

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date:</b>	12 December 2023
<b>Title:</b>	Annual Safeguarding Report - Children's Services 2022-23
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Children's Services

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#### **Purpose of this Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an annual update to Cabinet on safeguarding children activity within Children's Services during 2022/23.

#### **Recommendation(s)**

2. That Cabinet notes the positive progress and continued consistently high performance with regards to safeguarding children in Hampshire.
3. That Cabinet note the commitment of a wide range of Children's Services officers in achieving this level of performance.
4. That Cabinet receives further updates on safeguarding on an annual basis.

#### **Executive Summary**

5. This report seeks to identify key national developments, summarises performance and activity levels, and details a number of key local developments and future priorities. The report mainly uses data from the financial year 2022/23 but supplements this with more recent data where it is useful to do so.
6. The report provides assurance that whilst demand for children's social care services continues to increase year on year, the response to the safeguarding of vulnerable children is both robust and timely. New and emerging risks to children are identified and addressed collaboratively with partners and the wider transformation of children's social care will deliver a modern social work service fit for the future challenges over the next decade.

## Contextual information

7. Cabinet will recall the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) that, local authorities are subject to standard and short inspections depending on their previous Ofsted judgement. Inspections since the introduction of the ILACS:
  - 7.1. **November 2018** - Hampshire was subject to a focused visit, inspecting children subject to a child protection plan, including the quality and impact of pre-proceedings intervention under the Public Law Outline (PLO). Hampshire had received a very positive letter from Ofsted following this visit.
  - 7.2. **April and May 2019** - Hampshire was subject to a full ILACS inspection. Report to Council dated 15 July 2019 refers to this inspection. This inspection judged Hampshire to be outstanding overall and across the other three areas of judgement.
  - 7.3. **November 2021** – Hampshire volunteered to pilot a new Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI). The focus of this inspection was multi agency Safeguarding arrangements across all partners, working from initial contact through to a CIN/CP decision. The inspection involved inspectors from Ofsted, CQC (Care Quality Commission) and HMICFRS (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services). The partnership received a very positive outcome letter following this visit.
  - 7.4. **February 2023** – Hampshire was subject to a focused visit, inspecting children in care. Hampshire received a very positive letter from Ofsted following this visit. There were only three improvement actions:
    - The timeliness of initial and review health assessments for children.
    - Independent reviewing officer workloads.
    - The voice of the child in the corporate parenting comm
8. It is worth noting that each of these inspections were rooted in safeguarding and have fully tested Hampshire's safeguarding practice, alongside testing the front door process within the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

## Finance

9. There are no financial recommendations in this report although the issue of the continued rise in cost (price) of placements for children in care in the independent sector, is a key pressure for the County Council.

## National Developments

### 10. Child exploitation

- 10.1. There are clear links between child exploitation and those children who are trafficked and/or that go missing. The term 'exploitation' includes the

following risk areas: child sexual exploitation (CSE), online exploitation, criminal (CCE) exploitation, Modern Day Slavery and including local drug networks, county lines, drug related harm, knife crime and serious violence; as well as other forms of exploitation that involve coercion and control such as radicalisation and extremism; forced marriage, female genital mutilation. Child exploitation work remains a significant area of activity.

