline professionals, and assess impact on children and families

Priority 2: Strengthening our Assurance Programmes

- a) Responding to the outcomes of the Keeping Children Safe (Section 11) audit to better promote staff understanding and awareness of key policies and procedures.
- b) Reviewing learning from Serious Case Reviews to test impact on frontline practice.

Priority 3: Leadership and Transformation

- a) Publishing new safeguarding partnership arrangements by 29 June 2019, and full implementation by 29 September 2019 in line with Working Together 2018 statutory guidance.

- b) Publishing new Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) arrangements by 29 June 2019, and full implementation by 29 September 2019 in line with Working Together 2018 statutory guidance.
 - c) With colleagues across the other LSCPs in Pan-Hampshire and Isle of Wight, developing and implementing new Pan-Hampshire and Isle of Wight work streams, including Exploitation and Health groups.
9. As part of the above, and in line with its scrutiny and assurance role, the Safeguarding Partners have maintained a close focus on any change programmes ongoing in partner agencies, that may have an impact on the broader system. Safeguarding Partners and Relevant Agencies are invited to provide briefings on a quarterly basis on any transformation or change programmes so that the partnership has early sight on any changes in service delivery or practice that may impact on single agencies or broader partnership working.

Contextual information

10. The statutory responsibility for the effectiveness of the HSCP is held jointly between Hampshire County Council Children's Services, Hampshire Constabulary, and West Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Group (on behalf of the Hampshire Partnership of Clinical Commissioning Group). The Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) reviewed its [Local Safeguarding Arrangements](#) document in October 2020.

Finance

11. Not applicable

Performance

12. The strength of the partnership continues through good communication and information sharing and innovative work in response to safeguarding.

Consultation and Equalities

13. No equality impacts have been identified in the development of this report.

Other Key Issues

14. In addition to note that whilst the report covers the year 2019/20, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on service demands and has seen a renewed commitment to partnership working. The HSCP response to the 'new normal' arrangements have allowed us to adapt and build on our success further, at a time when resources are stretched, the HSCP

response has helped facilitate a strategic coordination of activity and understanding of impact.

Conclusions

15. The Hampshire Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report provides evidence that there is positive progress in many areas of child protection with strong and integrated front-line services maintained within the partnership across Hampshire.
16. The Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership has ensured the implementation of arrangements set out in Working 2018.
17. Safeguarding arrangements in Hampshire has continued to improve with partnership membership extending across several working groups to provide continuity. Multi-agency work within partnership groups and subgroups is driving a range of improvements to promote the safety and welfare of children and young people.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND 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

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

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 by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

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

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

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

Not applicable

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Panel:	Children and Families Advisory Panel
Date:	9 February 2021
Title:	Independent Reviewing Service Annual Report 2019/20
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

Contact Name: Karen Cairns, Lead Independent Reviewing Officer

Email: karen.cairns@hants.gov.uk

1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the annual update on the work of the Independent Reviewing Service (IRS) in Hampshire.
- 1.2 This annual report covers the period from 1 July 2019 to 31 July 2020

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. That the Children and Families Advisory Panel note this report on the annual work of the Independent Reviewing Service.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 This annual report summarises the work of the Independent Reviewing Service (IRS) in line with the key areas specified in statutory guidance. It identifies areas of good practice and the positive response of the service to the Covid-19 challenges. The IRS has contributed to the transformation and development work taking place across the department, including the embedding of the Hampshire Approach. This report also acknowledges the areas for further development of the service in the future, most notably, the improvement of the IRS quality assurance to evidence the impact on outcomes for children.

4. Contextual information

- 4.1 The appointment of an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) for a child or young person in the care of the Local Authority is a legal requirement under s.118 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002.
- 4.2 The IRO Handbook, issued in March 2010, provides Local Authorities with statutory guidance on how IROs should discharge their duties. The guidance confirms that the primary role of an IRO is: *to ensure that the care plan for the child fully reflects the child's current needs and that the actions set out in the plan are consistent with the local authority's legal responsibilities towards the child* (at para. 2.10)
- 4.3 The IRO Handbook states that the IRO manager should be responsible for producing an annual report for the scrutiny of the members of the Corporate Parenting Board. The IRO Handbook specifies 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 profile 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 there are any resource issues risk the delivery of a quality service to all looked after children.
- 4.4 In Hampshire, the role of the IRO also includes the function of independent Chair of child protection conferences.
- 4.5 By way of context and background, at the end of January 2019, the number of full-time Children Looked After (CLA) in Hampshire was 1,677. At the end of January 2020 this figure was 1,600 which represents a 4.81% decrease. During the same period, the number of children subject

to a Child Protection (CP) Plan decreased by 269 from 1,204 to 935 at the end of January 2020. This represents a 22% decrease. In terms of activity for the period covered by this report, 2,400 CP conferences were chaired and 4,719 CLA reviews were undertaken between 1 July 2019 and 31 July 2020 (for full-time CLA and including Statutory Reviews and Statutory Adoption Reviews).

