



Meeting: Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date/Time: Monday, 3 November 2014 at 2.00 pm

Location: Sparkenhoe Committee Room, County Hall, Glenfield

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REMINDER: AN ALL MEMBER BRIEFING ON SCHOOL ADMISSIONS AND SCHOOL APPEALS WILL BE HELD ON THE MORNING OF THIS MEETING AT 10.00AM IN SPARKENHOE ROOM.

Membership

Mr. L. Spence CC (Chairman)

Mr. J. Kaufman CC Mr. T. J. Pendleton CC
Ms. K. J. Knaggs CC Mr. J. Perry
Mr. P. G. Lewis CC Mrs. C. M. Radford CC
Mr B. Monaghan Mr. E. D. Snartt CC
Mr. A. E. Pearson CC Mr. G. Welsh CC

Please note: this meeting will be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's web site at <http://www.leics.gov.uk/webcast>
– Notices will be on display at the meeting explaining the arrangements.

AGENDA

<u>Item</u>	<u>Report by</u>
1. Minutes of the meeting held on 1 September 2014.	(Pages 5 - 12)
2. Question Time.	
3. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).	
4. To advise of any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent elsewhere on the agenda.	
5. Declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.	



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| 6. | Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16. | | |
| 7. | Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36. | | |
| 8. | Management of School Admissions and Appeals in Leicestershire | Director of Children and Family Services | (Pages 13 - 36) |
| 9. | Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officers 2013/14. | Director of Children and Family Services | (Pages 37 - 96) |
| 10. | Local Safeguarding Children Board/Safeguarding Adult Board Annual Report 2013/14 | Director of Children and Family Services | (Pages 97 - 116) |
| 11. | Action Taken Since the Publication of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham. | Director of Children and Family Services | (Pages 117 - 128) |
| 12. | Signs of Safety and Leicestershire's Growing Safety Strategy. | Director of Children and Family Services | (Pages 129 - 140) |
| 13. | School Performance and Overview of Outcomes in Key Stage Tests and Examinations. | Director of Children and Family Services | (Pages 141 - 146) |
| 14. | Quarter 2 Performance Report 2014/15. | Chief Executive and Director of Children and Family Services | (Pages 147 - 154) |
| 15. | MTFS Savings and the Education Psychology Service. | Director of Children and Family Services | (Pages 155 - 190) |
| 16. | Information Item: Progress on the remodelling of the Fostering Services. | Director of Children and Family Services | (Pages 191 - 194) |
| 17. | Information Item: Assessment of Key Themes from Ofsted Single Inspection. | Director of Children and Family Services | (Pages 195 - 200) |
| 18. | Date of next meeting. | | |

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to take place on 19 January 2015.

19. Any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent.

QUESTIONING BY MEMBERS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Members serving on Overview and Scrutiny have a key role in providing constructive yet robust challenge to proposals put forward by the Cabinet and Officers. One of the most important skills is the ability to extract information by means of questions so that it can help inform comments and recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny bodies.

Members clearly cannot be expected to be experts in every topic under scrutiny and nor is there an expectation that they so be. Asking questions of 'experts' can be difficult and intimidating but often posing questions from a lay perspective would allow members to obtain a better perspective and understanding of the issue at hand.

Set out below are some key questions members may consider asking when considering reports on particular issues. The list of questions is not intended as a comprehensive list but as a general guide. Depending on the issue under consideration there may be specific questions members may wish to ask.

Key Questions:

- Why are we doing this?
- Why do we have to offer this service?
- How does this fit in with the Council's priorities?
- Which of our key partners are involved? Do they share the objectives and is the service to be joined up?
- Who is providing this service and why have we chosen this approach? What other options were considered and why were these discarded?
- Who has been consulted and what has the response been? How, if at all, have their views been taken into account in this proposal?

If it is a new service:

- Who are the main beneficiaries of the service? (could be a particular group or an area)
- What difference will providing this service make to them – What will be different and how will we know if we have succeeded?
- How much will it cost and how is it to be funded?
- What are the risks to the successful delivery of the service?

If it is a reduction in an existing service:

- Which groups are affected? Is the impact greater on any particular group and, if so, which group and what plans do you have to help mitigate the impact?
- When are the proposals to be implemented and do you have any transitional arrangements for those who will no longer receive the service?
- What savings do you expect to generate and what was expected in the budget? Are there any redundancies?
- What are the risks of not delivering as intended? If this happens, what contingency measures have you in place?

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Minutes of a meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Monday, 1 September 2014.

PRESENT

Mr. L. Spence CC (in the Chair)

Mr. J. Kaufman CC	Mrs. C. M. Radford CC
Mr. P. G. Lewis CC	Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC
Mr B. Monaghan	Mr. E. D. Snartt CC
Mr. T. J. Pendleton CC	Mr. G. Welsh CC
Mr. J. Perry	

15. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2014 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

16. Question Time.

The Chief Executive reported that one question had been received under Standing Order 35.

Mr Richard Carter, a resident asked the following question:

“Background

Planning Officers were approached in July 2013 to approve an application from Officers responsible for education, to extend for a further 5 years the renewal of permissions for the Temporary Classrooms at Cossington Primary School.

The School continued to operate from August 2013 without planning approval. The Development Control and Regulatory Board considered the request in February 2014, and collectively objected to the application, and only gave approval for a one year extension to expire in July 2015.

The Board also required further information to be presented to them in February 2015.

Officers were informed that the Board were not presently minded to extend any further temporary permissions for these classrooms.

Question

In view of the normal lengthy timescales required to build/extend/develop School premises, I would ask what action/decisions/progress has been made to date?”

Mr Spence CC replied as follows:

“No decisions have been taken to date regarding the replacement of the mobiles with a permanent extension to the school buildings. However, it is clear from forecasts of pupil numbers that the demand for places at the school is predicted to remain high in future years. The current mobile classrooms form a significant contribution towards the overall provision of floor space at the school, it is therefore expected that any permanent extension would be of a similar size.

The planning consent for the modular classrooms and hall at the School is due to expire at the end of July 2015 and it is a condition of that planning consent that a report be submitted to the County Council's Development Control and Regulatory Board (DCRB) six months prior to that date i.e January 2015, to advise on the progress made with the provision of permanent accommodation at the school site. In this context, discussions will be taking place with the Governors and Head Teacher of the School early in the Autumn term regarding the options available.”

Mr Carter asked the following supplementary question:

“Why was this meeting not held a year or even six months ago when it could have triggered a series of procedural responses concerning budgets, draft strategy, community consultations, potential academy status, site surveys, highway provision, under provision in labour of catchment and all the necessary steps needed to be taken to manage the steps in a timely fashion?”

The Director of Children and Family Services, on behalf of the Chairman replied as follows:

Mr Carter was thanked for bringing the issue to the Director's attention. It was the Director's understanding that there was time to manage this and that she would ensure that discussions commenced with the headteacher of the School early during the autumn term. The department would then take the appropriate action in good time to make sure that the children in Cossington had access to the facilities that were required on an ongoing basis.

The Director was happy to provide to provide further information to Mr Carter about the progress made if required.

17. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

18. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

19. Declarations of interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

Mr D. Snartt CC, Mr L. Spence CC, Mr G. Welsh CC, Mr J. Perry and Mr B. Monaghan declared personal interests in matters relating to schools, as they had family members who taught in Leicestershire.

Mr L. Spence CC indicated that, whilst this did not amount to an interest to be declared at this meeting, he felt it relevant to report that he sometimes worked for an academy within the County.

20. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

There were no declarations of the party whip.

21. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.

The Chief Executive reported that no petitions had been received under Standing Order 36.

22. Quarter 1 2014-15 Performance Report

The Committee considered a joint report of the Chief Executive and Director of Children and Family Services which presented an update of Children and Family Services performance through to the end of quarter 1 2014/15. A copy of the report, marked 'agenda item 8', is filed with these notes.

Arising from discussion the following points were noted:-

- i) That this was the first quarterly performance report to include progress with regard to Supporting Leicestershire Families following its integration into the Service's area of work. It was pleasing to note that all families participating in the first stage of the programme had been successfully turned around and that phase 2 was now being implemented;
- ii) Educational attainment for key stage 1 was improving and now close to the top performance quartile, with improvement also being shown in key stage 2 which was above the national average;
- iii) A number of long term foster carers had retired during the last year which had led to an increase in the number of children with three or more fostering placements during the year, or in the same placement for over two years, or placed for adoption. Particular steps were being taken to address this through the process for remodelling social care in order to bring back up the number of foster carers in future years;
- iv) Whilst it was pleasing to note the percentage of schools being rated good or outstanding had climbed to 83.2%, it was noted that the number of special schools rated good or outstanding had fallen. The Director reported that this fall related to a specific residential element of a school which had now been addressed, with the expectation that the school's next inspection would restore its previous OFSTED rating;
- v) Whilst secondary school persistent absence rates of below 85% attendance had reduced during the quarter, the Service continued to work with behaviour

partnerships, with academies and to raise the issue more generally through the Leicestershire Educational Excellence partnership to improve this further.

RESOLVED:

- a) That quarter 1 performance be noted; and
- b) That officers be requested to bring a report to the next meeting of the Committee setting out progress in remodelling the foster caring service.

23. Reform of SEN and Disability.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services which provided information about the Government's reform of Special Educational Needs and Disability Services (SEND) and Leicestershire County Council's response to the required changes. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 9', is filed with these minutes.

The Director explained that the implementation of SEND reform was at the beginning of a three year programme of work which would introduce both cultural and system change both within the County Council and in its partnership working practices.

The Director also reported that the Department for Education, in visiting the Service during the previous week, had provided very positive feedback regarding the County Council's development of its local SEND offer and its integration into the wider strategy for change within the Authority and engagement with local partners and families.

Arising from discussion it was noted that:-

- i) Although there was multi-agency responsibility for implementing the change required, accountability lay with the Director of Children and Family Services and the Lead Member for Children and Families, with progress updates to be provided to the Committee on a regular basis;
- ii) The collective relationship between Children's and Adults Social Care Services, the health sector and parents in whole life planning had improved significantly over the last 18 months allowing consideration at an early age into what a child's life would be like as an adult, their likely health needs and therefore an ability to plan their long term pathways appropriately to meet required needs and outcomes;
- iii) The financial spend on out of county SEND placements had increased since 2013. Costs varied from case to case based on individual needs within the independent/non maintained sector. In county provision continued to be developed but currently demand outstripped supply, with the number of SEND statements rising, particularly those on the autistic spectrum;
- iv) By 2018, all 2800 children who were the subject of SEN statements would be moved to Education, Care and Health (EHC) plans. Initially officers would focus on children moving schools and in transition from primary to middle and upper schools, with those children also requiring early conversion due to particular needs being moved as well;

- v) The transfer rate to EHC plans were likely to be 30 per week between 2014 and 2018, utilising the Capita One system that was also being used by an number of other authorities.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the contents of the report be noted; and
- b) That officers be requested to bring a progress report to the Committee in 12 months setting out how the County Council's response to reform of Special Educational Needs and Disability Services is embedding itself both within the organisation and in joint commissioning arrangements with health partners.