- 10.2. The Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth & Southampton (HIPS) Child Exploitation Group is a strategic multi- agency group, covering the HIPS areas. The group developed the HIPS Child Exploitation Strategy, which sets out how all agencies will work together to ensure the most effective and coordinated response to identify and protect children at risk of exploitation both within and across the HIPS Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) areas.
- 10.3. A HIPS Operational Child Exploitation Group provides strong operational links and dissemination routes in and out of the strategic group, and links into Hampshire district led Missing Exploited and Trafficked (MET) operational subgroups. These ensure the identification, support, safeguarding and diversion of children who are at risk of, or being exploited within Hampshire's districts.
- 10.4. The latest available data for children who go missing in Hampshire, be that from home or for those in care, shows an increase in children going missing as well as an escalation in the number of missing episodes. There remains a robust and effective response from CSD and Hampshire Constabulary. Hampshire CSD have employed two specialist workers (based in Willow) who monitor missing children on a daily and weekly basis and work with district teams to ensure appropriate safeguards are in place to prevent repeat occurrences, they support return conversations and monitor the most frequent and at-risk missing children. Hampshire Constabulary, as part of a restructure, have set up a new team to address and find high risk missing children and adults. This is an important area of work and one that Ofsted gives significant scrutiny to.
- 10.5. County lines and local drug networks remain an increasing concern for Hampshire Children's Services. All agencies and professionals contribute to tackling this form of exploitation, with more specialist work being undertaken by the Hampshire Police MET Team and the Hampshire Children's Services specialist Willow Team. Willow is a multi-agency team consisting of specialist social workers, CFSWs, health professionals and Catch 22 substance misuse workers who all work closely with Hampshire Constabulary to protect the highest risk children.
- 10.6. Willow strives to be innovative and has won tenders for a Young Women & Girls Worker and has set up a devolved decision-making pilot for referrals coming into the National Referral Mechanism. Together with Hampshire Constabulary there is a coordinated deployment of these specialist resources to identify networks, ensuring the safeguarding of the most vulnerable children and the disruption of drug distribution activity.

## Performance and Activity Levels

11. Workloads, as evidenced in contacts, referrals and safeguarding activity, continue to be high with 11,517 cases open to Children’s Social Care as at the end of June 2023. The table below sets out the trends over the last five years including the source of referrals received via the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

### 12. Contacts and referrals

12.1. The total number of contacts as at 31 March 2023 (170,200) is 11% higher than the total received at 31 March 2022 (153,033). This is indicative of the continuing pressures across the child protection system which is reflected nationally. With schools reopened, education has retaken its traditional position as highest referrer at 30.61%, with police in second highest referrer position (21.62%). These percentages have remained fairly consistent over the last three years. Note, as indicated by \* in the table, the source of the referral is collated only for those referrals that require assessment hence the numerical discrepancy.

Contact and Referrals	2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Denom	Value	Denom	Value	Denom	Value	Denom	Value	Denom	Value
<b>Number of initial contacts</b>		117188		125413		126153		153033		170200
<b>Number of referrals</b>		40014		44434		48826		60761		62952
<b>Referral source*: Individual</b>	1906	10.40%	2303	11.39%	2484	11.41%	2694	9.67%	2987	9.64%
<b>Education</b>	4432	24.10%	5007	24.76%	4230	19.43%	7468	26.82%	9482	30.61%
<b>Health Services</b>	3063	16.60%	3656	18.08%	4259	19.57%	5101	18.32%	5800	18.72%
<b>Housing</b>	188	1.00%	248	1.23%	181	0.83%	255	0.92%	240	0.77%
<b>Local Authority Services</b>	1661	9.00%	1600	7.91%	1856	8.53%	1980	7.11%	2110	6.81%
<b>Police</b>	4559	24.80%	4585	22.68%	5803	26.66%	6958	24.99%	6698	21.62%
<b>Other legal agency</b>	593	3.20%	696	3.44%	884	4.06%	1087	3.90%	1300	4.20%
<b>Other</b>	1248	6.80%	1262	6.24%	1166	5.36%	1418	5.09%	1480	4.78%
<b>Anonymous</b>	495	2.70%	531	2.63%	643	2.95%	633	2.27%	622	2.01%
<b>Unknown</b>	263	1.40%	332	1.64%	2	0.01%	2	0.01%	0	0.00%
<b>Not recorded</b>	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	258	1.19%	252	0.90%	260	0.84%

### 13. Section 47 (child protection) investigations and assessments

Section 47 and Assessments	2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	% of S47 going to conference	4317	40.60%	5035	31.40%	6048	28.01%	7948	20.55%	8439
Assessment Timeliness	18003	90.90%	19712	92.61%	15924	95.30%	21188	95.90%	22166	95.10%

13.1. With regards to assessments, as can be seen in the table above, the percentage of child protection investigations (section 47 investigations) which progress to an initial child protection conference over a year, has reduced slightly in comparison to 2021-22 although the number of investigations has increased. We remain satisfied with the consistent application of thresholds both within MASH and in districts teams which has been endorsed by the positive inspection by Ofsted less than a year ago. We are confident through our quality assurance and performance work that cases requiring an Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) are appropriately progressed.