- 4.6 There are, therefore, some clear indications that the ongoing programme of transformation in children's social care over recent years is having an impact on the number of children being able to remain safely at home within their families and communities. The emphasis within this programme on reunification and permanence, and the application of strength-based family work initiatives (including multi-disciplinary specialist and intensive workers within social work teams) indicates positive outcomes with regards to the number of children in care and on child protection plans. The IRS continues to focus on ensuring reunification is achieved in the safest and most timely way, including examining how the service can develop their own strength-based practice to ensure continuity of experience for young people and their families. The full impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is yet to be fully understood on demand for children's social care, but there is clear evidence of a rise in both child protection and children looked after as a result.

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

- 5.1 There are currently 23.5 full time equivalent (FTE) IRO posts, line managed on an area basis (East and West) by two Lead IROs.
- 5.2 In the East, staffing has been stable with the one vacancy arising being filled following recruitment. Sadly, a valued IRO colleague died in service during March 2020 unexpectedly. This had a significant impact on the IRS and wider service as well as with young people and foster carers that we worked with. Support has been provided by the Lead IROs to affected staff and families.
- 5.3 In the West two IROs (1.5 FTE) were on maternity leave for a period, therefore one FTE agency IRO was approved to provide cover whose contract is currently being reviewed on a three-monthly basis. A temporary FTE has also been recruited; initially for 12 months but this has been extended for a further 6 months. The West has seen two FTE leave the Service; their posts have now been filled. In addition, there was some planned sickness leave totalling ten weeks from two IROs over summer/autumn 2019.

- 5.4 The Lead IRO West, who had been in post for three years left the IRS at the end of June 2020; this position was successfully recruited to without a gap.
- 5.5 The IRS service continues to use casually employed Child Protection Conference Chairs. The service employs eight casual chairs who have been vital in ensuring we deliver an effective and flexible service with the ability to be agile in meeting variations in demand. This allows the service to maintain the focus of the IRO role for allocation to our Looked After Children to ensure the statutory obligation in respect of that provision is protected and met.
- 5.6 Average FTE caseloads for IROs in Hampshire is 83 which includes both children looked after and child protection conferences. There was a slow and steady reduction at the end of 2019/beginning of 2020 with the numbers on child protection plans decreasing. However, IRO caseloads have been impacted in the main by gaps in the recruitment process (i.e., the amount of time it takes to recruit between staff leaving and joining the service). CP Conference Chair responsibilities are held in addition to the IRO role in Hampshire. It is noted that the statutory guidance, within the IRO Handbook, recommends a caseload of 50-70 looked after children for a full-time equivalent IRO. Nationally these figures vary across authorities. The service is working hard to robustly manage the caseloads of IROs through regular monitoring (reporting monthly to the DCS) and Lead IROs are overseeing throughput and ensuring a drive and focus on reunification where appropriate.
- 5.7 A review of the service, undertaken as part of the Transforming Social Care programme, has just begun. This will seek to understand demand and workload and ensure appropriate and efficient use of resource. It will identify improvements to enhance and develop service quality, performance and most importantly, impact. The IRS is positive about this review and looking forward to identifying and owning improvements as a result.
- 5.8 The majority (83.5%) of children in Care in Hampshire are White British, this being reflected by the makeup of the cohort of IROs within the IRS service. Seven IROs are male and 17 are female, with the majority being White British, one IRO is Black/Caribbean.
- 5.9 In March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in wide-ranging restrictions across the country and, as with all aspects of children's social care, impacted directly on the work of the IRS in Hampshire. Local offices were closed, with staff, partners and children and families unable to meet face-to-face for conferences or reviews. As with the rest of the branch, work continued with business as usual whilst doing things differently. In response to these challenges the IRS service worked closely with social

care teams and partners to develop processes that meant CP conferences and CLA reviews could be held virtually. Within 48 hours of lockdown, staff implemented the use of MS Teams to ensure service continuity. To ensure agency decision making is clear, each partner agency submits their decision and analysis via an email following each conference. These submissions are recorded on the child's electronic record by the CP chair along with their Chair's summary. This gives a clear record of decision making to be captured if the recording quality is reduced in a small number of cases due to internet connection.