24. Service Developments and Plans to Meet MTFS Savings.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services which detailed the planned programme of departmental savings across Children and Family Services forming part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy 2013/14 – 2017/18 and information about the Council's Transformation Programme including where the Service's required MTFS savings would fit within that. A copy of the report, marked 'agenda item 10', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following principal points were noted:-

- i) A number of the separate savings areas for the Children and Families Service had been brought together to create four transformation projects, within the wider context of the County Council's 24 projects, which would remodel:
 - a. children's social care;
 - b. early help services;
 - c. special educational needs and disability services; and
 - d. education services.
- ii) The context of the programme would be set within a stable vision and mission, with the Service continuing to meet its statutory obligations whilst promoting independence and collaboration through partnerships and local integration of services through a planned and effective commissioning approach, in order to provide service users with the right help at the right time,
- iii) With an increasing difficulty in achieving further efficiency or savings within statutory areas, the 30% of departmental budget currently spent on non statutory early help services would need to be the focus of future savings in order to meet MTFS targets;
- iv) Engagement of partners and providers such as Health, the Police, District Councils, Schools and other learning providers likely to be affected in those service areas had already begun, as had engagement with parents, young people and families, which would continue as the Service, having already saved £4m in the current MTFS, formulated its remaining £9.84m savings required between 2015 and 18;
- v) Members noted that it was clear that further savings would be required for at least 2018/19 as well, with the Government continuing its austerity programme in the public sector;

- vi) In respect of the transformation project to remodel children's social care, the Director reassured members that First Response measures to deal with specialist intervention and safeguarding would continue to be delivered at the right time and by the right provider in line with statutory requirements. It was hoped that by improving the way in which early help was delivered, such as through the Supporting Leicestershire Families (SLF) programme, that demand for high cost intervention services would be reduced;
- vii) In noting the ongoing SLF programme was not funded in the current MTFs, the programme needed to be aligned better with other services in order to provide for management level savings. A cost benefit analysis would also be undertaken with all partners to ensure that those funding the programme were properly recompensed by partners achieving a return on that investment through either reduced actual demand or reduced levels of future demand that would have arisen;
- viii) Children's Centres remained a statutory responsibility and whilst there were no current plans to close any of the Centres, innovative ways would need to be explored to ensure full and thriving participation within available budgets;
- ix) The Service was engaging with schools to see where the co-commissioning of staff may be appropriate in order to use budgets more effectively and to work together in other areas through the LEEP;
- x) The Scrutiny Committee would receive further reports on progress in respect of each of the four transformation projects at regular intervals as they progressed.

RESOLVED:

That the implications of the planned programme of departmental savings across Children and Family Services, required as part of the County Council's MTFs and Transformation Programme, be noted.

25. Children's Social Care Panel.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services which provided a narrative commentary to accompany the structure chart for the new children's social care governance arrangements. A copy of the report, marked 'agenda item 11', is filed with these minutes.

The Committee welcomed the new structure, noting the high level of involvement between the Lead Member, officers and Group spokesmen in ensuring the continuity of oversight of process, transparency and accountability of children's social care services, following legislative and structural changes both nationally and locally, in order to deliver the best outcomes for young people.

RESOLVED:

That the new governance arrangements for children's social care be noted.

26. Date of next meeting.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday 3 November 2014 at 2.00 pm.

2.00 - 3.45 pm
01 September 2014

CHAIRMAN

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CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 3
NOVEMBER 2014

MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL ADMISSIONS AND APPEALS IN
LEICESTERSHIRE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee of:
 - (a) the current arrangements and performance data relative to the management of admissions and appeals in Leicestershire maintained schools and academies;
 - (b) the current position regarding consultation on the draft strategy for the planning of school and other educational places;
 - (c) the risks, challenges and priorities in relation to the future allocation of school places.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Education Act 1996 places a statutory duty on the Local Authority (LA) to:
 - (a) Ensure a sufficient supply of school places with a view to securing diversity of provision and increasing opportunities for parental choice;
 - (b) Exercise its education functions with a view to promoting high standards;
3. More specifically, the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (SSFA 1998), outlines through the associated School Admissions Code, the statutory responsibilities on LA's in terms of admissions and appeals.
4. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee has not previously considered the impact to school admissions and appeals, that arise as a consequence to changes to the educational environment and associated legislation, and particularly the introduction of academies.

Background

5. The statutory duty placed on the Council requires that sufficient school places are available within its area for every child of school age whose parents wish them to have one. This requires that we are able to promote diversity, parental choice and high quality educational standards; to ensure fair access to educational opportunity; and to help fulfil every child's educational potential.

6. All local authorities must determine their admission arrangements annually. Where changes are proposed to admission arrangements, the admission authority must first publicly consult on those arrangements. If no changes are made to admission arrangements, they must be consulted on at least every 7 years. The consultation must run between 1 November and 1 March of the year for a minimum period of eight weeks. However the Department for Education (DfE) has recently closed its consultation on the current School Admissions Codes, in which it proposes to bring forward the window for consultation from 1st October until 1st January, shortening the required consultation to a minimum of six weeks.
7. The Admissions Code places other mandatory obligations on the LA in terms of compliance with national closing dates and offer dates, how appeals will be conducted, reporting arrangements to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (the regulatory body for the oversight of fair admissions and appeals), and the operation of Fair Access Protocols.
8. In terms of the application of the Code, academies, studio schools and certain types of other schools are defined as 'own admission authorities', and therefore having direct responsibility for application of fair admissions and appeals. The table below further clarifies the position.

Type of School	Admission authority	Responsibility to deal with complaints about arrangements	Responsibility for appeals against refusal of a place at a school
Academies (incl. Studio Schools)	Academy Trust	Schools Adjudicator	Academy Trust
Community Schools	Local Authority	Schools Adjudicator	Local Authority
Foundation Schools	Governing body	Schools Adjudicator	Governing body
Voluntary aided schools	Governing body	Schools Adjudicator	Governing body
Voluntary controlled schools	Local Authority	Schools Adjudicator	Local Authority

Other legislative change

9. As a consequence of new legislation, the educational system in Leicestershire is now undergoing substantial organisational change. The majority of secondary schools (91%), and a significant proportion (40%) of primary schools, have now converted to academy status or will do so in the future.
10. Coupled to the academies agenda, many schools have subsequently sought to progress age range changes to give either 4-11, 11-16 or 11-19 status, with 27 schools (20 Secondary and 7 Primary) having

received DfE approval for September 2014 or September 2015 change, and several others now planning change.

11. To add to this momentum of change, other types of secondary provision, for example Studio Schools have started to appear in Leicestershire, and from this year FE Colleges are now entitled to admit students from the age of 14.
12. The net effect of this change has been to significantly enhance the diversity and choice in our schools, but at the same time, as schools and academies begin to exercise a greater degree of autonomy, making the process of managing admissions and appeals much more challenging.
13. Coupled to this, there is a much greater awareness by parents of their rights and choices, largely brought about by a determined effort by the local authority, to ensure everyone knows how the admissions and appeals process works, and to get the best from this for their child.

Admissions Policy

14. Leicestershire's admissions policy was last consulted on during the 2013/14 academic year for entry in autumn 2015. This explains how we will operate within the confines of the law, the national admissions codes, and locally determined conditions.
15. A copy may be accessed via the following link;
http://www.leics.gov.uk/admissions_policy_2014_for_entry_sept_2015_final_version_06mar14-2.pdf
16. The policy sets out that Leicestershire operates school catchment areas, with the purpose of ensuring that every child has a designated school.
17. The policy also includes Leicestershire's agreed set of priority criteria that are used to rank applications when offering places. A copy of the priority criteria can be found at Appendix A.
18. The policy also seeks to clarify academy changes. It is of interest that the majority of academies in Leicestershire have adopted the local authority's policy, catchment-maps and priority criteria.
19. Some (approximately 20) academies have consulted to change their admissions arrangements and in some instances this has caused some confusion to parents, particularly where they have been unable to secure a place for their child. The changes made by some academies to their admission criteria include:
 - i) capping their admissions number i.e.so as to not overfill beyond their admission number at the normal round, and therefore not accepting children that may subsequently move into their catchment;
 - ii) giving siblings a higher ranking;
 - iii) introducing a new criterion of 'children of staff';

- iv) making changes to catchment areas.

Managing admissions - our approach

20. There are well established and effective practices in the local authority for the management of school admissions which include:
- i) Implementing robust ICT systems designed to support and encourage online applications.
 - ii) Producing an annual 'Your Guides to Education in Leicestershire' to advise parents of their choices and the things that should be taken into account when applying for a place.
 - iii) Support through the Customer Service Centre for general advice and the Admissions team for more detailed enquiries.
 - iv) The launch of a media campaign in the autumn to alert parents of key dates. This has included posters, articles in Leicestershire Matters as well as in other newspapers, and direct marketing to schools and the Diocese, as well as web related media.
 - v) As a further precaution 'reminder lists' to schools are circulated three weeks before the closing date and direct 'reminder letters' are subsequently sent where applications are known to be outstanding.
21. Parents are encouraged to apply online as this provides an immediate acknowledgement on submission of the application form, it allows parents to change their mind and it allows parents to know the offer on the national offer date. This is in contrast to Leicester City where prefer parents are notified later, and which can lead to confusion when City parents apply for a place in County schools (only the home authority can notify parents of decisions).
22. The key dates relating to the admissions process are as follows:
- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>Secondary:
 Closing date 31 October
 LA exchange dates with other LAs late November
 Provisional allocation list January
 Final allocation list late February
 1st March national offer date</p> | <p>Primary:
 Closing date 15 January
 LA exchange dates with other LAs late February
 Provisional allocation list March
 Final allocation list late March
 16th April national offer date</p> |
|--|--|
23. Where parents have not been able to secure a school of their preference they are automatically placed on the school's oversubscription (waiting) list (OSL) and are ranked using the appropriate priority criteria. If a place becomes available, parents are contacted automatically by the Admission Team.
24. Any applications received after the closing date will be accepted but considered only after those received by the closing date.

25. If the allocation of a place has been made on the basis of fraudulent or intentionally misleading information, the admitting authority reserves the right to withdraw the place.

Current demand

26. The current number of compulsory school age pupils on roll in Leicestershire schools (including academies) is 86,266. This equates to 36,071 pupils in primary schools, 49,417 in secondary schools, 766 in special schools, and 12 in the PRU.
27. Each year the Admissions Service deals with approximately 7000 primary applications for first time admissions and over 10,000 secondary applications. In addition to these there are a further 6000 plus mid-term applications. A full breakdown of the number of applications is at Appendix B.

Admissions Performance

28. The following tables illustrates that Leicestershire performs well by comparison to other LA's.

Year	FTA – 1 st pref	Online Figs	Secondary – Transfer 1 st Pref	Online Figs
2014	89%	91.80%	96.20%	97.30%
2013	91.90%	83.50%	96.70%	97.10%
2012	91.80%	75.20%	98.40%	95.80%
2011	92.20%	58.60%	97%	57.90%
2010	92.90%	44.50%	94.60%	55.40%

29. In addition, of particular note are the levels of online take-up by parents when making either primary or secondary applications, where Leicestershire has seen year-on-year increase for the last four years. The impact of this to the authority has been a significant decrease in paper based systems and associated costs.
30. For 2014 there has been a slight dip in first preferences rates achieved for primary children, which is believed to be a consequence of parents becoming more aware of their choices and targeting popular and successful schools, a general rise in birth rates and increased housing.
31. Comparisons with Leicestershire's 'statistical neighbours' also shows that in general Leicestershire parents enjoy well above the average in England in terms of attaining their first preference school at secondary level.

Statistical Neighbours		Secondary – 1 st Pref%	Primary – 1 st Prefs%
823	Central Bedfordshire	95	94
835	Dorset	94	93
881	Essex	85	86.1
855	Leicestershire	96	89.6

850	Hampshire	95	90.1
802	North Somerset	91	86.8
803	South Gloucestershire	89	90.9
860	Staffordshire	95	92.4
937	Warwickshire	82	88.2
938	West Sussex	91	89.2
885	Worcestershire	91	90.4
970	England Average	85	87.7

32. Fair Access Protocol

All Leicestershire schools have signed up to the Fair Access Protocol in order to make sure that the most vulnerable children are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible. This includes admitting children above the published admission number of a school that is already full. The table below provides a statistical breakdown of Fair Access cases, and shows that there are a relatively low number of pupils where intervention under the protocol is required.