13.2. The timeliness of completing a Child and Family Assessment (C&FA) since their introduction in 2014-15, is a very positive picture given the large number of assessments undertaken over the last year. This has not fallen from the 90s for the last four years and is higher than the majority of other local authorities in the region.

#### 14. Child Protection Plans (CPP)

14.1. As detailed above, work within the child protection planning process remains robust with numbers showing a decline from the end of March 2018, but an increase more recently due to the Covid pandemic. The previous positive reduction was considered to be as a result of more effective interventions with children and families at the Child in Need level, meaning less cases are escalated to a child protection plan because risks are addressed earlier. The increase is as a result of additional pressures on families as a result of Covid 19 due to the withdrawal of some services and leading to an increase in the complexity of cases and the cost of living crisis.

14.2. The number of children subject to a plan for neglect remains in the 50-70 percent (although a word of caution in that categorisation between neglect and emotional abuse can be variable, and neglect while present may not be the main presenting factor). Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) launched its Neglect Strategy in October 2016 and again in 2021, and this continues to help professionals better identify neglect.

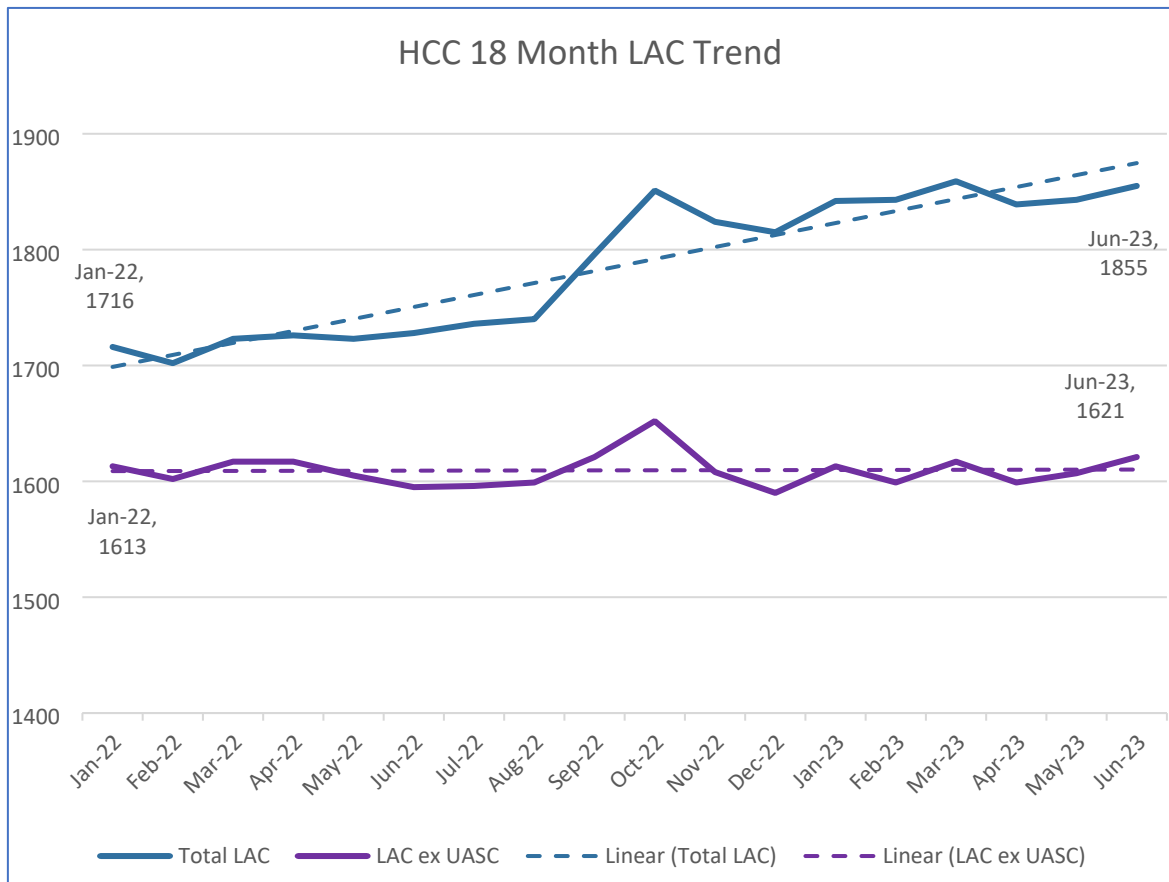
14.3. A low percentage of child protection plans are lasting beyond two years (which is good as it indicates proactive work) and relatively few require a repeat plan within two years. The number of timely visits made within the

