

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### For information

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| <b>Board:</b>       | Children and Families Advisory Panel                               |
| <b>Date:</b>        | 7 June 2023  |
| <b>Title:</b>       | Hampshire Approach update for Children and Families Advisory Panel |
| <b>Report From:</b> | Director of Children's Services                                    |

**Contact name:** Sarah Plummer, Service Improvement Lead

**Email:** Sarah.plummer@hants.gov.uk

### Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Children and Families Advisory Panel with an overview of the Hampshire Approach practice framework and an update on its continuous improvement.

### Recommendation

2. The Children and Families Advisory Panel note the update on the Hampshire Approach.

### Executive Summary

3. This report
  - Outlines the background to the Hampshire Approach practice framework
  - Describes the key elements of the Approach
  - Summarises a recent stock-take of how the Approach has been embedded into practice
  - Describes the development plan for the coming year
  - Identifies how the Approach improves the experience of and impact on children and families.

## **Background**

4. HCC are an established Department for Education 'Partner in Practice (PIP)'. Part of this status included funding to undergo a whole system transformation and a key element of this was the development of a practice framework.
5. The PIP Programme team worked together with staff from across the service to develop the first phase of the practice framework in 2017/18. However, it was recognised that to truly transform practice we had to develop our culture, leadership and processes which together would enable staff to work in new ways.
6. The practice framework was titled 'The Hampshire Approach' and was launched in the summer of 2018. It included the 'Hampshire Approach mindset', a new C&F Assessment, a suite of training and guidance. It also set a roadmap to develop the Approach and our culture over time.
7. The Hampshire Approach framework has continued to develop and embed in the years since its launch. The principles have permeated all areas of our practice, including how we work with each other and our partners. Many of our documents have been reviewed to reflect the updated mindset and training has evolved in response to staff and family feedback.
8. The success of the Approach was recognised by Ofsted when it said in its inspection visit of 2019 "Social workers are highly skilled at building and sustaining enduring relationships with children. This is a considerable strength in Hampshire", "Staff are skilled at using 'strengths-based' approaches and empowering children and families to take control of their plans." And "The 'Hampshire Approach', permeates the work with children and families, building confidence and resilience and leading to positive outcomes for children".

## **The Hampshire Approach**

9. The Hampshire Approach is a mindset and is at the heart of all we do. It guides how we work with children, families, partners, and each other.
10. We work together to:
  - Respond to risk and keep children safe
  - Develop positive relationships
  - Identify and build on strengths

- Grow and strengthen support networks

Because by doing so we will contribute to positive change, now and in the long term.

11. The Hampshire Approach is woven in to all that we do, from our meetings, conversations, and supervision to the policies, practices and forms we use every day. This approach is enhanced by knowledge, skills, technology, and ongoing learning and development to enable us to work in this way.

12. We use a collection of methodologies such as Motivational Interviewing, Solution Focused Approaches, Restorative Practice, and many more to help us achieve the four key outcomes.

13. In Hampshire we believe that this strengths-based way of working helps children and families to achieve sustained change.

14. What does it look like in practice?

- Always looking to a family’s strengths, whilst also recognising and clearly assessing risks.
- Using a range of tools and techniques to engage and empower such as motivational interviewing and solution focused conversations.
- Drawing on restorative practice skills to help you navigate and strengthen the network and relationships around a child.
- Capturing the voice of children and families and going further so they have ownership and involvement in their plans and future goals.
- Ensure that all our family plans are SMART.
- Invite support networks around the child and family to all meetings.

| <b>Traditional Approach</b>  | <b>Hampshire Approach</b>   |
|--|---|
| We ask – what can’t you do? How much support do you need? What has gone wrong in the past? | We ask – what does a good day look like? When things are working well why is that? Who supports you when you need it? |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| We open our meetings by - discussing the risks and what's gone wrong in the past | We open our meetings by – discussing what's been working well since the last meeting, what has been learnt, what steps have been taken |
| We capture the parent and child's view during assessment and planning            | We assess, plan and review together with the family, those important to them and the professionals and support network around them.    |
| We write about the child and family in 'professional language'                   | We write directly to the family and child in language they understand  |
| Focus on reducing the number of children in care                                 | Focusing on keeping more children safely home and with their support networks  |