Type of School	Number of children admitted			Number of children refused admission		
	Schools for pupils up to age 11	Schools for pupils over age 11	All-through schools	Schools for pupils up to age 11	Schools for pupils over age 11	All-through schools
Community		1			1	
Academy		21	8		20	

The Appeals process

33. The purpose of this Admissions Code is to ensure the independence of admission appeal panels and to ensure that all admission appeals for maintained schools and Academies are conducted in a fair and transparent way. The Code is further designed to give admission authorities the freedom they need to run the appeals process efficiently.
34. The responsibility for making arrangements for appeals against the refusal of a school place rests with the admission authority of the school. In Leicestershire all appeals for community and voluntary controlled schools are organised through the local authority. The majority of voluntary aided schools have their appeals organised via the diocese and academies can choose who they wish to conduct their appeals. However so far, all Leicestershire academies currently buy into the local authority's appeals service.
35. Appeals panels operate independently of the local authority. However it is the local authority that co-ordinates the appeal hearings, ensures that all appeal panel members are fully trained, and are independent and qualified to sit as panel members.
36. Appendix C attached provides an overview of the appeals process.

Appeals Performance

37. The table below provides data on appeals considered over the three year period 2012- 14:

Secondary	Number of applications	Lodged	Settled	Withdrawn	Appeals Heard	Appeals Upheld	Appeals Not Upheld
2014	11,152	217	57	10	150	36	114
2013	11,155	173	61	14	98	35	63
2012	12,224	121	37	8	76	54	22

Primary	Number of applications	Lodged	Settled	Withdrawn	Appeals Heard	Appeals Upheld	Appeals Not Upheld
2014	6,929	341	90	62	189	40	149
2013	6,852	326	99	48	179	52	127
2012	6,543	400	98	54	248	90	158

38. Of interest is the increase in the number of secondary appeals being lodged, analysis of the figures indicates that this is attributable to an increase in popularity of certain schools, schools reducing their admission numbers in response to age range change and schools capping their in-take.
39. In contrast the table illustrates the fall in primary school appeals over the last three years, however it should be noted that overall the number of schools receiving appeals has increased i.e. schools previously that have not had appeals have now done so.
40. In general, for both primary and secondary appeal outcomes over the last two years, fewer parents have been successful, this is also reflected in the national picture where on average 66% of appeals are in the LA's favour.

The Challenges ahead

41. There is significant ongoing change to the Leicestershire educational system, which can be evidenced by schools wishing to:
- convert to academy
 - implement age range changes (both primary and secondary)
 - move away (for academies) from the LAs admissions arrangements
 - merge into multi-academy trusts
42. In addition to the above, there are also schools moving through academy sponsorship due to performance issues, and the emergence of new schools as part of the strategy for additional places.
43. The changing environment is having a significant impact on some parents, who are worried about making the right choices for their children. In response to these concerns the admissions team are proactively ensuring there is detailed information on our website and

through our Customer Service Agents to enable parents to make informed decisions.

44. It is expected that the introduction of a revised home to school transport policy will also have a bearing on parental choices, although it is too early to say how profound this might be.
45. The other significant challenge is the large increase in the number of mid-term (in-year) applications received. For September 2014 the Admissions team received 853 applications across all age groups – this is most the service have ever received in a single month. The monthly trend for mid-term applications has remained consistent. However there has been a proportionate increase in the number of applications processed, when compared to the increase in the number of applications received generally. It is noticeable that mid-term applications peak in September immediately after schools have opened, and in May/June after appeals have been heard. The challenge is turning-around the workload. Appendix D attached provides further analysis of the mid-term applications received.

Key Areas for Action

46. In the light of the above challenges, there are three key areas for action to be addressed by the Admissions Service, they include:
 - Continuing to develop our strategic approach placing emphasis on the effectiveness of our planning of additional school places;
 - Strengthening our relationship with academies to ensure greater co-ordination of the admissions process and catchment arrangements;
 - Meeting increased demand by reviewing the availability and deployment of resources within the Admissions Service (and associated link to the department transformation programme for Education, Learning and Skills).

Delivery of School Place Planning Strategy

47. The admissions and appeals arrangements are closely linked to the planning of school places which is intended to ensure that the local authority keeps abreast of future demand for school places.
48. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee previously considered and made comment on an early draft of the strategy entitled 'In the right place - Strategy for the provision of school and other learning places in Leicestershire 2014/18', at their meeting of 24th March 2014 . The strategy outlines the eight key priorities for the provision of school and other educational places to be addressed by the local authority during the years 2014-18, this is the period covered by the basic need capital allocation for the local authority announced by the DfE at the beginning of this year.
49. The eight key priorities outlined in the draft Strategy include:
 - i. Providing the additional primary school places required and to give priority to this from the available capital budget;

- ii. Ensuring there is a good supply of secondary places in each locality, offered through well planned, sustainable and viable solutions, underpinned by robust funding arrangements;
 - iii. Securing sufficient capital funding to fulfil our commitment to the programme of Area Special School development;
 - iv. Ensuring that basic need capital allocated to the County Council is targeted towards meeting the need for additional places arising from increased births and general demographic change;
 - v. Seeking to support opportunities to address structural change to the pattern of education i.e. age range changes, where this can be linked to basic need requirements in the locality, and where there is a robust case for change;
 - vi. Working with each District Council, housing developers, maintained schools and Academies to ensure that appropriate contributions are received for new school places arising from new housing;
 - vii. Supporting the development of a vibrant and sustainable mixed market approach to the provision of school and other learning places in Leicestershire, so as to promote the best possible choice and diversity;
 - viii. Further developing strong arrangements for the management of our assets and strengthen our relationship with Academies, to ensure all school buildings (irrespective of their designation and howsoever funded) are maintained fit for purpose.
50. Consultation on the draft strategy has taken place with a wide group of stakeholders from the beginning of September and ending on 17th October. The results of the consultation are now being assessed and will be presented to the Cabinet on 19th November. Although there have been relatively few responses received (35 at the time of preparing this report) in the context of widespread circulation, early analysis of the results confirms that the eight key priorities are appropriately targeted, and that there is strong support for these to be addressed. It is of interest that many respondents have also identified the need to remove the 10+ education system (which remains in four areas of Leicestershire) as a further key priority that should be addressed by the local authority – in effect this would require the retention of year 6 pupils in primary schools, and a change of age range to 11-16/19 in associated secondary schools.
51. A copy of the consultation document for the strategy may be accessed via the following link – www.leics.gov.uk/haveyoursay/schoolplaces
52. In identifying the requirement for additional primary places as a key priority for Council, the strategy makes reference to the Braunstone Town and Leicester Forest as an area where early action needs to be taken to address the emerging increased demand.
53. Having considered the available options it is believed that the best way to create more places would be to develop a new 210-place primary

school on land located off Holmfield Avenue, Leicester Forest East. , The school would be an academy, to comply with legal requirements set by the government. Our role would be to work with the Department for Education (DfE) to find the best organisation to run the new school by inviting organisations to put forward proposals. The final decision on which organisation would run the proposed school rests with the Secretary of State for Education.

54. Consultation on this proposal with schools, parents, pupils, the community and other stakeholders began on 14th October and is due to end on 11th November 2014, prior to reporting to Cabinet on 11th December to agree the way forward.
55. A copy of the consultation document has been circulated to all members of the County Council via a 'Members news in brief' item and is available also via the following link:

www.leics.gov.uk/haveyoursay/schoolproposal
56. There will be an opportunity for members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to make further comment on the proposals at this meeting

Risk Assessment

58. The risks to the County Council arising from admissions and appeals are kept under regular review by the C&FS School Admissions and Pupil Services team; and for matters relating to wider school place planning issues by the Head of Strategy for Education Sufficiency.

Conclusions and Next Steps

59. The County Council has robust and effective arrangements in place for the management of admissions and appeals as confirmed by performance data, and informal feedback from schools /parents, but recognises that the education environment is now changing quite dramatically, and needs to keep pace with this through further improvements to our working practices.
60. The change underway has capacity to improve the choice and diversity in our schools, and coupled to our admission arrangements will help enable good access to them. The key areas for action set out in this report are intended to help ensure that the local authority continues to provide a high quality service and the maximum degree of support for schools, parents, and our children and young people.

Background Papers

Report to Children and Family Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee 24 March 2014

'In the Right Place – Draft strategy for the planning of school and other educational places in Leicestershire 2014/18'

Circulation under the Local Alert Issues Procedure

61. None.

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List of Appendices

Appendix A: Priority criteria for entry autumn 2014 admissions and mid-term applications during 2014 / 2015 academic year

Appendix B: Breakdown of admission applications.

Appendix C: Overview of the appeals process

Appendix D: Statistical analysis for mid-term applications

Equality and Human Rights Implications

62. The underlying purpose of the admissions and appeals service is to ensure that the local authority meets our statutory obligations to ensure that all parents, children and young people are able to access good or outstanding schools, and are offered real choice and diversity of educational provision. Wherever new policies or changes to existing policies are considered they are subject to an Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment prior to any proposals for change to ensure that individuals are not disadvantaged or discriminated against.

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Priority criteria for entry autumn 2014 admissions and mid-term applications during 2014 / 2015 academic year

If there are too many requests for 'Leicestershire' Academy, priority will be given to children in the appropriate age-range, whose parents applied on time, in the following order (see note i below):

1st	Children who are in public care and those children who were previously looked after children. (See note ii).
2nd	Pupils who live in the catchment area. (See note iii).
3rd	Pupils who will have an older brother or sister attending the same school at the same time. (See notes iv and v).
4th	Pupils who have a serious medical condition or exceptional social or domestic needs that make it essential they attend the school requested. (Professional documentation confirming the situation must be submitted with the application). (See note vi).
5th	Pupils who will have attended a feeder school for at least two years before the time of transfer. (See note vii).
6th	Pupils starting at an infant school with a sibling attending at the same time in the linked Junior school. (See note iv). or Pupils transferring to high school who will have an older brother or sister attending the linked upper school at the same time. (See note iv).
7th	Pupils basing their application on religious belief. (See note viii).
8th	Pupils living nearest to the school measured in a straight line distance (home to school front gate). (See note ix).

Notes:

- i. Combinations of the above criteria are used in priority order. Where the computerised system throws up an equality of distance for more than one child (who do not have the same home address) the final tie breaker will be by drawing lots.

- ii. A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a residence order¹⁹ or special guardianship order).
- iii. The child's place of residence is taken to be the parental home. In addition where a catchment area has more than one school:
 - No one school will be overfilled while another school with the same catchment has places; and,
 - If more applications than the number of places are received from within the catchment the oversubscription criteria will be applied for each school in accordance with the admissions policy. (Braunstone schools only)
- iv. The term "brother or sister" includes half brother or sister or legally adopted child being regarded as the brother or sister.
- v. Regarding brothers or sisters who will be of sixth form age, these are counted as brother/sister connections for criteria 3 or 6 above.
- vi. If criterion 4 is used, professional supporting documentation from the Lead Professional must be supplied and must be submitted with the application. The following list are the areas that are considered exceptional:
 - Crown Servants (serving members of the armed forces).
 - Children subject to Child Protection Plans.
 - Hard to Place children – who fall under the Fair Access Protocol.
 - Parents suffering domestic violence (This is dependent on documentary evidence by a lead professional).
 - A child for whom transfer to the catchment area school would involve attending a different school until he/she is the right age for transfer. (This is dependent on the child having attended the present school for at least a year).

Each case will be assessed on its individual merits.
- vii. For criterion 5 above, the child must have been enrolled at the feeder school on or before the start date of the Autumn Term two years before transfer.
- viii. For criterion 7 above, a letter of support from your Minister or Religious Leader will be required explaining how the school caters for your faith. For schools listed below a Minister's letter is required to support the parent's application that verifies children from church going families who have attended a Christian place of worship at least once a month for a year prior to application;

This criterion only applies to the following CE VC schools.
- ix. For Criterion 8 above, measurement of distance is in a straight line from the

centre point of the property to the school's main designated front gate, using a computerised mapping system (Geocoding). Where there is equal distance then lots will be drawn supervised by an independent officer.