required dates remains a significant strength of the service and reinforces that children are being seen and kept safe.

### 15. Full Time Children Looked After (CLA)

Full Time Children Looked After (CLA)	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
No of full time CLA	1339	1305	1440	1592	1664	1602	1656	1725	1855

15.1. With regards to children in care, the number has increased by 130 (7.5%) over the last 12 months, however this is due to an increase in Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC). There are 1,619 CLA when we exclude UASC. UASC now make up 12.9% (239) of the total cohort, whereas 18 months ago in March 2022 this was around 6% (106) of the cohort. It should be noted that the ability to keep children safely at home through high quality social work practice has meant that the underlying trend of CLA has remained broadly static.



15.2. The financial cost of CLA is significantly affecting the financial challenges the Council is facing.

15.3.

	Apr-Jun 2020	Jul-Sep 2020	Oct-Dec 2020	Jan-Mar 2021	Apr-Jun 2021	Jul-Sep 2021	Oct-Dec 2021	Jan-Mar 2022	Apr-Jun 2022	Jul-Sep 2022	Oct-Dec 2022	Jan-Mar 2023	Apr-Jun 2023
Entering full time care	158	166	152	157	156	155	192	136	173	191	182	195	151
Leaving full time care	107	136	184	139	176	134	147	113	154	141	160	148	147
Net increase	51	30	-32	18	-20	21	45	23	19	50	22	47	4
Of those new into care children PwP	25	23	24	27	20	13	16	8	5	24	27	25	17
Of those new UASC	0	20	4	7	3	7	46	18	49	45	65	35	7

15.4. It should be noted that there is of course significant churn throughout the year of the children in care population. Nationally the picture of demand continues to outstrip the supply of placements for children in care, and the costs of placements are rising significantly. The increasing complexity of the children coming into the care system has meant additional costs associated with their placements. There is no doubt that the paucity of mental health services for some children has led to them coming into the care system. The costs (or more accurately, the price) of those placements continue to rise year on year. Significant work is carried out by our Placement Commissioning team (such as working through framework contracts and contract specification) to ensure that Hampshire achieves the best value that it can in what is an 'overheated' market.

## 16. Hampshire UASC Arrivals

16.1. As at 30 June 2023 the total number of UASC (under 18 years) looked after by Hampshire is 227. (NB the figure as at October stands at over 284.)

UASC Arrivals	Apr-Jun 2020	Jul-Sep 2020	Oct-Dec 2020	Jan-Mar 2021	Apr-Jun 2021	Jul-Sep 2021	Oct-Dec 2021	Jan-Mar 2022	Apr-Jun 2022	Jul-Sep 2022	Oct-Dec 2022	Jan-Mar 2023	Apr-Jun 2023
Quarterly Data	0	18	4	7	3	7	46	18	49	46	65	35	7

<b>UASC Care Leavers</b>	Apr-Jun 2020	Jul-Sep 2020	Oct-Dec 2020	Jan-Mar 2021	Apr-Jun 2021	Jul-Sep 2021	Oct-Dec 2021	Jan-Mar 2022	Apr-Jun 2022	Jul-Sep 2022	Oct-Dec 2022	Jan-Mar 2023	Apr-Jun 2023
Period End	335	341	347	363	365	369	402	417	423	438	493	552	568

16.2. The table above shows the number of UASC Care Leavers at each period end. There has been a 69.6% increase in the number of UASC care leavers since June 2020 (233), which is to be expected given the age demographic of UASC arrivals with an average age of 17 years.