### **Embedding the Hampshire Approach in practice**

15. There has been a constant focus on embedding and development since the initial launch in 2018. District and Service Managers are responsible for working with their teams to consider how the overarching principles apply to their area of practice. This will look different for front line practice with families, foster carers, residential teams and MASH for example.
16. The following highlights some of the changes made across the service:
  - An updated Family Plan which travels with a family through all elements of the service, irrespective of social care status. This means family's don't have to tell their story more than once and our support is coordinated across thresholds.
  - The Graduate Trainee Programme has incorporated the Hampshire Approach ensuring new staff are well equipped to begin work with families. Further training has been commissioned and is being rolled out to all staff to provide further guidance and support in facilitating family network meetings. Training has also been provided to Managers to enable them to facilitate reflective learning sessions to further embed practice. Finally an update to our Reunification procedure has fully incorporated the Hampshire Approach.

- An updated 'My Life My Future Care Plan' which travels with a child from entry to care and on as they are either reunified with their family/support network, or go on to become a Care Leaver. This provides consistency for children and young people and gives them more ownership and involvement in their care plan.

17. A new Service Improvement team was introduced in June 2022 and a key responsibility of this team is to own the continuous improvement of the Approach. The team undertook a stock-take in the summer of 2022 to review how the approach is understood and used across all aspects of the service. The key findings from this stock-take were

- There are many examples of excellent practice and understanding of the approach and children and families are benefiting as a result
- Assessments and plans across District teams are consistently demonstrating the Hampshire Approach and are recognisably strength based and collaborative
- Further developments and refinements are required in some aspects of the service which weren't the initial focus, for example MASH, Fostering and Residential.
- Now is a good opportunity to update and build upon our resources, creating materials for families, staff and partners.

### Developments over the past 12 months

18. Over the past year the developments described below have been overseen by a new Hampshire Approach Development Group, reporting into the Children and Families Management Team.

- Introduction of new branding to symbolise the focus on safety, networks, strengths and relationships.



- Creation of a staff Sharepoint Site with a wide range of 'Quick Guides' and resources, focusing on the areas of development identified during the stock-take.
- Review and improvements to training package, with enhanced training offer available from June 2023, with further developments planned during the remainder of 2023.
- Beginning to collate user friendly direct work tool packs, making them more easily accessible for practitioners.

### **Development planned during the remainder of 2023**

19. The Service Improvement team will be doing a focused project with residential staff, working with them to improve confidence and identify ways in which they already apply the Approach in their work. Residential colleagues will be able to input into further developments and resources, and we will take training content to them, as we know accessing external training can be a logistical challenge for this staff group.
20. A similar piece of work will take place with Fostering Staff and we have commissioned a dedicated training day for Supervising Social Workers and Hive Coordinators for later in the year. The Service Improvement team will work with them to apply the training to their processes and procedures so they can be embedded in a meaningful way.
21. Further work will take place to create and collate direct work tools and make them accessible for staff, both in physical and virtual form.

### **Impact on our children**

22. At its foundation, the Hampshire Approach is designed to enable families to meet the needs of their children, now and in the long term. **It is a critical tool alongside our wider transformation programme which together are enabling more children to stay or return safely home with their families and wider networks.**
23. For those children where living in care is in their best interests, the Hampshire Approach and the My Life My Future care/pathway plan ensures a more consistent and collaborative way of working with those children, but also their families and their carers. This in turn will create a more supportive and cohesive support network around our children in care.

24. Finally, the Hampshire Approach empowers children and young people to have more involvement and ownership of their care plan and the decisions which affect them. Many of our young people lead their review meetings for example. This not only positively impacts them now, but also builds confidence, skills and resilience for the future.

## **Conclusions**

25. The Hampshire Approach practice framework is part of a whole system transformation. Whilst it was launched in 2018 we continue to invest in how it is embedded and developed.

## REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION

### Links to the Strategic Plan

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

### 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.)**

Document

Location

None



## EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT: **Not relevant to this 'for information' report**

### 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>

Insert 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*