- 5.10 Participation of parents and agencies have improved greatly since working virtually and consideration will be given about the use of virtual and hybrid meetings following the ease of Covid-19 restrictions due to its success. Another positive is that adjourned and cancelled conferences have remained very low in numbers since Covid-19.
- 5.11 Children have reported that they have liked the use of MS Teams or WhatsApp. IROs have reported that they have seen some improvement in children participating in their CLA reviews although this is dependent on their ages and understanding. The IRS service will be undertaking a Participation Audit in the autumn to establish how the use of MS Teams/WhatsApp has impacted on children's engagement within their reviews.

6. 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

- 6.1 CLA Review timeliness for the rolling year to date at the end of July 2020 was 71.8%; a decrease from 81.2% in July 2019. The results between 2019 and 2018 are similar at 82.6%. This decrease in CLA Review timeliness performance has not been a feature in previous years. An investigation was undertaken by the Lead IROs with local managers and it was established that this was a data issue relating to counting errors in the West; this has since been corrected which improved the performance to the county total of 78.6% rolling year and 91.6% statutory year to date.

7. Extent of participation of children and their parents

- 7.1 Child participation in CP conferences was the subject of a separate report considered by CFMT in October 2019, which was then presented within the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. In headline, overall and across several key areas audited, performance was better than the September 2017 audit.
- 7.2 Fifteen children (14.9%) over the age of 10 years attended their conference during the participation audit; all met with the chair prior to the

meeting and 14 also had prior preparation with the Social Worker. However, the Participation audit report highlighted that of the 85.1% of the children who did not attend their conference, the majority had their wishes and feelings represented. The child's wishes, and feelings were expressly referenced in 97% of cases from social work reports. Conference chairs were confident that in 81.2% of cases their outline and child protection plans were informed by the child's wishes and feelings. Only 3% of children submitted a document to conference whereby their feelings were recorded independently. Improvements have been sustained, but further work is needed to embed participation rather than using the representation of a child's views as the norm. The annual Care Plan audit further considers the issue of participation in CLA planning processes.

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

- 8.1 A repeat audit of agency participation in, and report contribution to, CP conferences was conducted for a week starting 23rd September 2019. Local CP administrators in each district answered key questions for each conference held that week. Headlines from this snapshot of practice include that multi agency engagement, as part of the CP conference process, showed an increase in attendance from the previous audit. In terms of report submission, the sharing of these reports with the conference chair and families concerned had declined. Data shows only 61% of invitations result in the attendance of a professional at the conference.
- 8.2 School and school nursing service engagement improved significantly and contributed to the overall increase in attendance and conference quoracy had been significantly supported by colleagues from these services and from colleagues in health visiting and Police. The agencies whose contribution to the process needed greater consideration included GPs with regards to report submission, midwifery and other agencies not routinely invited but who are attending less often such as probation. These matters have been discussed with the relevant heads of service and within the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership to establish the barriers of non-attendance and actions to increase participation.
- 8.3. Since Covid-19 and working virtually Child Protection chairs report participation and attendance from all agencies has been greatly improved. A Participation Audit will be undertaken in the autumn to establish the extent of this.
- 8.4 As part of the work in developing the Hampshire Approach, during last year, the CP plan template has been revised in line with our strength-based model and renamed the Family Plan. The CLA review record

template has been changed from August 2020 to make them more child friendly. Lead IROs are also revising their audit tool in line with the Quality Assurance Framework which will capture the impact of the IRO. Over the next twelve months we are developing and planning a schedule of LIRO and IRO auditing of work to capture the impact and outcomes.

- 8.5 Procedures for resolving concerns, including the local dispute resolution process and an analysis of the issues raised in dispute and the outcomes
- 8.6 The formal Problem Resolution Process (PRP) was commenced seven times by four different IROs in the year to July 2019 to July 2020 all were resolved at district manager level. This is a low return when compared to previous years as 23 were commenced in 2018. IROs have stated that their relationships with team managers are positive and issues are generally being resolved at the informal level without the use of PRPs. To capture this improvement the IRS service are working with the C2C team to ensure that we can collate this data in the new Mosaic system that is currently being developed.
- 8.7 Triggers for escalation include non-completion of review decisions, lack of school placement, non-completion of placement at home regulations and no health assessment. The IRS was part of the multi-agency Rapid Improvement Event planned in September 2020 on health assessments of children who are looked after.

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

- 9.1 In light of the work within Hampshire to promote the resilience of families and keep more children safely at home, the overarching strategy has seen a gradual reduction in the number of children being looked after and a decrease in children on child protection plans since November 2018, thus reducing the demands on the IRS. However, the increase in demand on social care because of the coronavirus pandemic, and the expected pressures going into the autumn is reversing that trend.
- 9.2 IROs have all been asked to identify children on their caseloads who should be achieving their 'right to private and family life' to confirm they are robust in ensuring the plan is realised without drift or unnecessary delay and by use of formal resolution if appropriate. Within supervision IROs are asked to highlight progress in these cases. This has led to progress being made in permanence planning.
- 9.3 The main challenge in ensuring delivery of an outstanding reviewing service remains the consistency and management of IRO caseloads, particularly considering the potential increased demand on social care as

a result of Covid-19. A further challenge is developing the evidence of the impact of the IRS on children's records from our IT system. However, work is underway as part of the Transforming Social Care programme to review the effectiveness of the service and how it can adapt and flex to meet the challenges going forward, utilising its resource as efficiently as possible.