16.3. Since July 2016, Hampshire has been proactive in the National Transfer Scheme (NTS). The scheme became mandatory for Local Authority's in April 2021, with an expectation that we accept 0.1% of the total child population; for Hampshire, this totals 281. Hampshire continues to adopt a proactive, forward-leaning approach to receiving children through the scheme and responding to need. This has led to a review of the working practices, most notably, the creation of two Refugee Teams in February 2023. The Refugee Teams have been receiving case allocations from NTS and 'spontaneous arrivals' from around the county. Running in parallel with the recruitment of practitioners, the Teams have been transferring cases from district teams, a process which is nearing its conclusion.

16.4. In June 2023, our care extended to 225 separated children (U18) in Hampshire and 389 care leavers.

16.5. The majority of the children are placed in independent fostering agency (IFA) placements and a significant number are placed outside of Hampshire, in order that we can better meet their cultural and individual needs. The age range is from 11 years old and the significant majority are males. They will need to be looked after by the local authority until they reach 18 years and will then have care leaver status with continuing support from the local authority until they are 25 years of age. Whilst the Home Office provide set funding for UASC, an Association of Directors of Children's Services report evidenced that the funding only covers 50% of the actual costs to the local authority. It should also be noted that around 30% of UASC will not be given leave to remain in the UK and as such will have 'no recourse to public funds' requiring the local authority to entirely fund all of their living costs until they reach 25 years of age.

16.6. Given the rise in activity in respect of UASC a specialist UASC team has been set up, specifically to support UASC and former care leaver UASC in Hampshire.

## **Consultation and Equalities**

17. There is no adverse impact on equalities and no consultation is required.

## **Other Key Issues**



## **18. Recruitment and retention**

- 18.1. The recruitment and retention of social workers continues to be a key issue. This is a national challenge which is particularly acute in the South East region.
- 18.2. The retention of children's social workers is a significant challenge for Hampshire as it is all local authorities and can undermine the work being undertaken to bring new staff into the service. In the last 12 months, turnover amongst children's social workers has stabilised from an increase in the previous 12 months, remaining at 20.6%. This challenge is shared by other local authorities and reflects changes in the wider recruitment market following the pandemic.
- 18.3. The Independent Review of Children's Social Care has afforded us the opportunity to employ and use alternatively qualified professionals to support children and families. We have introduced the role of Family Practitioners who are differently qualified case-holding professionals in our statutory teams. We have had some success in recruiting differently qualified professionals, as evidenced with the Intensive Workers. This change will increase the capacity of our Qualified Social Workers across our teams.
- 18.4. There is a proactive recruitment strategy in place which utilises a positive partnership with Community Care, through regular national and local marketing targeted campaigns and advertisements. This is alongside events such as Social Work in the South, and Community Care Live.
- 18.5. We are focussing on direct recruitment of graduates from universities to our highly regarded newly qualified social worker programme, utilising the National Step Up to Social Work Programme and over the last three years have successfully supported staff through the Social Work Apprenticeship programme, with the first cohort graduating in August 2022. When this scheme began it was fairly unique, but most local authorities now offer similar schemes, which means it is now more difficult to recruit to cohorts.
- 18.6. Given the challenges in recruitment and retention, there is a need to be more ambitious in growing our own social workers. There is a range of highly skilled and experienced differently qualified workers currently employed within the department. We have increased our intake to the apprenticeship scheme from 10 to 30 per year.
- 18.7. We have increased our activity in overseas recruitment utilising an employment agency to assist in the recruitment of 25 social workers over the last year and a further 25 over the coming year.

## **19. Transforming Social Care (TSC) in Hampshire**

- 19.1. Safeguarding Reports have provided an overview of what has TSC has achieved within phases 1 and 2.
- 19.2. TSC phase 3 has supported the delivery of a new system to improve the quality and consistency of Personal Education Plans (PEPs), and has undertaken several service reviews, including: Family Time Service, Virtual

School, Virtual College, Volunteers Service and completed a project with the Family Connections Service.