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Appendix B

First Time Admissions

YEAR	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Number of application received on time	6556	6864	6543	6852	6929
Number of FIRST preferences attained	92.2%	91%	90.2%	92%	89.5%
Number of SECOND preferences attained	4.10%	4%	4.41%	4%	4.7%
Number of THIRD preferences attained	0.70%	0.70%	1.01%	0.8%	1.6%
Number of FIRST, SECOND & THIRD	97%	95.7%	95.7%	96.8%	95.6%
Number of ONLINE applications	51%	62%	79.1%	88.3%	92.8%

Secondary Transfer

YEAR	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Number of packs sent out	13775	13406	12686	12224	11155	11152
Number of application received on time	12863	12359	12119	12076	10877	10794
Number of FIRST preferences attained	(97.5%)	(96.5%)	(98%)	(98.1%)	(97.4%)	(96.6%)
Number of SECOND preferences attained	(1%)	(2.5%)	(1.3%)	(1.3%)	(1.5%)	(1.9%)
Number of THIRD preferences attained	(0.1%)	(0.2%)	(0.2%)	(0.1%)	(0.1%)	(0.2%)
Number of FIRST, SECOND & THIRD	(98.9%)	(99.3%)	(99.5%)	(99.5%)	(98.9%)	(97.2%)
Number of ONLINE applications	47%	52.50%	54%	95.7%	97.5%	96.9%
NUMBER OF SURPLUS PLACES	(9.7%)	(18.4%)	(25%)	(21.6%)	(26.4%)	(25%)

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Overview of the Appeals Process

- i) All transfer and FTA appeals must be heard within 40 school days from the deadline of being lodged. The process involves the Admissions Service preparing a detailed statement on behalf of the school detailing the reason for refusal as well as why the school cannot take any further children. A key aspect of the LA's statement will be to evidence that the admission of more pupils would affect the education of other pupils already in the school, and that if there are more pupils admitted to the school then it would prejudice the efficient provision of education as well as the efficient use of resources.

Once the appeal statement is completed parents are written to inviting them to attend the hearing. Panel members receive both the school's case and the parent's case at least two-weeks prior to the hearing.

- ii) On the day of the hearing strict protocol is adhered to administered by the Clerk to the panel. The appeal will run as a two stage process in the following order:

Stage 1-

- a) case for the admission authority;
- b) questioning by appellant(s) and panel;

- iii) Panel decisions range from; up-holding the appeal in favour of the parent at Stage 1 – often when the school have not made a case, to moving on stage two if the case made – that may up-hold some of the appeals or none of the appeals depending on whether the parent's circumstances out weight the school's pressures:

Stage 2 -

- a) case for the appellant(s);
- b) questioning by the admission authority and panel;
- c) summing up by the admission authority;
- d) summing up by the appellant(s).

- iv) Decisions are made after the final appeal is heard, and the clerk will write to the parents within five working days outlining in detail the panel's determination.

Infant Class Appeals

- v) Regulations made under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 limit the size of an infant class (a class in which the majority of children will reach the age of 5, 6 or 7 during the school year) to 30 pupils per qualified school teacher (this does not include teaching assistants or nursery nurses). Only in very limited and exceptional circumstances can admission over the limit be permitted.

- vi) Therefore, panels considering an infant class size appeal must pay regard to all of the following matters:
 - a) whether the admission of an additional child/additional children would breach the infant class size limit;
 - b) whether the admission arrangements (including the area's co-ordinated admission arrangements) complied with the mandatory requirements of the School Admissions Code and Part 3 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998;
 - c) whether the admission arrangements were correctly and impartially applied in the case(s) in question; and
 - d) whether the decision to refuse admission was one which a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case.

- vii) The panel **may** only uphold the appeal at the first stage where:
 - a) it finds that the admission of additional children would not breach the infant class size limit; or
 - b) it finds that the admission arrangements did not comply with admissions law or were not correctly and impartially applied and the child would have been offered a place if the arrangements had complied or had been correctly and impartially applied; or
 - c) it decides that the decision to refuse admission was not one which a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case.

- viii) The panel **must** dismiss the appeal at the first stage where:
 - a) it finds that the admission arrangements did comply with admissions law and were correctly and impartially applied; or
 - b) it finds that the admission arrangements did not comply with admissions law or were not correctly and impartially applied but that, if they had complied and had been correctly and impartially applied, the child would not have been offered a place; and it finds that the decision to refuse admission was one which a reasonable *admission authority could have made*.

The decision

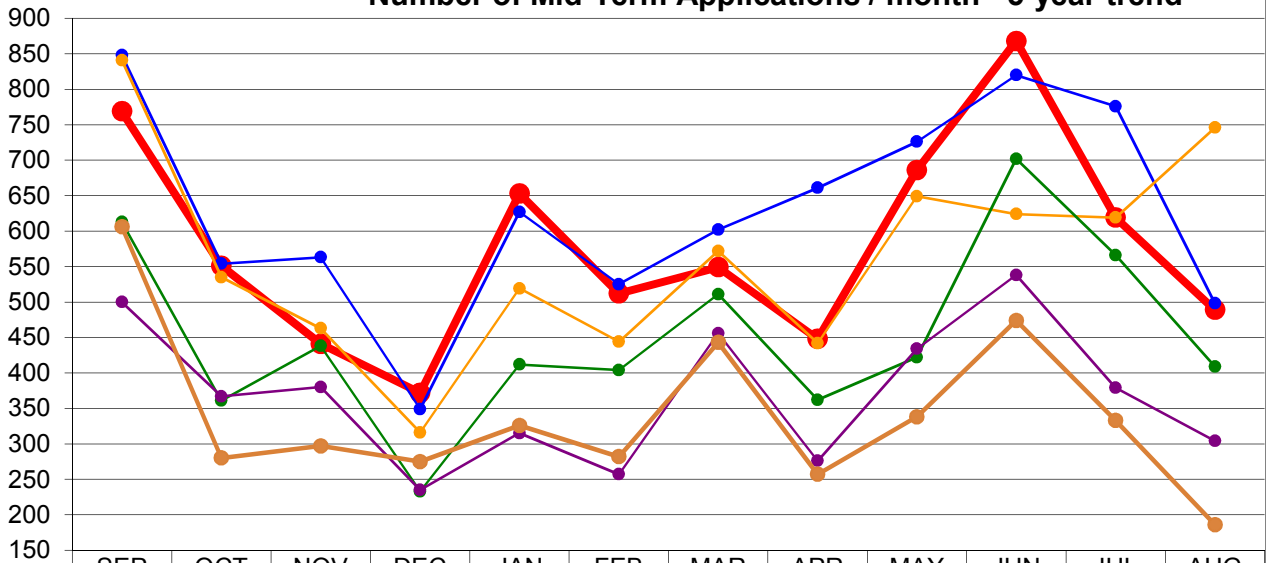
- ix) The appeal panel's decision-making is binding on all parties. If the outcome is not in favour of the parent, the only recourse is to complain to the Ombudsman, to contact the Secretary of State or to seek a judicial review. All these courses of action however cannot overturn the panel decision but may if found in the parent's favour require the appeal to be heard again in front of a new panel.

- x) In normal circumstances a parent may only appeal once for the same school per academic year. In very rare instances, a second appeal maybe allowed if

the parent can demonstrate a significant and material change in the family's circumstances i.e. a house move.

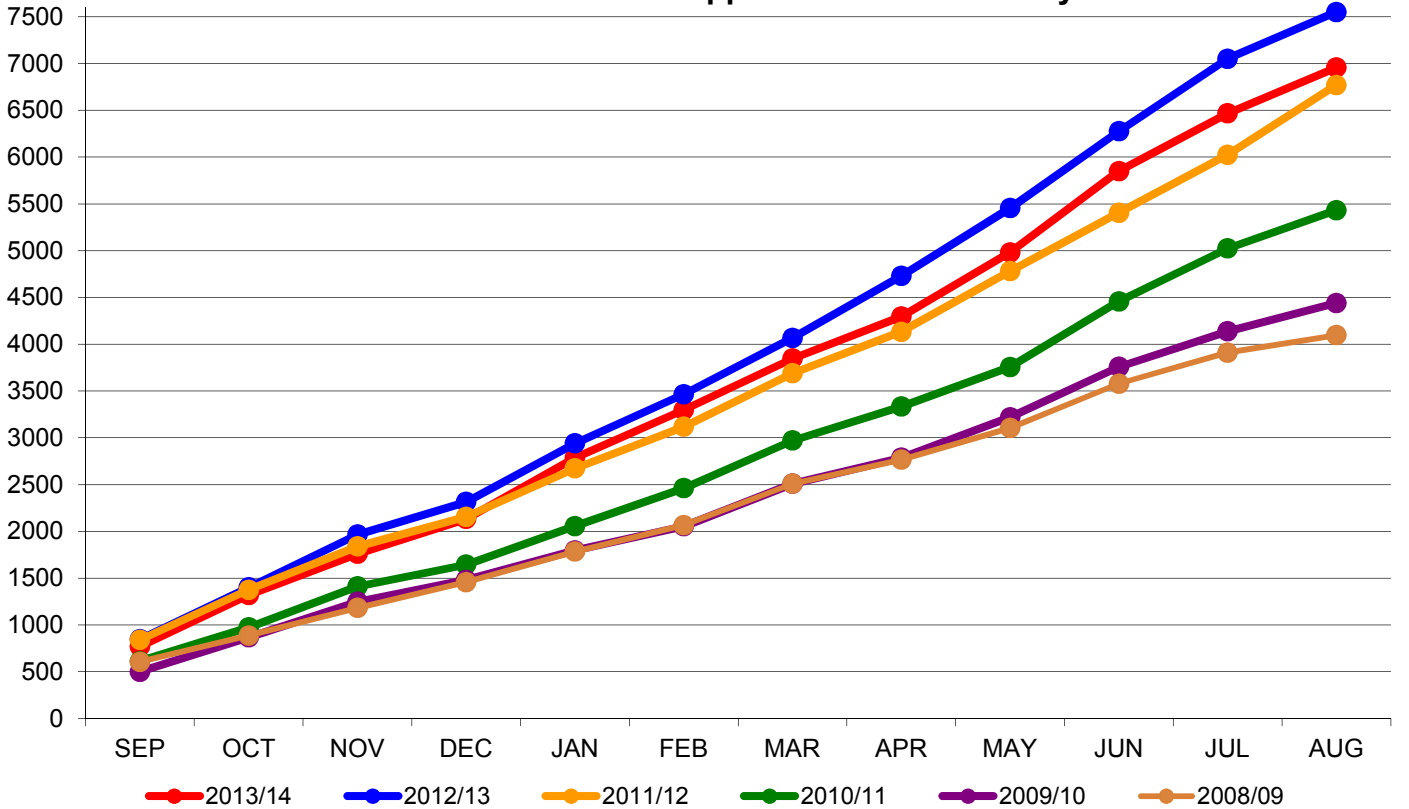
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Number of Mid-Term Applications / month - 5-year trend



	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG
2013/14	769	551	441	372	653	512	549	448	686	868	619	489
2012/13	848	554	563	349	627	525	602	661	726	820	776	498
2011/12	841	535	463	316	519	444	572	442	649	624	619	746
2010/11	613	361	438	233	412	404	511	362	422	702	566	409
2009/10	500	367	380	235	315	257	456	276	434	538	379	304
2008/09	606	280	297	275	326	282	443	257	338	474	333	186

Cumulative Number of Mid-Term Applications / month - 5-year trend



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CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 3
NOVEMBER 2013

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICERS (IRO) 2013-
14

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of Report

1. To inform the Committee of the 2013-14 annual report of the Independent Reviewing Officers.

Background

2. The publication of an annual reports on the activities of the Independent Reviewing Officers for Looked After Children (LAC) is a requirement of the IRO Guidance (2004) and is restated in the IRO handbook issued as statutory guidance in March 2010; these reports are attached at Appendix 1 and 2 and set out the role and activity of the Independent Reviewing Officers in Leicestershire over the period from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.
3. Within Leicestershire, IROs have a dual role whereby they undertake their statutory role as outlined in the IRO Handbook in relation to Looked After Children, as well as the chairing of all Child Protection Conferences (CPCs) and reviews convened in the authority.
4. The annual report is obliged to report on the following:
 - (a) An overview of the challenges about care planning in children's cases undertaken by the IRO Service and how these are escalated and resolved;
 - (b) The workload of the service and a description of the workforce of the service;
 - (c) The extent of participation of children and their parents in the review process;
 - (d) The 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;
 - (e) The position in relation to the organisation, conduct and recording of reviews; and
 - (f) Whether any resource issues are compromising the delivery of a quality service to looked after children.
5. The annual reports identify good practice but also highlight issues for further development and identify action required. Key issues to progress:

- (a) Improved care and permanency planning and processes for children and young people; a joint action plan is in place across the IRO Service, Locality Social Work and Adoption and Fostering and the work of this plan is being driven forward.
 - (b) Improved placement sufficiency and suitability to support stability and permanency for children and young people in the care of LCC. This is currently being addressed through the Transformation Programme and Remodelling of Children's Social Care
 - (c) Strengthened and increased challenge from the IRO Service to improve influence and outcomes for children and young people at a service and strategic level not just individual case; Challenge forums have been developed between the IRO Service and Assistant Director and a Notification Policy is being developed.
6. In accordance with regulatory requirement the findings of the IRO annual report have been presented to the Corporate Parenting Board and will be published in full on the County Council's website along with an action plan detailing the work now underway to address the conclusions in full.