10. Good Practice

- 10.1 Led by the Lead IROs, the IRS has been fully involved and contributed to the work and development of the Hampshire Approach, particularly in respect of new recording formats to be used for care planning, CLA review and CP conferences. There have been some significant benefits of working virtually for the IRS, and as the IRS service progresses through its transformation review these benefits will be considered for future ways of working within the service.
- 10.2 Lead IROs have led work with the IROs to develop a new process for holding CP conferences. The aim is to improve information sharing and parental/carer participation and to strengthen the planning process. Covid-19 has impacted on the further development of this process with a wider staff group, but it will be incorporated and progressed within the work being undertaken on Family Meetings. The service has made some inroads into developing better processes to ensure midway review points between statutory CLA reviews are better recognised and acted on. Over the next few months this will be embedded into practice.
- 10.3 As well as their statutory role in challenge, IROs regularly note and informally reflect examples of good practice in relation to front-line social work and feed this back to practitioners and their managers. At the request of a district manager, care planning training and support is being developed and delivered by IROs to support practitioners.
- 10.4 Lead IROs continue to input into district PAGs using an agreed data set and analysis format and now attend County PAG to present a monthly IRO performance report. They attend local management meetings in districts as appropriate.
- 10.5 IROs visit and offer support to social work teams to support practice and build positive professional relationships. Each IRO is linked to a team to enable this, they attend the link team meetings on a quarterly basis. This enables case progression discussions to be more effective. This work is currently being undertaken virtually.

11. Areas for further development

11.1 Use of MS Teams has been working well for both Child Protection Conferences and looked after children reviews. The following actions were agreed by the Children and Families Management Team:

- The Care Plan Audit will be further refined and repeated ensuring that it is both quantitative and qualitative. CFMT is asked to take a view on the timing of the next audit in the context of the My Life My Future Care Plan format having just been launched.
- A format for CLA review minutes written 'to the child' has been agreed and its use will be embedded in IRO practice from 24 August 2020.
- The service will engage with and contribute to Partners in Practice sector led improvement work with other local authorities as appropriate and is currently involved in workstreams with two Local Authorities.
- The IRS will continue to remain updated with the developing work in the department, specialist inputs to service meetings, contribution to process and form developments and participation in training where possible. This will include the recent corporate and branch focus on inclusion and diversity, initially in response to Black Lives Matters.
- LIROs will ensure the issues of performance in relation to timeliness and participation are monitored, addressed and improvement is made where necessary.
- The IRS service will consider the use of and incorporate MS Teams for future service delivery where appropriate.
- The IRS service will participate in the IRS Service Review from July 2020.

12. Conclusion

12.1 The IRS has continued to deliver a good quality service in the last 12 months whilst managing the significant impact of Covid-19, working virtually and staff resourcing.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND 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

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents	
<p>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.)</p>	
<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

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 by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

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

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

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

This report provides an update on the overall work of the Independent Reviewing Service and is not proposing changes that would lead to an impact on groups with protected characteristics.

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HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee/Panel:	Children and Families Advisory Panel
Date:	9 February 2021
Title:	Update on Lockdown 3
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

Contact name: Stuart Ashley

Tel: 01962 846370

Email: Stuart.ashley@hants.gov.uk

Purpose of this Item

1. The purpose of this presentation item is to summarise the management of the Children and Families service throughout the ongoing coronavirus pandemic with a particular focus upon the third national lockdown. The presentation containing the relevant information is attached at Appendix 1.

Recommendation

2. That the Children and Families Advisory Panel note the content of the presentation.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes
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Document

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None

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2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

This item contains information regarding the management of the departmental response to the national pandemic and an equalities impact assessment for this particular presentation has not been deemed necessary.