- 19.3. TSC is focusing resource on a range of workstreams, including extending the scope and range of services delivered through the Family Help model, continuing the development of the Specialist Intensive Worker Hubs, and to ensure we are providing efficient and effective support to meet the needs of Children with Disabilities.
- 19.4. Responding to the recommendations outlined in the Care Review, TSC is leading on the development of the new Family Help model. Family Help will bring together a range of services, delivered within the community, to families across both targeted early help and children in need. The new model is set to launch in January 2024. Further detail on this transformation project can be seen below:

## **Family Help**

- 19.5. A key element within The Independent Review of Children's Social Care, and supported in the government paper 'Stable Homes, Built on Love', was the introduction of the 'Family Help' model. This model brings together a range of services delivered to families across both targeted early help and children in need.
- 19.6. The vision for Family Help is for new local, community-based teams. These teams will be sited within the community they support which will enable and facilitate easier and quicker access to services, therefore meeting the family's needs as early as possible.
- 19.7. For Hampshire this initially means that our Family Support Service and Childrens Assessment and Safeguarding Teams will be brought together. The new Family Help model will be implemented in Hampshire from January 2024.

Hampshire's model is being developed within a phased and iterative approach:

**Phase 1.1** – The introduction in January 2023 of a new differently qualified case holding role, that of the Family Practitioner. These workers have initially been recruited in CAST and will transition into the new Family Help teams in January 2024.

**Phase 1.2** - Has focused on the development of Family Help teams; there will be 34 in total, each geographically sited to cover specific wards within districts. The aligned of these teams within specific areas will enable the delivery of local support as prescribed in the government paper 'Stable Homes Built on Love'.

- 19.8. The vision is to further develop the model and to bring other social care teams and services together into wider Family Help service, creating a seamless journey for families as their needs and levels of risks change.

19.9. The new model is being developed on the basis that there will be positive impacts and outcomes for children and their families:

- More children remain safely at home.
- Families will receive the right support, by the right professional for the right amount of time.
- Families will experience fewer transition points with professionals 'stepping into' a family as needs require rather than moving a family onto a new team or service.
- Families will be able to access services more easily as they will be within their local community, ultimately delivered through community hubs with partners which will facilitate the de-stigmatisation of families seeking support.

## 20. Youth Justice Service

20.1. During the last year Hampshire Youth Justice Service (HYJS) has continued to deliver youth justice and youth crime prevention to the children of Hampshire.

20.2. Progress against last year's plan is as follows:

- Developing further the participation of children in our service.
- Ensuring all staff have an awareness of the actions they need to take to address any disproportionate representation of children from other minority ethnic groups.
- Reducing the number of first-time entrants to the criminal justice system to its lowest point ever.
- Developed practice in relation to the assessment of risk of harm to others.

21. The delivery plan for 2023/24 includes:

- Continuing to build on progress this year in the participation of children in Youth Justice.
- In partnership, tackling serious youth violence.
- Continuing to develop Youth Diversionary activity.
- Widen our work on disproportionality to include other diverse groups.

## 22. Sector Led Improvement

22.1. For many years, Hampshire has a strong reputation for being a leading provider of sector led social work improvement, support and advice to other local authorities across the region, nationally and internationally. This work

is commissioned from three main sources. Hampshire successfully bid to be a part of the Department for Education's Sector Led Improvement Programme (SLIP) from 2021-24, one of a handful of local authorities nationally providing social work improvement advice and expertise. Our SLIP work over this past year has supported improvement in several authorities including Buckinghamshire, West Sussex, Southampton (all of whom now have improved Ofsted inspection ratings), Reading and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP). Secondly, Hampshire coordinates and leads the sector led improvement peer support improvement work through the South East Sector Led Improvement Partnership (SESLIP), comprising all nineteen authorities in the south east. In addition to the SLIP and SESLIP work, Hampshire has continued to work with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to undertake some specific social work improvement support with the British Overseas Territories. Currently this work is ongoing with St Helena, Ascension Island and Tristan da Cunha.

