

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Report

<b>Committee:</b>	Corporate Parenting Board
<b>Date:</b>	5 October 2022
<b>Title:</b>	Hampshire Approach update
<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 the Corporate Parenting Board with an overview of the Hampshire Approach practice framework, plans for future development and its impact on children in care.

#### Recommendation

2. That the Corporate Parenting Board notes 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 in our care.

#### 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 guides how we work with children, families, partners and each other. It is a whole system approach which at its core builds on the strengths within a family to meet the needs of their children.
10. We use a range of tools and interventions to equip the family to build on their strengths and respond to concerns and risks themselves. We draw on their wider support network to make sure change lasts.
11. The principles which underpin the Approach are:
  - Developing positive relationships with families is the heart of what we do
  - Everyone has strengths, and we get the best from each other when we recognise and build on those strengths
  - In listening, respecting and working together with the child, their family and those that have a responsibility to them
  - That working to support the whole family will achieve the best outcomes for the child in the long term
  - That working in this way enables us to identify, respond to and manage risk safely.
12. These principles underpin our evolving culture and also filter down through our processes, documents and direct work. The following provides an example of what this change looks like in practice for our children and families:

<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**

13. 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 (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) for example.
14. 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.

15. We regularly peer review and audit practice to understand how well the Approach is being embedded. A stock-take was undertaken 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.

### **Plans for future development**

16. Over the next year the Hampshire Approach development will be managed by the Service Improvement team, under the governance of a new Hampshire Approach Development Group.

17. Phase 1 is to better 'define and market' the Approach. This will include creating resources for families to better describe what their experience will be when working with Children's Services.

18. Phase 2 is to build on our existing resources and develop further practitioner guidance. A suite of 'one-minute guides' will be created for teams so provide a consistent introduction to the Hampshire Approach, training and tools – this will be an invaluable resource for new starters and refreshers. More detailed guidance will be produced for more complex areas of the service. In addition direct work tools will be collated and created to support practitioners in their work with children and families.

19. Phase 3 is to make resources more easily accessible for staff. This includes updating the online 'toolkit' which contains all guidance tools and resources for C&F Branch. The new 'Resource Library' will have an enhanced search function and contents which will save staff time as they search for tools to support their work.

20. Phase 4 will review the training offer to staff, making the training offer more widely understood and accessible, from new starters to more experienced practitioners.

### **Impact on children in our care**

21. 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.**
22. 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.
23. 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**

24. 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.
25. The next phase of development will lead to a more comprehensive range of tools, resources and guidance for practitioners, and also information for families and partners.
26. The Hampshire Approach is already positively impacting children in care and will continue to benefit them as the approach develops.

## 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:	Yes
<b>OR</b>	
This proposal does not link to the Strategic Plan but, nevertheless, requires a decision because:	

### 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:

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*