Equal Opportunities Implications

7. These are addressed throughout the report as the aim is to improve standards and outcomes for all children and young people in care, including disabled children, young children and those from minority and harder to reach groups. The IRO Service has a diverse compliment of staff with good representation across gender, age, sexual orientation as well as ethnicity.

Background Papers

8. IRO Annual report 2012-13.

Circulation under the Local Alert Issues Procedures

9. None.

Appendices

10. Appendix 1 – IRO Children in Care Annual Report 2013-14
Appendix 2 – IRO Child Protection Annual Report 2013-14

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LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES
Safeguarding & Improvement Unit

IRO Children in Care Annual Report 2013-14

Content

- 1 Executive Summary
- 2 Introduction
- 3 Purpose of IRO Service and Legal Context
- 4 IRO service
- 5 Quantitative Information
- 6 Qualitative Information (See Appendix 1)
- 7 Conduct of the organisation
- 8 Recommended areas for improvement by the Operational Service 2014-15
- 9 Annual Work Programme 2014-15 (See Appendix 2)

Appendix 1

Appendix 2

Appendix 3 (IRO Handbook Implementation Plan update)

Appendix 4 (IROs - Taking up the Challenge update)

Appendix 5 Tables of figures

Executive Summary

- 1.1 The IRO (Independent Reviewing Officer) has a statutory role to ensure effective and improved care planning for children and young people, securing better outcomes, with their wishes and feelings being central and given full and due consideration. (*IRO Handbook March 2010*).
- 1.2 IROs independently oversee care planning for children and have opportunity to challenge poor decisions and better protect a child's interests.
- 1.3 This report evaluates the extent to which Leicestershire County Council has fulfilled its responsibilities to the children in its care, between 1st April 2013–31st March 2014 including its corporate parenting function.
- 1.4 There are strengths, challenges and areas for improvement as set out below. The report includes priorities for 2014-15 in its appendices, which respond to local and national drivers.
- 1.5 For the purpose of this report, the term LAC (Looked After Child) will be used for statutory related references to children looked after by the local authority e.g. LAC Reviews and all other references will refer to children in care.
- 1.6 Strengths
 - Defined IRO lead areas on Children Using Sexually Abusive Behaviour, Child Sexual Exploitation, Signs of Safety, complex care needs, national/regional developments and soon to be added care leavers.
 - Dual role of IROs provides continuity to the child's journey through the child protection process and into the care system.
 - 98.8% of the 1283 Reviews were carried out within the prescribed timescale an improvement on the previous two years, (97.9% and 98% respectively).
 - Increased numbers of children participating in their Reviews from 88.5% in 2012-13 to 91% in 2013-14.
 - IRO Service attendance and involvement at Joint Solutions and Permanency Forum, Education of Children in Care meetings and with the Specialist LAC health team.
 - Challenge meetings between the IRO Service managers and Assistant Director.
- 1.7 Challenges
 - Maintaining manageable caseloads within current capacity as the numbers of children in care have continued to increase.

- Ensuring that the process for children coming into care and their first Review is fully understood and carried out by social work staff.
- Ensuring that the data input to Frameworki is accurate and on time.
- Establishing an effective approach to ensure that children with communication needs and disabilities can participate in their Reviews.

1.8 Areas for Improvement

- Improved quality and timeliness of preparation for Reviews.
- Consistency regarding assessment, care planning and notification of/consultation with IROs regarding changes in a child's case.
- Clear understanding of the IRO statutory role across the children's workforce.
- Improved placement sufficiency and suitability to support stability and permanency.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 This paper reports on the contribution of the IRO Service in Leicestershire, to the quality assurance and improvement of services for children and young people in the care of the County Council during the year April 2013 to March 2014. It evaluates how effectively the service and the Local Authority have fulfilled their responsibilities to Leicestershire's children in care over this period, including performance in relation to the Local Authority's corporate parenting function.
- 2.2 The content and format of this report follows the expectations set out in The *'IRO Handbook - Statutory guidance for independent reviewing officers and local authorities on their functions in relation to case management and review of looked after children'* (March 2010); it will make recommendations with due regard to this guidance and comply with the expectation that such reports should be available for scrutiny by the Corporate Parenting Board, as well as accessible as a public document and most importantly, accessible to Leicestershire's children in care.
- 2.3 In addressing the above, this report will draw on the key findings from the Ofsted publication, *'Independent reviewing officers: taking up the challenge?'* - produced on June 7th 2013 following an evaluation of the effectiveness of independent reviewing officers across a sample of 10 local authority areas between November 2012 and February 2013.
- 2.4 This report will identify areas of good practice and areas in need of development and improvement. It provides an opportunity to pinpoint emerging themes and trends, and details areas of work which the service has prioritised during the year, including progress on the areas of development that were identified from the 2013-14 IRO Service Annual Work Programme, as set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.5 Priorities for the current year 2014-15 are set out in Appendix 2.

3.0 Purpose of IRO Service and Legal Context

- 3.1 A House of Lord's judgement in 2002 concluded that a local authority that failed in its duties to a looked after child could be challenged under the Human Rights Act 1998, most likely under article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights relating to family life. The judgement recognised that some children with no adult to act on their behalf may not have any effective means to initiate such a challenge.
- 3.2 In response, the Government made it a statutory requirement that local authorities appoint IROs (*Adoption and Children Act 2002, section 118*).

- 3.3 The IRO role is to ensure effective and improved care planning for children and young people, securing better outcomes, with their wishes and feelings being central and given full and due consideration. (*IRO Handbook March 2010*).
- 3.4 IROs should do this not only on a singular case basis but collectively, in order to monitor the performance of the Local Authority as a Corporate Parent, drawing out themes for improvement and development and helping to drive forward change.
- 3.5 Historically there has been some concern regarding the effectiveness of IROs in contributing to improved outcomes for children in care (*Care Matters 2006/07*) with insufficient challenge to the local authority when needed.
- 3.6 The Children & Young Persons Act 2008, as well as the revised Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) 2010 regulations augmented the role of the IRO, so that they were not just concerned with the performance of the local authority in respect of the child's looked after review but of the child's case per se; the intention being that this would provide a strengthened, independent oversight of the care planning for children and therefore more opportunity to challenge poor decisions and better protect a child's interests.
- 3.7 Should IROs have concerns about the conduct of the local authority in relation to its provision for a child in care, they have the power to refer cases to the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (*section 26 of the 1989 Children Act as amended by the 2002 Act*) who could consider bringing proceedings for breaches of the child's human rights, judicial review and other proceedings.
- 3.8 The legal framework, associated regulations and statutory guidance sets out very clearly the expectations on local authorities and on IROs for the benefit of children in care. An effective IRO Service should enable the Local Authority to meet these expectations.

4.0 IRO Service

- 4.1 The IRO Service in Leicestershire is sited within the Safeguarding & Improvement Unit (SIU), part of Children's Social Care (CSC), which sits within the Children and Family Services (CFS). Whilst part of CSC, it remains independent of the line management of resources for children in care and the operational social work teams; significant in terms of the challenge and scrutiny role.
- 4.2 The effective independence of the IRO Service in Leicestershire, in the context of them being sited within the department that they challenge, continues to be monitored and considered across the IRO

management team. Our position is very firmly that independence is not compromised, and is supported by evidence of strengthened and increased challenge by the IRO Service.

- 4.3 The siting of IROs within CSC is one that is viewed by the service as beneficial overall as they have direct oversight of the performance of the department and direct access to case records and therefore full information relating to a child's case – invaluable in considering how well the Local Authority is discharging its responsibilities.
- 4.4 The restructure of the SIU, finalised at the end of the 2011-12, facilitated a strengthened and enhanced IRO function as referenced in the 2012-13 annual report. The role has continued to evolve and gain strength and responsibilities over 2013-2014 as the importance has been recognised and further supported both locally and nationally.
- 4.5 The service has 3 Team Managers with lead responsibilities for children in care, quality assurance and child protection, including child sexual exploitation and trafficking, children missing and runaways. The Team Managers manage the team of IROs; the SIU Service Manager has lead responsibility for the IRO Service.
- 4.6 The IRO Service provides a fairly diverse mix of staff in comparison with the make-up of the children in care population, with good representation across gender, age, sexual orientation as well as ethnicity. Opportunities to reflect the make up more effectively have continued to be presented and taken, through recruitment.
- 4.7 The Team Managers drive forward the development of their lead areas of expertise in order to support progress in practice and improvement activity. This approach has been mirrored across the IRO team with individual IROs having lead areas of expertise as follows:
- CUSAB (Children Using Sexually Abusive Behaviour)
 - Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
 - Children with complex care needs
 - Signs of Safety (Growing Safety)
 - Regional and national IRO developments.
- 4.8 Additionally, 2 IROs have been involved with the Children in Care Council, working closely with the Participation Officer for Children in Care and Care Leavers as well as the Corporate Parenting Team and Team Manager. Links have been forged with the Corporate Parenting Board where influence is exerted, as regards the overall progress and experiences of children and young people in care and care leavers. One of the IROs left the IRO Service in April 2014 but the other remains and will continue their involvement.
- 4.9 At the time of writing, the Children in Care Council are working with the IRO Service in relation to developments to improve consultation and

therefore participation of children and young people in their Care Planning and Reviews. This is crucial in relation to their views being listened to, heard and acted upon in the most effective way.

- 4.10 There are plans over 2014-15 to further develop the specialisms within the service and have an IRO taking the lead on Care Leavers; linking with the newly developed Care Leavers focus group SYPAC (Supporting Young People After Care). Leicestershire officially signed its commitment to the Care Leavers Charter at a launch event at the end of April 2014 and it will be vital that there is accountability for the pledge it has made to care leavers – the IRO specialism will assist in this.
- 4.11 The Growing Safety practice methodology has continued to gather momentum across CYPS and contribute to improving outcomes for children and their families. The IRO Growing Safety champion has had a key role in helping to strengthen the skills of the workforce, working with Learning and Development to deliver introductory training sessions for staff. It is a role that complements the improvement work of the IRO Service.
- 4.12 The IRO specialisms inevitably means extended responsibilities against a working environment of already high demand and a careful balance has to be struck in terms of their capacity to deliver their statutory obligations to children in care to the required standard. However, the service continues to assert that this strategy enhances the skill set of the team which in turn supports the capacity for quality and improvement which is fundamental to the IRO role.
- 4.13 Within Leicestershire, as in a number of other local authorities, IROs have a dual role whereby they undertake their statutory role as outlined in the IRO Handbook, as well as the chairing of all Child Protection Conferences (CPCs) convened in the authority. This is an established model of some 14 years in Leicestershire, in contrast to other models where the roles are kept separate.
- 4.14 The approach taken in Leicestershire is key in relation to the continuity it provides to children and young people on their journey through the child protection process and into the care system. Such an approach maintains the flexibility of the team and provides more effective oversight across children's' situations. The service provided from the IRO team to Child Protection as well as Children in Care continues to be given equal priority and status. At present there are no plans to make any changes to the configuration of the team by splitting the team into two functional areas.
- 4.15 One of the continuing challenges for the service over the reporting period and beyond is the issue of sufficient capacity. This is a regional and national picture, not just pertinent to Leicestershire. It is highlighted in *Independent Reviewing Officers: taking up the challenge?* (June

2013), as well as recently published Ofsted Inspection outcomes in other authorities along with the findings from the NCB Research Summary 11 in March 2014 'The Role of Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) in England'.