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Hampshire
County Council

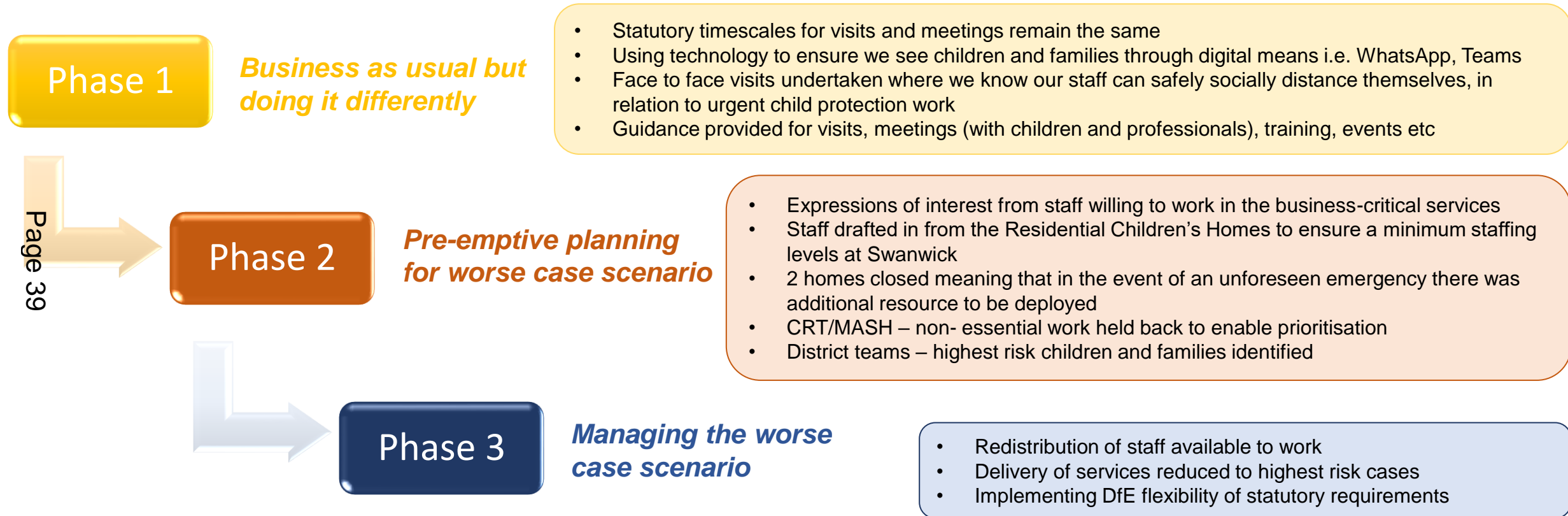
Agenda

1. Our approach
 - Phases, oversight and data
2. What we did
 - Use of technology
 - Children in Care, Foster Carers and Residential
 - Partners
 - Our staff
3. Lockdown three
4. In practice
 - Some examples
5. Lessons learned and in conclusion

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Our approach through the lockdown:

As part of our contingency planning we developed a phased approach, with each phase based on having fewer staff available to work should the situation worsen



We remained in Phase 1 until Lockdown 3 when some of Phase 2 was implemented

Maintaining management grip

It was imperative, from the very start, to respond quickly, be agile, and maintain control:

- Guidance has been issued promptly and updated
- Statutory timescales have been maintained
- Visits have continued - virtually
- Local level management has been enhanced
- Management oversight has remained

... all whilst children have continued coming into care and fewer have been leaving

Throughout lockdown and between lockdowns there has been constant engagement and feedback to understand and capture how teams are responding to the crisis. We have done this through:

- Daily/bi-weekly CFMT Covid meetings
- AD log/action tracker
- Weekly Covid specific DM and SM meetings
- BAU team meetings and supervisions
- Q&A process and comms
- Impact log – for TSC specific activity
- DM and SM Workshops
- All manager meetings



Activity Data:

	Mar-19	Apr-19	Sep-19	Dec-19	Mar-20	Apr-20	Sep-20	Dec-20
CiN Referrals	1644	1563	1690	1572	1710	1180	2283	1767
Assessments completed within 45 working days	1041	1189	1015	13031	1511	1231	1285	1306
% Within Timescale	94.0%	92.3%	89.3%	91.3%	93.4%	90.3%	95.3%	95.6%
ICPC	95	91	119	129	163	160	111	169
RCPC	336	285	320	204	280	194	309	243

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Re: Child Protection conferences we have seen a significant rise throughout 2020 because of the complexities of families needs magnified by Covid

Whilst there was a slight reduction in referrals and assessments during April, by the end of May we were back to normal levels and have stayed around 17% higher than the previous year.