22.2. Given the increased demand in Hampshire Children's Services which reflects the increase nationally, careful consideration will need to be given to our future support of other Local Authorities to ensure that it does not adversely impact on the children of Hampshire. A small central team of social work managers has been established with the income from this work, to support capacity in this area. As with all work undertaken in other authorities, there is always positive learning gained to further improve services in Hampshire. The benefits to Hampshire are significant and enable both staff and services in Hampshire to be continuously improved. Ofsted commented in 2019 that, 'Leaders recognise the benefits that come from being an improvement partner, not only in creating income, but also in the learning that is gained from other local authorities and from keeping its own staff stimulated and stretched'

## **Future Challenges and Operational Priorities**

23. The future challenges and priorities can be summarised as follows (this is not an exhaustive list and the history of this type of work is that new priorities will continue to emerge in much the same as child exploitation and county lines):

23.1. The full long-term impact of the pandemic is not yet known. Children's social care have seen a sustained increase in referrals over the last 2 years of over 30% compared to pre-pandemic levels. It is not yet known how long that will continue but experience shows us this might now be the new normal level of demand going forward. At this stage the increase in demand has not led to a similar increase in the numbers of children coming into care due to the effective practice of our front-line staff and the success of our transformation activity.

23.2. The costs associated with the placements for looked after children will continue to be a significant pressure for the County Council. Significant additional corporate funding has already been given to the department, but as demand increases and the supply of placements comes under further

pressure, inevitably costs will rise. Our Modernising Placements Programme aims to increase our numbers of Hampshire County Council foster carers, thereby reducing costs in the longer term.

- 23.3. It should be noted that the challenges faced within the placement market are significant. There are well acknowledged shortfalls in available beds both within the secure welfare estate and in Tier 4 psychiatric provision which compound the issue for social care. In terms of residential provision, demand is outstripping current supply which is resulting in escalating pricing and providers able to select from a multitude of referrals for each available bed, with a local provider referencing over 100 referrals per available bed. The Competitions and Market Authority report identifies the inflated profit margins within external placement suppliers. Hampshire is fortunate to have in house provision, which regularly supports the most hard to place young people but the placements issue remains a significant challenge.
- 23.4. It is essential that our transformation work continues at pace to keep more children at home, where it is safe and appropriate to do so. Transforming children's social care will deliver a modern social work service fit for the future challenges over the next decade. Where children do come into care, our Modernising Placements Programme, will ensure children have the right placement to meet their needs.
- 23.5. Child exploitation, in all its forms, continues to be an increasing area of work, particularly the 'County Lines' issues. Although Hampshire is well placed to meet these challenges, it is important that we remain vigilant and responsive, working in tandem with partners to protect children.
- 23.6. The recruitment and retention of social workers will continue to need to be addressed.

## **Climate Change Impact Assessment**

24. Hampshire County Council utilises two decision-making tools to assess the carbon emissions and resilience impacts of its projects and decisions. These tools provide a clear, robust, and transparent way of assessing how projects, policies and initiatives contribute towards the County Council's climate change targets of being carbon neutral and resilient to the impacts of a 2°C temperature rise by 2050. This process ensures that climate change considerations are built into everything the Authority does.
25. **Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation.** The carbon mitigation and climate change adaptation tools were not applicable because this report is to provide details of Children's Services safeguarding activity and does not recommend changes or require any decisions which would have any climate change considerations. However, this does link to other strategic priorities as listed in the relevant section at the end of the document. Children's Services are aware of the importance of climate change and plan for this in new projects.

26. **Carbon Mitigation.** The carbon mitigation and climate change adaptation tools were not applicable because this report is to provide details of the contribution of Children's Services safeguarding activity and does not recommend changes or require any decisions which would have any climate change considerations. This report is not relevant as above. Children's Services regularly feedback to the Corporate Climate Change Action Plan.

## **Conclusions**

27. Throughout 2022/23 there continued to be a highly effective strategic response to the safeguarding of vulnerable children and a robust operational response, tested via external validation from the Ofsted inspection in November 2021 and February 2022.

**REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:  
Links to the Strategic Plan**

<b>Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:</b>	Yes
<b>People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:</b>	Yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:</b>	No
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:</b>	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.)

Document

Location

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 is for Cabinet to note Hampshire County Council's progress and performance with regards to safeguarding vulnerable children. As such it creates no disadvantage or inequality and the activity described serves to reduce inequality for some of the county's most vulnerable children.