



Hampshire
County Council

Annual Safeguarding Report Children Services 2019-20

Summary

Agenda

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Purpose and Background

To provide an update to Cabinet on safeguarding children activity within Children Services during 2019 and up to September 2020.

The Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services report (ILAC April/May 2019) was **intrinsically rooted** in safeguarding and **fully tested** all aspects of Hampshire's safeguarding practice.

"Children Services in Hampshire are **outstanding**. Since the last full inspection in 2014, the director and his leadership team have **resolutely focused on continuing to improve** the help, care and protection provided to children."

"Children in need of help or protection benefit **from high-quality services that improve their lives**, whatever the level of need"

"When children need protection, **swift, proportionate and authoritative** action is taken **during and outside office hours.**"



Key Developments



Hampshire
County Council

Providing an outstanding service to children and families



Covid-19 – Business as usual but doing things differently

Children's Services respond quickly, communicate change and embrace new innovative ways of working.

Statutory timescales for visits and meetings remain the same.



Guidance provided for visits/meetings with children and professionals.

Ensuring we see children and families through use of technology where safe and appropriate.



Face to face visits for urgent child protection work, whilst keeping our staff safe.

Flexible staffing in the residential homes to ensure minimum staffing levels at Swanwick Lodge were maintained.



2 open homes were closed, utilising additional resource for deployment.

Child Exploitation

The reports reference of exploitation includes the following risk areas; child sexual exploitation (CSE), online exploitation, criminal exploitation (CCE) including '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.

'County lines' remains an increasing concern for Hampshire Children's Services and all agencies concerned with children in the area.

This activity involves child criminal exploitation as criminal gangs **use children and vulnerable adults to move drugs and money.**

Gangs establish a local base or can send adults into a local area, who **actively recruit vulnerable children.**

- ✓ Specialist work is undertaken by the pan-Hampshire Police Missing team and the Hampshire Children's Services specialist Willow team.
- ✓ Together with Hampshire Constabulary there is a **coordinated deployment of specialist resources** to identify networks, ensuring the **safeguarding of the most vulnerable children** and the **disruption of county lines activity.**

Children who go missing

Children who go missing from home or care, shows a **continued improving position.**



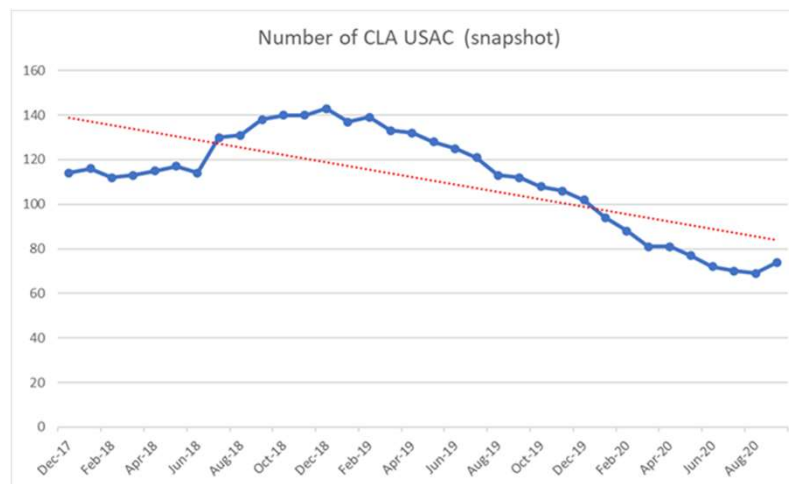
Fewer children are going missing.

There is a **robust and effective response** from children's Services and Hampshire Constabulary when they do go missing.

District teams track and risk assess these children to **ensure appropriate safeguards** are in place and **prevent repeat occurrences.**

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)

- ✓ Hampshire has been one of the **strongest supporters** of the **National Transfer Scheme**.
- ✓ Hampshire Children's Services supported Kent during Summer 2020 when they ceased to fulfil their statutory duty, due to no placements and no staff to service the increasing demand.
Social workers assessed and assisted in onward placements with other local authorities for 12 UASC.
- ✓ The Home office have begun a **national consultation** of the future of the National Transfer Scheme. Hampshire Children's Services has responded with a **strong view** for the scheme **to be mandatory for all local authorities and must be funded properly.**



- As of 30 September 2020 the **total number of UASC (under 18 years)** looked after by Hampshire is **74**.
- The number rises and falls because when UASC become 18 years of age they do not count against the 0.07% target as they become care leavers.
- **0.07% equates to 192 for Hampshire.**

- The table below sets out the **number of care leavers who were previously UASC**.
- The table evidences that there **has been a 145% increase in the number of UASC care leavers since June 2017**, which is to be expected given the age demographic of arrivals, typically 16/17 year olds.

UASC Care Leavers	Jun-2017	Sep-2017	Dec-2017	Mar-2018	Jun-2018	Sep-2018	Dec-2018	Mar-2019	Jun-2019	Sep-2019	Dec-2019	Mar-2020	Jun-2020
Period End	137	148	171	246	247	270	294	308	328	329	327	334	335



Performance and Activity Levels

Continuing increase in demand

Demand, evidenced in contacts, referrals and safeguarding activity, continues to be high.