- 4.16 The IRO Service has been fairly stable in terms of the make-up of the team over the 2013-14 period although there have been some changes as a result of maternity leave, one member of staff leaving and new staff commencing to replace. In terms of capacity, the service has operated with an average of 9.8 FTE IROs meaning caseloads continue to be over the recommended guidelines as per the IRO Handbook.
- 4.17 A further increase in the numbers of children in care in Leicestershire alongside a continuing improvement approach regarding the challenge and scrutiny responsibilities, has meant continued increased demands on IROs, exacerbating further the pressures they faced over 2012-13 to the degree that again, towards the end of the reporting period it was necessary for further support to be sought from agency staff, to bolster the service.
- 4.18 Within this, careful consideration has continued to be given to the type of work allocated to temporary staff within the team in order to continue to support sufficient priority being given to consistent professional relationships with children, young people, their families and their carers.
- 4.19 The challenge for the IRO service in the context of the above has been the ability to continue to meet and maintain required standards and not fall short. A key area of focus in this respect has been timely distribution of Review decisions, an area of concern highlighted in last year's annual report. Despite continuing pressures, the team has successfully addressed this and management oversight and newly developed systems and paperwork formats have achieved objectives set and will ensure this does not revert.
- 4.20 The expectations on IROs are significant and the strive for quality from the IRO Service in Leicestershire remains high accordingly. In order for IROs to continue to encompass their full responsibilities and improve outcomes for children in care on an individual as well as collective basis, the resources to deliver need to be in place.
- 4.21 At the time of writing, a risk assessment to consider sufficiency is being undertaken within the SIU, led by Service Manager.

5.0 Quantitative Information

- 5.1 The year-end figures below, highlight how the children in care population in Leicestershire has seen further growth over the 2013-14

period in comparison to the previous two years. It has been as high as 500 during this year. **See Table 1 in Appendix 5**

- 5.2 Caseload numbers per FTE IRO (pro rata, taking into account the dual role for LAC as well as Child Protection that IROs have in Leicestershire) have remained high at 100 – continuing to sit well above the parameters recommended within the IRO Handbook which is 50-70.
- 5.3 Between 1st April 2013 and 31st March 2014, a total of 1283 reviews for children were held. The figures in the table **See Table 2 in Appendix 5** do not reflect those that have not have been captured on Fwi (Frameworki) or those where children are in pre-adoptive placements, which accounts for the difference between 1107 and 1283. SIU has manual records of these as a result of their own monitoring which enables a more accurate representation.
- 5.4 On time LAC Reviews are important, to ensure focused and timely care planning for children, avoiding delay and assisting in the completion of actions aimed at delivering best outcomes. Of the 1283 LAC Reviews held over 2013-14 98.8% were held within the prescribed timescales. This is a good achievement and a further improvement compared to 97.9% and 98% in the prior two periods.
- 5.5 The good performance in relation to timely LAC Reviews is very much attributed to a robust and finely tuned system operated within the SIU across IROs, managers and excellent administrative support. A continued flexible approach, treating the Review as a process rather than a meeting is another way that the IRO Service works with locality teams to ensure reviews take place within timescale.
- 5.6 Of the 1283 reviews 36 were completed in 2 parts to allow more flexibility both with timescales as well as attendance and participation of young people and their family, carers and professionals. This also allows for a more pragmatic approach where for example there are key court hearings that ideally need to have taken place before the review meeting in order to inform further planning or there is a need to have different people in different meetings to allow for the young person to be more comfortable with their Review. Flexibility in holding a review in several parts means that key information and decisions can be made in the right order rather than having a situation whereby there is information missing and having to have yet another meeting for the sake of a short period of time.
- 5.7 There were 16 out of 1283 LAC reviews that did not take place on time over 2013-14 (1.2%). This represents improved performance compared to (2.1%) 2012-2013 and (4%) in 2011-12, achieved as a result of actions being implemented in line with the 2013-14 work plan including clear communications from the IRO Service to locality social workers and managers around expectations and standards.

- 5.8 Despite the improved performance, the main reasons for those out of date are again, the same as the main reasons in the two previous reporting periods. (i) Lack of understanding of the process needing to be followed by social workers when children come into care and need their first review; (ii) untimely or no notification to the SIU (iii); and issues with the accuracy and timeliness of data input to Frameworki.
- 5.9 The Work Plan for 2014-2015 has as a priority the need to take forward joint work across the IRO Service and Locality Social Work Teams that was not fully achieved over 2013-2014. This needs to focus on enabling all workers and managers responsible for meeting the needs of children in care to have a more consistent and clear understanding of the whole care planning and review process - in order to achieve the standards and requirements within this that underpin securing best outcomes for our children in care and care leavers. A locality lead has been identified to take this forward with the IRO Service – a joint approach is crucial for this to be effective.

5.10 Participation

5.10.1 The participation figures for this period, represents the percentage of children and young people aged 4 and over who communicated their views in some way, for their review.

5.10.2 Participation is defined across 7 different indicators:

- PN1 children who attend their reviews and speak for themselves;
- PN2 those who attend but communicate via an advocate;
- PN3 those who attend and convey their views non verbally;
- PN4 those who attend but don't contribute;
- PN5 children who do not attend but brief someone to speak on their behalf;
- PN6 do not attend but communicate their views by another method;
- PN7 those who do not attend and do not convey their views in any other way.
- PN0 represents children under the age of 4

5.10.3 The figures in the table **See Table 3 in Appendix 5** do not account for work not captured on Frameworki, including pre-adoptive reviews, but again the SIU has a separate monitoring system that gives a fuller picture. The participation figures for 2013-2014 have seen an increase to 91% from 88.5% in the previous period.

5.10.4 This improvement albeit small is heading in the right direction but this will need to increase further over the 2014-2015 period so there is minimal non participation.

5.10.5 Analysis of key reasons for non-participation has been undertaken and some of this was about inaccurate recording by IROs to reflect

participation that had taken place. Work is being progressed across the IRO team and a monitoring system introduced to support further improvement. This needs to be extended to the social work teams also, so there is a joined up and more collaborative and creative approach to supporting children and young people to take part in their reviews, particularly for children who's communication needs and disabilities present more of a challenge. This is work that is currently progressing as part of the 2014-2015 work plan.

5.10.6 The IROs endeavor to support the meaningful participation of all children and young people in their review process and build good relationships with them; they accept and support it as a requirement that is best practice. IROs are aware of the IRO Handbook stipulations around contact with children and young people outside of their formal Review meeting and the service has strived to make improvements over the reporting period with some success, building on what has been achieved in the previous reporting period.

5.10.7 The IRO Service has received positive comments previously about their good practice in encouraging participation and fostering good relationships (*Ofsted Fostering Inspection in November 2012*). There is evidence of this continuing from positive comments received from young people, carers and other professionals. The examples relate to 3 separate IROs:

"...best LAC review L has ever had ... she is brilliant, she just has a great way with kids...L has always really struggled with attending his reviews, he is such a private, and at times self-conscious young man.... a big thank you for enabling this shift in L."

"IRO was very good in ensuring/checking with L that she understood jargon, processes and working at her pace/in a style that fitted L's needs... L's views were central to the discussion and the IRO proactively sought her views."

"Recently LL's review...the IRO made a lot of effort to include L, visiting beforehand and asking him where he wanted to have his review, the purpose of the review etc. In the end we had the review in the park. This worked well for L and the carers so I wanted to pass on my view that this work prior to the review allowed L to make the most out of the process."

5.10.8 There is a facility for IROs to record their contact and visits with children and young people on Frameworki so a clearer picture as to how effectively this is happening can be gained, to support the anecdotal perspective. Work is in progress to ensure more consistent recording by IROs as well as fine tuning the questions asked in relation to data reporting, so an accurate picture can be achieved.

- 5.10.9 At the time of writing, work is underway within the IRO Service to revamp and develop a wider range of participation and consultation approaches and platforms, as the current system is outdated and not effective enough. Within this, a decision has been made that responsibility for coordinating and driving consultation with children and young people for their care planning and review process will return to the SIU from locality social work teams. It is the intention to make best use of the Beacon website to support this development. Young people are contributing their views to this work.
- 5.10.10 There are clear systems in place to report on participation of children and young people in their reviews, but not for impact of this and feedback about the quality and experience of the IRO Service and the difference it makes in relation to outcomes.

6.0 Qualitative Information

- 6.1 The 2012-13 IRO Annual Report, identified priority areas for improvement and action by the IRO Service for 2013-14 in the Annual Work Programme. Appendix 1 illustrates performance against that.
- 7.0 Conduct of the organisation in relation to the review and the case, including any resource issues that are putting at risk the delivery of a quality service for Children in Care.**
- 7.1 The statutory Review meeting is the forum where care planning for children is carefully considered and overseen by the IRO and in order for this to be most effective, evidence of the assessment and thinking on which the plan is formulated, along with the plan itself, needs to be made available in advance to the IRO along with all relevant reports.
- 7.2 Performance in this respect was a recommended area for improvement by the operational service from last year's annual report as this was only achieved in 43% of LAC Reviews over the 2012-13 period. As the table shows **See Table 4 Appendix 5**, performance has improved which would indicate that the measures put into place (work to improve the quality of assessments under the umbrella of the QAIF; clarity of expectation and challenge from the IRO Service) have had some positive effects, but this needs to improve further, along with the quality of information within the reports.
- 7.3 It is the view of the IRO Service that the joint work around care planning and review developments, featuring in the 2014-2015 work plan is crucial and likely to bring further good results. This will be supported further by embedding Signs of Safety methodology, building on progress already made with this approach.
- 7.4 Additionally, the IRO Service still has the facility to adopt a more stringent approach where there is a lack of effective planning and preparation on the operational side for LAC reviews and can adjourn

where there is concern about this. The service has considered this very carefully over the reporting period as one method to assist making improvements but has not progressed to adopting this as a possible solution at this stage. There is evidence that this has worked well in other authorities yet will have a cost in terms of affecting timeliness of reviews as well as personal impact on others involved in reviews, especially young people. Further consideration will be given to use of this as a means of bringing improved performance over 2014-15.

- 7.5 Notification to IROs of any significant change or event in a child's life including any proposed change to the care plan has seen improvement over 2013-14, compared to the previous year and there have been more examples of good practice in this respect to support that the role of the IRO is better understood than previously and more integrated into the thinking of workers and managers at all levels.
- 7.6 The role of the IRO Service in the Joint Solutions and Permanency Forum has been influential in this, having a positive impact for best outcomes for children at an individual case level as well as opportunity to influence service planning and development for children in care.
- 7.7 Additionally work undertaken between the IRO Service and Legal Services around the role of IROs in legal planning meetings for children has further aided notification to IROs of care planning direction and thinking from the operational teams enabling proper process to be followed in terms of decision making and oversight.
- 7.8 However despite improvement, on the whole consistency is still an issue, and agreements about how this will be achieved on a more whole service basis needs to be addressed.
- 7.9 IRO challenge has been a key progressive focus for IROs over the reporting period. Despite the demands on the service and capacity issues already highlighted, it has strived to conduct its role to the fullest, in order to achieve best outcomes for children in care, holding those representing the Local Authority to account where needed. Challenge has taken place on a formal basis using the escalation procedure, as well as on an informal basis which takes the form of concerns being flagged by IROs but not necessarily needing to progress through the formal process. Close work with the Children's Rights Officer for children in care has continued.
- 7.10 The issues of concern requiring challenge have as in the previous reporting period, centred mainly on drift and delay in permanency planning and associated decision making along with placement sufficiency, suitability and stability. None of the cases that used the escalation procedure required referral to Cafcass in relation to Judicial Review as the challenge was resolved prior to that becoming necessary. However advice and consultation has been sought from Cafcass legal advisors in 3 cases this period compared to one

previously and one case has required an element of independent legal advice.