Visit data:

Across March and April 2020, we completed 18,367 visits (Assessment, CIN, CP, CLA, LC)

In March 15% of visits were undertaken virtually, 85% in person

In April 53% of visits were undertaken virtually, 47% in person

In September 2020 we completed 10,471 visits, 77.5% of which were face to face and 22.5% virtual

And in December 2020 we completed 10,783 visits, 76.5% of which were face to face and 23.5% virtual

How we worked with children and families

We have continued to see children face to face when needed **(an essential and necessary part of keeping children safe)**, however our teams have also been creative in how they are using technology to engage with children and families:

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Technology used:

- WhatsApp
- Zoom
- MS Teams
- Skype
- Twinkl
- Google Translate
- Team Talk App

Used for:

- Visits
- Care planning and review
- Pathway planning
- Participation
- Building Rapport
- Life story work
- CLA Reviews
- TAFs
- EPMS
- Life story work
- Supervised contact
- Family Star
- Observing home conditions
- Translation
- Parenting programmes
- Nurture sessions



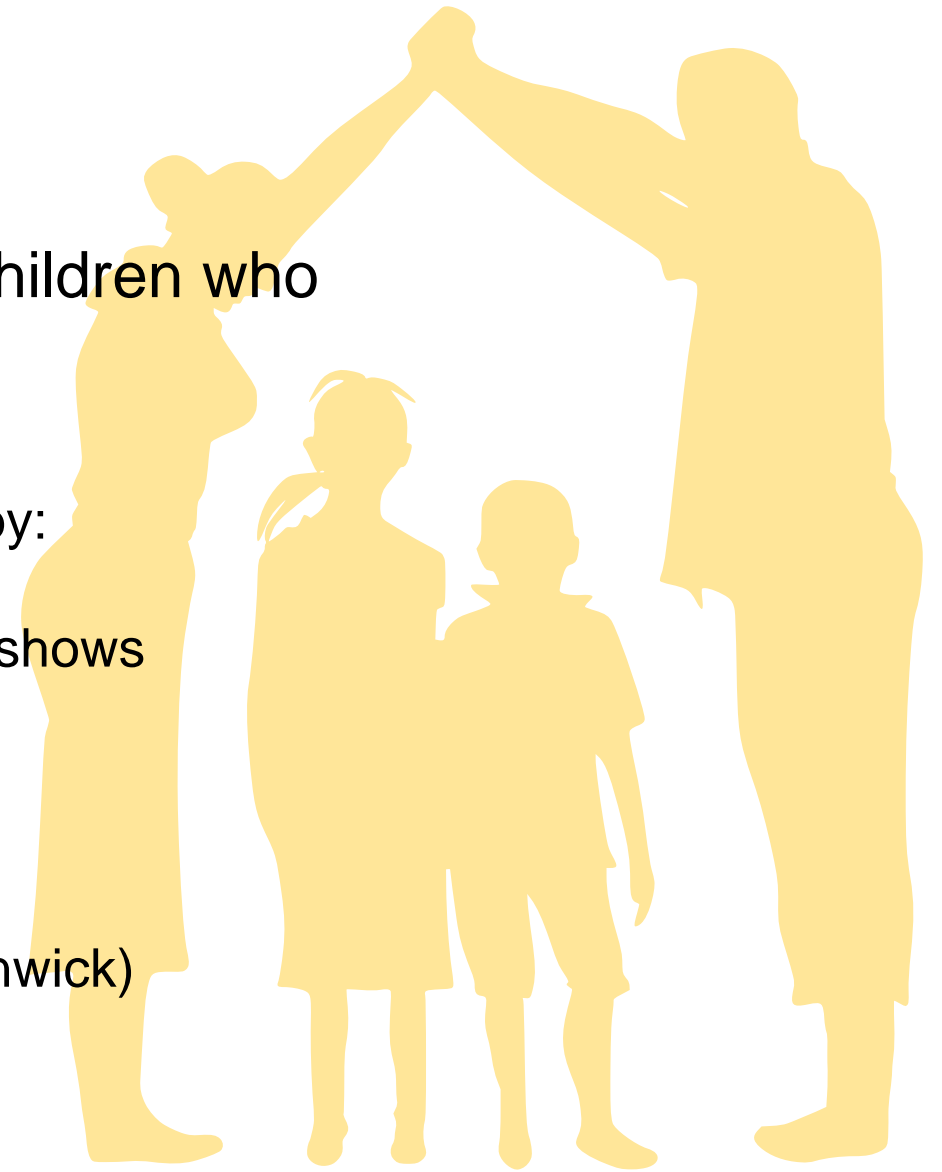
Children in Care

Our staff have worked *relentlessly* to support our children who have all been seen either in person or virtually

We have been focussing on supporting our children in care by:

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- Being (even more) creative in lockdown – quizzes, talent shows
- Stabilising placements
- Recruiting Volunteers
- Supporting our foster carers (i.e. staying put)
- The transition of care leavers to independence
- Keeping our remaining residential homes open (inc. Swanwick)



Foster Carers and Residential

Early on we closed 2 homes to build resilience for our staffing levels across the residential estate