Post lockdown 1.0 has seen a 15% increase over and above what would be expected.

Child and Family Assessments.

- The timeliness of completing a Child and Family Assessment is a **very positive picture**.
- **Timeliness has not fallen from the high 80s for the last five years** and is higher than the majority of other local authorities in the region.

Assessments	2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		2018-19		2019-20	
C&FA Timeliness	16931	88.30%	19841	89.60%	18496	87.90%	18003	90.90%	19712	92.61%

Child Protection Plans.

- The **positive reduction** is considered to be **as a result of more effective interventions with children and families at the Child in Need level**.
- Note: During and **post lockdown numbers** of children on a child protection plan **have started to increase**.
- A **low percentage** of child protection plans are lasting beyond two years **indicating proactive work**.
- **Relatively few** require a repeat plan **within two years**.

Child Protection Plans (CPP) and visits	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
No of children on CPP	1441	1263	1293	1097	938

Full Time Looked After Children.

- 2019/20 initially saw a **4% (62) decrease**, against a **national increase** of 4%.
- Since lockdown and as of September 20 there has been an **increase of 4%**.

Children Looked After (LAC)	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21 Q1 Apr-Jun
No of full time LAC	1267	1339	1305	1440	1592	1664	1602	1640



Quality Assurance with increasing demand

The Children & Families branch has a **robust and well established quality assurance framework** in place enabling the department to make sure that quality standards are maintained.



A detailed case file auditing programme, audits circa 1000 cases during the year (10% of casework)



'Effective quality assurance and performance systems support leaders to maintain strong oversight of practice' (Ofsted 2019)



Local Developments

Recruitment and Sector Led Improvement

Recruitment:

- ✓ Nationally vacancy rates continue to be around 20%.
- ✓ Vacancy rates in Hampshire are around 13%, following significant work to improve recruitment and retention.
- ✓ Three cohorts of Newly Qualified Social Workers are joining Hampshire during this Autumn.
- ✓ We aim to reduce vacancy rates to 10% or less by the end of 2020.

Sector Led Improvement Work:

Hampshire Children's Services are a Partner in Practice with the Department for Education and we currently provide improvement support and advice to 3 other local authorities.

Buckinghamshire	West Sussex	Isle of Wight
Hampshire's Chief Executive chairs Buckinghamshire's Children's Improvement Board. Hampshire have been supporting since 2018, with a further 87 days agreed in 20/21.	Hampshire has provided extensive support since 2019 across all service areas, as West Sussex plan to establish a Trust model.	The formal strategic partnership has been extended to 2023. ILAC judged IOW as 'Good' in 2018, after being judged 'Inadequate' in 2012.

'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.' (Ofsted)

Transforming Social Care

We will continue to push harder and be ground-breaking in our approach

“A highly successful large-scale transformation programme has included the creation of additional social work posts and an innovative pathway of support for newly qualified social workers. The implementation of children’s assessment and safeguarding teams (CAST) and specialist multi-disciplinary teams supports an increasingly holistic approach to children’s needs...” (Ofsted)

‘The appointment of personal assistants to support social workers, combined with improved technology and the implementation of the strengths- based social work model, the Hampshire Approach’, have equipped social workers with the tools, skills and time to work directly with children and families. Consequently, children’s needs are better understood, intervention is purposeful, and children and families are being helped to become resilient’. (Ofsted)



Slide 15

HS2 need to expand the acronyms
How, Stephanie, 06/11/2020

Modernising Placements Programme

The aim of this transformation programme is to develop a continuum of care which can provide **the right accommodation and support at the right time** for our Looked After Children in Hampshire.

Approaches to care need to be more fluid, **offering different pathways to children** at various points in their childhood **that pull on the different skills and experiences of carers and staff** in all settings **who share a common understanding and language around trauma.**

The programme objectives are to:

- Increase the number of in-house foster carers in Hampshire
- Ensure that we have sufficient placement opportunities that are able to offer high quality, flexible, stable and local support to meet the needs of our young people
- Ensure that there is equivalency and parity of esteem across the different care environments
- Maximise in house children's homes occupancy



Future Challenges and Operational Priorities

Hampshire Children's Services is well placed to meet these challenges which will be key areas of focus over the next year

- Child exploitation continues to be an increasing area of work, particularly 'county lines'.
- It is important that we remain vigilant and responsive, working in tandem with partners to protect children.

- The costs of placements for looked after children will continue to be a significant pressure for the County Council.
- Additional corporate funding has already been given to the department. But, inevitably costs will rise as demand increases and the supply of placements comes under further pressure.

✓ Continue to meet the increasing demands for children's social care services.

✓ Maintain operational effectiveness of the service throughout the pandemic.

✓ Continue to address recruitment and retention of social workers.

✓ New IT system to be in place late 2021, which will free up social work capacity and reduce administration.

Thank you
Any Questions?