- 7.11 The IRO Service has identified the need to review its systems to ensure all challenge work is captured and evidenced to best effect and there is clear information regarding outcomes and impact for children and young people. This will form part of the 2014-15 work programme (see Appendix 2). Quarterly thematic reporting is now in place that will support the collective rather than the individual scrutiny - the action that follows from this reporting needs to be developed more systematically at senior manager level with the IRO Service in order to realise the contribution of the IRO Service to strategic service development and better provision and outcomes for LAC.
- 7.12 The latter part of the reporting period has seen the development of monthly challenge meetings between the IRO Service managers and Assistant Director that are diarised ahead over the forthcoming year. Clear terms of reference have been identified along with clear lines of accountability in terms of the role the Local Authority has as a Corporate Parent to the children in its care. It is the intention to use these meetings as opportunity to further the way in which the IRO Service can influence not just the individual case of the child but developments for improvement on a strategic and service level also.
- 7.13 IRO Service links with partners in health and education for the benefit of children in care services have been consolidated over the reporting period with both the EDCiC Service and Specialist Nursing LAC health team. There is representation at both education and health strategic groups and arrangements in place for regular attendance at IRO meetings of both services.
- 7.14 Over the 2013-14 period, the IRO Service has worked with EDCiC in relation to developments in personal education plans for early years as well as 16 + and has recently commenced consultation with health around leaving care health summaries. Close working relationships will continue.

8.0 Recommended areas for improvement by the operational service

- Improved quality and timeliness of preparation for LAC reviews alongside consistency and quality of assessment and care planning.
- Whole service consistency as regards notification to and consultation with IRO of changes and progress or otherwise in a child's case.
- Clearer and fuller understanding of the statutory role of the IRO across all workers and managers responsible for and working with children in care.

- Clearer and fuller understanding of the processes and procedures to be followed for LAC to achieve best practice and best outcomes.
- Improved placement sufficiency and suitability to support stability and permanency.

9.0 Annual work programme of the IRO service i.e. priority areas for improvement and action in the IRO service in the coming year.

See Appendix 2 attached

Judith Jones

Team Manager (Children in Care and Corporate Parenting)

Safeguarding & Improvement Unit

June 2014

Appendix 1

Performance of IRO Service against 2013-2014 Annual Work Programme

ACTION	WHO	WHEN	RAG	COMMENTARY
Address delays in the distribution of records of the decisions and recommendations from LAC reviews.	SIU Managers including Admin Managers with IROs	End of 2013 and monitor through monthly reporting system	G	Achieved at the end of April 2014. Improved reporting and monitoring now in place to ensure this is maintained, although this remains vulnerable to demand as well as the magnitude of the IRO role.
Identify resource gaps	SIU Managers	Review at monthly SIU Manager meeting	G	Additional IRO recruited during 2013-14 to increase the IRO establishment. Risk assessment being completed June 2014 led by SIU Service Manager.
Achieve consistency through workload allocations systems	SIU Managers and Admin Team	End of 2013, monitor at monthly joint meeting	G	Weekly workload management meetings in place with SIU Team

ACTION	WHO	WHEN	RAG	COMMENTARY
		with Admin Managers		Managers working closely with Administrative Team and Admin Managers for improved consistency.
Achieve consistency through quality assurance systems in place (Observation tool, peer observations, and audit)	SIU Team Managers with Safeguarding Development Officer and IROs	End of 2013	A	This work remains in the early stages, capacity across the IROs and Team Managers has been a factor. Will need to be taken forward into 2014-2015 Work Plan.
Develop and execute IRO Handbook implementation Plan	SIU Team Managers for Children in Care and Quality Assurance	See Appendix 3 for more detail.	G	This is almost complete. Detail can be seen at Appendix 3
Plan and run IRO Service follow up development day. Focus on permanency planning and effective	SIU Team Managers with Learning and Development	November 2013	G	Achieved although work will be undertaken over 2014-2015 to embed Growing Safety methodology and

ACTION	WHO	WHEN	RAG	COMMENTARY
LAC review recommendations.				approach into LAC Reviews
Launch Care Planning developments	SIU Team Managers for Children in Care and Quality Assurance with Locality Social Work Teams	July 2014	A	Locality lead identified and planning is underway. Carried forward to the 2014-2015 work plan.
Further review of IRO recording on Fwi and consistent use by IROs	SIU Team Managers & IROs	End of November 2013	G	Further review achieved. There has been improved use - highlighted need for more consistent and increased use. Work plan for 2014-2015 will include more systematic manager oversight of usage along with periodic reviews and audit.
Develop further systems to capture evidence regarding quality and impact of IRO Service	SIU Team Managers	End of 2013	A	Quarterly reporting developments are in place. Some system refinement required. Further work needed for user feedback

ACTION	WHO	WHEN	RAG	COMMENTARY
				to be developed in the work programme 2014 - 15.
Use the Beacon to improve and develop a wider range of participation and consultation strategies	Beacon Development Team	March 2014	A	Wider use of the Beacon is needed; action for 2014 - 2015 Work Plan. Consultation developments including use of the Beacon as a platform currently in place; 2014 – 2015 Work Plan.
IRO compliance with relevant Adoption Minimum Standards and requirements of the Adoption Act 2002	SIU Team Managers	End of 2013	G	Adoption Action Plan tasks for SIU achieved.

Appendix 2

IRO Service 2014-2015 Annual Work Programme

ACTION	WHO	WHEN	RAG	COMMENTARY
Risk assessment to consider sufficiency of capacity in IRO Service	SIU Service Manager	June 2014	G	SMT Agenda June 20 th 2014
Achieve consistency of approach across IRO Team using observation tool, peer review and audit	SIU Team Managers and IROs	Dec 2014	G	Approach being used that replicates what has been undertaken across Child Protection Conferencing Service.
Realise IRO Handbook full implementation	IRO Service Team Manager leads	See detail in Appendix 3	G	Almost complete – Appendix 3 has more detail
Embed Growing Safety methodology and approach into LAC Reviews	SIU Team Managers with L&D and IROs	March 2015	A	Growing Safety IRO Champion to have key role building on progress and skill set developed through introduction in CP conferences.

ACTION	WHO	WHEN	RAG	COMMENTARY
Complete Care Planning & Review developments	SIU Team Managers for Children in Care and Quality Assurance with Locality Social Work Teams	July 2014	A	Locality lead identified and planning is underway
More consistent and increased use of recording on Fwi by IROs to evidence their role and challenge.	SIU Team Managers & IROs	Through quarterly reporting	G	Team managers applying more systematic oversight of usage – need to review nomenclature of case note type on Fwi and set review and audit pattern.
Refine systems for capturing evidence of quality and impact of IRO Service including user feedback	SIU Team Managers	September 2014	G	Time specific and focused piece of work currently underway
Wider use of Beacon website as a platform for consultation and participation	Beacon Development Team with IRO temp manager	Initial phase by September 2014	G	Work commenced June 2014
Establish IRO specialist role for Care Leavers and SYPAC link.	IRO	July 2014	G	IRO identified

ACTION	WHO	WHEN	RAG	COMMENTARY
Further improve participation performance	IRO Service lead with locality social work teams	March 2015	A	SIU team manager /admin monitoring system in place and planned work in relation to care planning and review developments with localities will assist.
Establish IRO Service link with Family Justice Board and VOICE of young people in care	IRO Managers and young people	July 2014	G	Recently set up – opportunity to influence further Public Law Outline developments to secure better experience and outcomes for children.
Increase challenge - need to improve influence at service and strategic level not just individual case	IRO Service with Assistant Director	Monthly	G	Commenced end of 2013-2014 period

Appendix 3

IRO Handbook Implementation Plan – Progress Update June 2014

REQUIREMENT	ACTION	WHO	WHEN	RAG	COMMENTARY
IRO Service to be notified of child becoming Looked After within 2 working days.	To ensure notification procedure in place to alert SIU. This involves procedures to be in place with Locality Team	Locality Social Work Teams	October 2013	A	Good progress made between Oct 2013 and April 2014 but this is not being consistently maintained and further work with localities needed.
IRO to be appointed to child within 5 working days of child becoming Looked After. Child to be given information including contact details. If child only informed verbally this date to be recorded on case records.	Relies on notification process as above. Need to develop notification process to inform young person (age appropriately) of the IRO's details.	SIU	September 2014	A	IROs are allocated as soon as SIU receives notification so if notification is on time then allocation is too. Information to child re IRO is part of work recently commenced in IRO service around consultation and preparation for LAC reviews including use of the Beacon.
IRO name and contact details must be recorded on case record	Name of IRO is shown on child's front sheet on Frameworki	N/A	Already in place	G	Completed

Consistency of IRO including across sibling groups.	Administrative system ensures that SW is asked about the relationship of child to any other siblings that may be in care or subject to CP plans.	N/A	This practice already in place.	G	Completed
IRO to receive all appropriate reports in advance of the LAC review	Aide Memoir for SW/TM to define minimum set of documents.	N/A	July '12	G	Completed
	Need to make clear the expectations and timescales that Locality Social Work Teams need to achieve.	SIU Team Managers to Locality Social Work Teams	September 2014	A	Improvement in performance from last year as highlighted in the body of this report but still not a good standard and IRO Service will be taking firm stance moving forward.
IRO to speak with the SW 15 days prior to review (to include agreeing arrangements for the meeting).	IRO to forward task date for consultation and planning and preparation from point of allocation	SIU/ IROs	Sept 2014	A	Not happening consistently, capacity is an issue – needs to be part of the care planning and review developments that need to be taken forward
Consult with the child about the review 10 working days prior to the review.	IRO/SW to liaise, agree plan and forward task date for consultation.	IROs & Locality SW	Sept 2014	A	Part of care planning and review developments.

IRO to provide child with information about advocacy, Children's Rights, how to make a complaint, including information re discharge of care order.	Suitable written format to be developed and system to evidence.	IROs/CRO	October 2014	A	Information already present on Beacon website. Plans for small working group to develop with CiCC in place.
IRO to meet with / communicate with child before review.	Facility to record this activity on Fwi in place, now need to monitor performance.	SIU Team Managers	In place	G	Team Managers are monitoring performance, working with Performance and Business Intelligence colleagues.
To agree role of child/Young person in the review (including arrangement for young person to chair some/all of the meeting).	To embed practice further into care planning and review developments.	IRO Service with Locality Teams	End of 2013	G	To continue to implement as part of the process of organising review
IRO to observe child <4 yrs in placement	Completed	IROs	In place	G	Completed
Written consultation to child, parent, carers and other significant person 10 working days prior to review	Update consultation process and methods	SIU Team Manager, IROs and Young People	September 2014	G	In progress

Review timescales to be in place and monitored. Including adjourned reviews.	Completed	SIU Team and Admin Managers	Completed	G	In place.
To establish clear procedure where child is subject to more than one process (e.g. CP, CSE, CUSAB)	To develop procedure that clarifies how this will be managed	SIU Managers with Admin	September 2014	A	There is a procedure and oversight in place that is understood and actioned within the SIU but not currently captured in writing
To record outcome of permanency plan (3 month review)	Completed	IROs	Completed	G	Encompassed in new LAC minutes format and process in place for communicating with ADM.
Review timescale for Adoption placement disruption (4 – 6 weeks following removal of child)	Included in procedures.	N/A	In place	G	In place
To distribute decisions and minutes within timescale	Covered in Appendix 1	SIU Managers with admin and IROs	Achieved	G	As per Appendix 1
SW to update care plan within 10 working days of review.	Locality social work teams to address	Locality social work teams	Phased approach from July 2014		Part of care planning and review joint work needed.