Support across all areas has been **Outstanding**

- Some children have been unwell
- Foster carers have take children from homes where there has been infection
- We've had volunteers from the wider service offering help when staffing has reduced
- Volunteers have also offered support for foster carers
- Further support has been put in place for foster carers if needed (i.e. financial)

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Partners

We have maintained a constant dialogue with our partners

- Business as usual meetings have been unchanged
- Daily contact between Assistant Director and Head of Public Protection (the police) if needed

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We are proactively sharing our important updates with partners across the health economy

- Shared high risk cases with police and vice versa to focus on right children
- We are sharing updates from partners with our staff

Coronavirus
Latest NHS Guidelines
Translated into 23 languages

Children's guide to coronavirus
Children's COMMISSIONER

Global Email
Daily COVID-19 update

Colleagues,
Line managers and supervisors are encouraged to use the content of the 'Daily COVID-19 update' to brief their teams.

Minute's silence for key workers
Tomorrow (Tuesday 28 April) at 11am a minute's silence will be maintained across the UK as a mark of respect for key workers who have lost their lives during the coronavirus pandemic.

Hampshire Constabulary will be taking part with the support of Chief Constable Olivia Pinkney and officers and staff will be encouraged – if operational duties allow – to take 60 seconds to reflect.

Please take time to reflect at your desks, or on your duties, on those who have paid the ultimate price.

HELPLINE
0808 800 5000
heln@nsncc.org.uk

Hampshire & IOW Crisis Line for Young People
Havant and East Hants (HEH) Mind are excited to share with you that we will be launching a Freephone Crisis Line for children and young people aged 11-17 years old living in Hampshire & Isle of Wight.
Launching on Monday 4th May 2020.
This service will be available Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday, 9 – 5.30pm.
Freephone 0800 303 1050
Immediate access to help, support and advice for young people experiencing difficulties with their mental health.

Safeguarding Children During Lockdown
Concerned for a child
The Government has asked parents to keep their children at home wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for children who are vulnerable and for those children of workers critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) response who absolutely need to attend.
While in lockdown, there is the potential that children could be at an increased risk of harm relating to:
• Self-harm and wellbeing
• Online exploitation
• Abuse and neglect by parents/carers

Safeguarding Children During Lockdown
During COVID-19, we must ALL LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER and make sure we safeguard EVERYONE!
Top Tips During COVID-19
IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT YOURSELF or SOMEONE ELSE...
• TALK TO A TRUSTED ADULT
• SEEK HELP AND SUPPORT IF YOU NEED IT
• KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOUR FRIENDS & FAMILY
• LOOK OUT FOR YOUR FRIENDS, IF YOU'RE CONCERNED TELL SOMEONE
IF YOU'RE FEELING FRIGHTENED IN YOUR HOME BECAUSE OF SOMEONE'S BEHAVIOUR, CONTACT SUPPORT BELOW

WHERE CAN I FIND SUPPORT?
There are lots of different ways you can get help if you are worried about yourself, your friends or your family.
Test the YoungMind's Crisis Messenger for free 24/7 support across the UK.

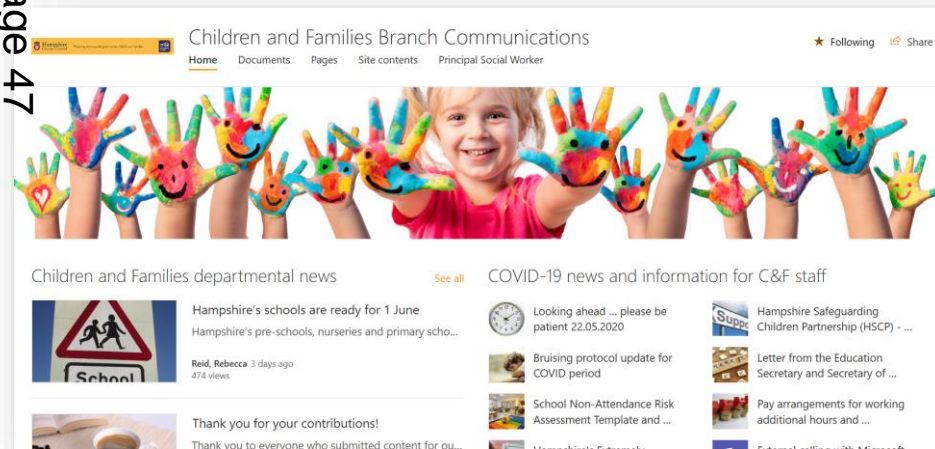
Mind Havant and East Hants
NHS
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Our staff

Due to the dynamic situation throughout Covid-19, we quickly reviewed how we communicate with and support our staff.

Following a refresh, our internal comms channels across Children and Families have seen a 100% increase in engagement, meaning staff are accessing important COVID-19 practice updates quickly and easily

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We've been creative in use of all channels and messaging to maintain constant contact and provide reassurance

Connectivity: Our staff *(not WiFi!)*

We are hearing that some staff are feeling more connected. This is because Covid-19 has meant:

Sustain after Covid-19

- More frequent meetings/catch-ups/touchpoints in response to the ever-changing situation
- Watching out for staff welfare, checking in on colleagues, looking out for each other
- Streamlining and more efficient communications
- Trying new and creative ways of engaging workforce through Teams/videos/other channels



But this will never fully replace the face to face interactions and meetings, both formal and informal, that make us outstanding. We need to do both and use a blend of all channels available to us.

Lockdown 3

- Complexity of children's circumstances better understood
 - Behind the numbers, more urgent/serious child protection situations presented during June-October
- New ways of working have become 'business as usual'
- Able to quickly resume strategies from lockdown one
 - Enhanced communication with staff
 - Emotional support for those who needed it
 - Risk assessment and face to face visiting
- Resumption of QA processes (peer inspections/observations/audits)
- Continued support to other LAs under PiP programme

In practice: some examples

Social workers have used technology to observe relationships, home conditions and to engage with children and families in a virtual way

Young people see social media and video communication as part of their daily lives and have enjoyed their personal advisors becoming more engaged with this

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Video calling very useful for offering nurture sessions to families. I have emailed them sheets and tasks to complete before a session for us to then discuss and go through together via video. It keeps the sessions focused with really good time. It also seems to help record keeping as I can immediately write notes after talking with them rather than waiting until my next admin slot in my diary.

...how lovely it's been to face time my clients Wow - it has been amazing - they have loved it! It seems that a lot of mine have valued this more than when i trek miles to see them face to face. They have been so much more relaxed and definitely this is in their comfort zone - they seem to have taken it as a huge personal compliment that I am contacting them this way. I've been shown around their homes, met their cats and dogs, seen their gardens and relatives and it was all so relaxed too.... I hope it can play a part in the normal world when we come through this.

The use of video has been very helpful as the child has been able to show me things which they have been doing during the lockdown. They have also enjoyed meeting my puppy which was very helpful in engaging a child that is new to my caseload so haven't built as much rapport with him yet

What we have learnt

Worked Well (Continue)

- **Adaptability of staff - Agile working has become the norm we can do things differently/people adapt**
- Staff have picked this up and run with it - Staff have been up for the changes and worked hard to make children safe, good can do
- **Leadership is key**
- **NO TRAVEL!**
- Use of estate creatively – use this as a ‘coming together’ space
- **Use of IT - MS teams has become BAU**
- Better engagement/attendance in meetings. Staff have enjoyed seeing “the person”
- Staff feedback on clear messages from Senior Managers
- **Staff creativity, improved working relationships**
- OP MET meeting – SWs dropping in to the meeting rather than travel
- HSCP meeting working well – look at Hybrid model? (different speeds of different agencies etc.)

Didn't Work Well

- Courts appear to be out of step with current circumstances of staff
- **Sensitive meetings e.g.: HR**
- Fostering health and safety checks
- Newly qualified staff not having experiential working
- Amount of MS team meetings, the need to plan diary well
- **Equipment, making sure people equipped to do the role**
- Not having face to face training how we introduce again , mixture of virtual and face to face?
- Not all large meetings work as well virtually, need to practice how to improve
- CWD cohort – **non communicative children virtual is not better.** Face to face needed when safe to do so.
- **Parenting assessments**

What next:

When lock down eases we must continue working in an agile and responsive way

We are planning for:

- Reviewing building use-incremental increase based on maintaining social distancing, consideration of rotas for staff
- Increasing demand: both referrals and for placements
- Constantly assessing risk for face to face visits & contact
- Reporting and monitoring to continue daily/weekly. This will play an important role in assessing impact and analysing areas of need so we can deploy resources effectively
- Ensuring that staff and foster carers are accessing testing swiftly and appropriately

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New ways of working

There are some great examples of how we have worked differently

- Together as teams
- In a mobile and flexible way
- With children and families

We can learn from this and must ensure the good bits are sustained in the service of the future

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However, we will always be mindful that new opportunities must not compromise basic social work practice that cannot be done virtually.

Adoption of new ways of working need to be incorporated into what we already do that makes us outstanding. There are fundamental tasks that will never change and they are an integral part of keeping children safe



In conclusion

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Business as usual but doing it differently



We have maintained constant and solid management oversight of service



Our practitioners, managers and foster carers have been Outstanding in adapting and going above and beyond



Our work with agencies has been collaborative and responsive

We will transition the ease of lockdown by continuing to operate in an agile way. This will enable us to continuously maintain services if we need to go back into lock down at a later stage.

Thank you
and
any questions



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