Dispute resolution and Escalation procedure	Completed	N/A	N/A	G	In place
Provision of independent legal advice for IROs that is easily accessible.	Completed	N/A	N/A	G	In place
Changes to the care plan to be reviewed and recorded	Notifications to IROs need to happen more consistently in order to achieve this fully.	Locality social work teams and managers	Immediately	A	Criteria of when this is required has been set out and communicated to social work teams. Improvement evident but still needs to happen more consistently.
To ensure systems are in place to meet the care planning needs of more specialist groups with more specialist requirements including LAC Reviews for children receiving Short Breaks; young people in the Criminal Justice System; children and young people in secure accommodation (s25 Children Act 1989); for Children admitted to Hospital and	To ensure Frameworki episode is in place. Access to specialist communication services and advocacy. Update IRO and social worker Aide Memoir with specialist information and where to access further detail Produce procedure that outlines and clarifies requirements in each of the specialist circumstances and integration of the LAC review	SIU Team Managers with relevant professionals for each of the specialist requirements.	September 2014	A	Some of this work is complete and in place e.g. young people in the Criminal Justice System and Secure Accommodation and the remainder needs completion.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.	& IRO into other relevant procedures e.g. the Secure Accommodation Panel, Care Programme Approach, UASC related processes.				
Transition Planning	<p>To ensure protocol is in place to set out expectations for Pathway Planning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEN/PEP process • Pathway Planning • Co-chairing meetings • Move to unregulated placement <p>Process to ensure Pathway Planning is complete – receipt 20 days prior to 18th birthday.</p> <p>To consider the role of IRO oversight of Pathway Plan post 18.</p> <p>To review protocol with Adult Health & Social Care.</p>	SIU Team Managers with Transitions Teams, CiC Teams and Adult Services	October 2014	A	Some areas have been developed the remainder require further work.

Appendix 4

Key Findings - Independent Reviewing Officers: taking up the challenge? Leicestershire IRO Service position against findings –progress update June 2014.

FINDING	ACTION & COMMENTARY	WHO	WHEN	RAG
Pace of progress in taking on all of the enhanced responsibilities too slow	IRO Service has almost achieved IRO handbook implementation plan-see Appendix 3 for detail.	SIU Managers & IRO Service	Risk assessment re. sufficiency to DMT June 2014 Appendix 3 has detail.	G
The effectiveness of IRO oversight of care plans not consistently good enough	IRO Service has further increased its oversight and challenge over the reporting period – IRO Service input into JSF has supported this and plans in place to further improve and increase recording and evidence on Fwi.	IRO Service	Quarterly reports	G
Workloads impacting on ability of IRO's to carry out role effectively and influence of child's VOICE in planning	Despite challenging workloads body of this report highlights achievements and progress alongside further improvements to be made. Risk assessment has been undertaken in recognition of the impact of workloads and work is in progress as identified in Appendix 2 to further through consultation and participation the influence of the child's VOICE.	SIU Managers & IRO Service	As per Appendix 2	G

Review recommendations and monitoring not consistently rigorous resulting in poor planning and delay	New format for recommendations in place supports more rigorous and consistent approach to planning and securing permanency.	IRO Service	In place	G
Insufficient consultation with young people about venue for their reviews and attendance.	Part of care planning and review developments - to embed further as part of the process of organising the review	SIU Managers and Admin Managers alongside Locality Managers	September 2014	A
Social Worker and IRO consultation occurs regularly but purpose and impact not always evident	Key discussions and outcomes recorded on Fwi by IROs with analytical approach. Team manager oversight in place to ensure more consistent and increased use.	IROs and SIU Team Managers	In place	G
Quality of IRO Annual report not consistently good enough and not accessible to children and young people, carers and families and wider public.	Agreed format as per IRO Handbook being followed.	SIU team manager	In place	G
	Reports tabled for Corporate Parenting, LSCB and Scrutiny	“	Achieved	G
	2013-2014 report to be made available on LCC website and Beacon website including version for children and young people.	“	September 2014	G

IRO's not forging links with Corporate Parenting Board or CinC Council.	Effective integration already in place but need to develop influence at strategic and service level. Use of monthly challenge meetings with Assistant Director to further this.	SIU Managers with IRO Service and AD	In place	G
Formal dispute resolution processes in place but not always well understood or used when required	Effective challenge mechanisms in place and demonstrated through a number of cases. Dispute process used effectively. Work underway to improve systems for capture and evidence as per Appendix 2	IRO Service	In place	G
The involvement of IRO's in cases where care proceedings underdeveloped, though improving liaison with Cafcass evidenced	National protocol with Cafcass near completion at local level – initial phases in place already which is supporting more focused and consistent liaison.	SIU Managers with Cafcass and Leicester City	In place	G
Oversight of IRO work by line managers not sufficiently rigorous.	SIU Team Managers continue to oversee individual IRO work through formal and informal supervision, apply supervision and capability processes and policies. Workload management and oversight system in place. Quarterly reporting in place provides more collective oversight	SIU Managers	In place	G

Independent challenge that can be provided by IRO's was encouraged and welcomed as a lever for improvement	Active challenge in place with reporting mechanism to Senior Management.	IRO Service with SIU Managers	In place	G
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Appendix 5 – Tables of figures

Table 1

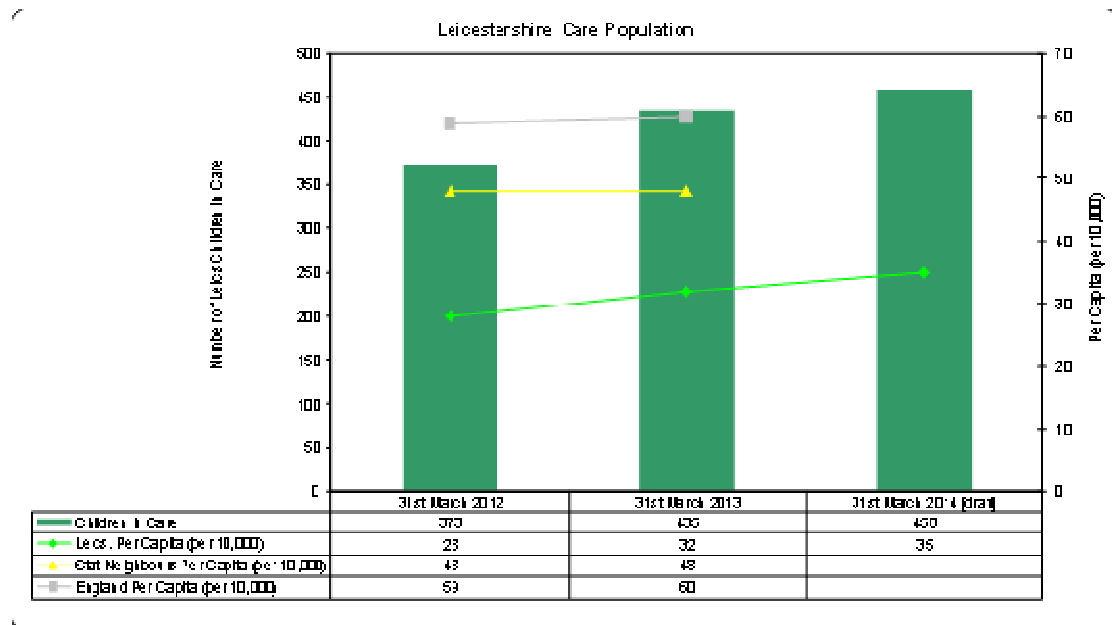


Table 2

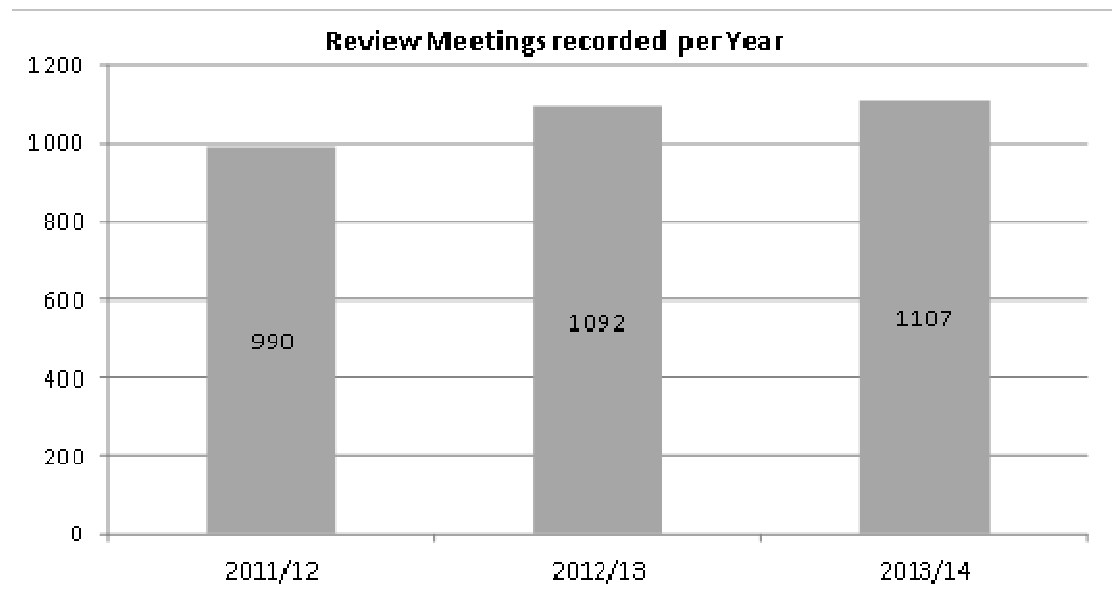


Table 3

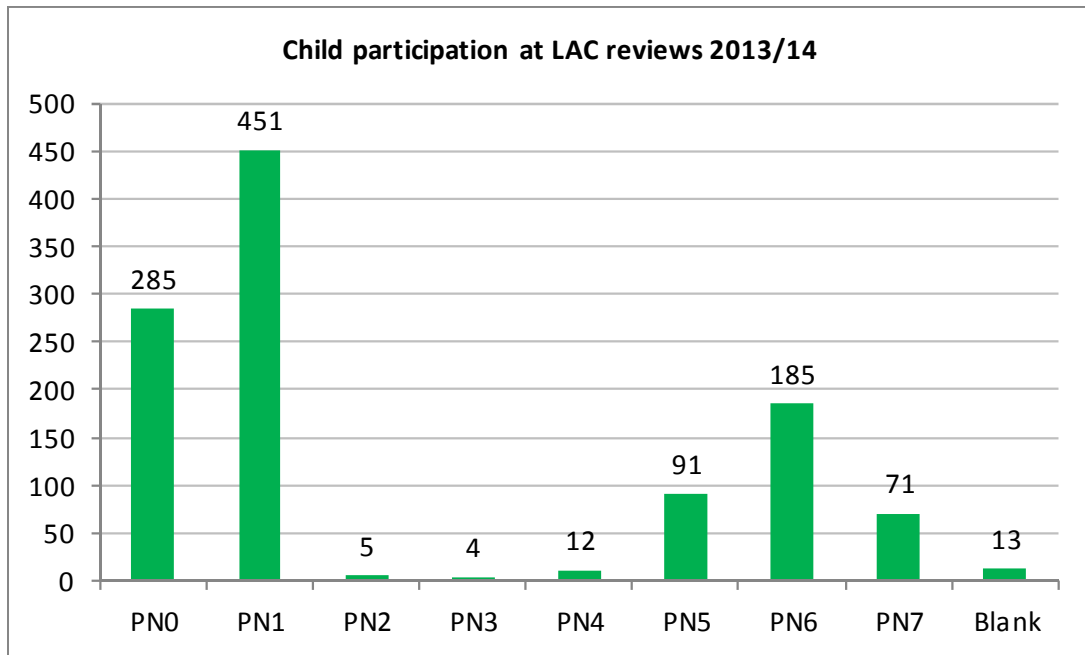
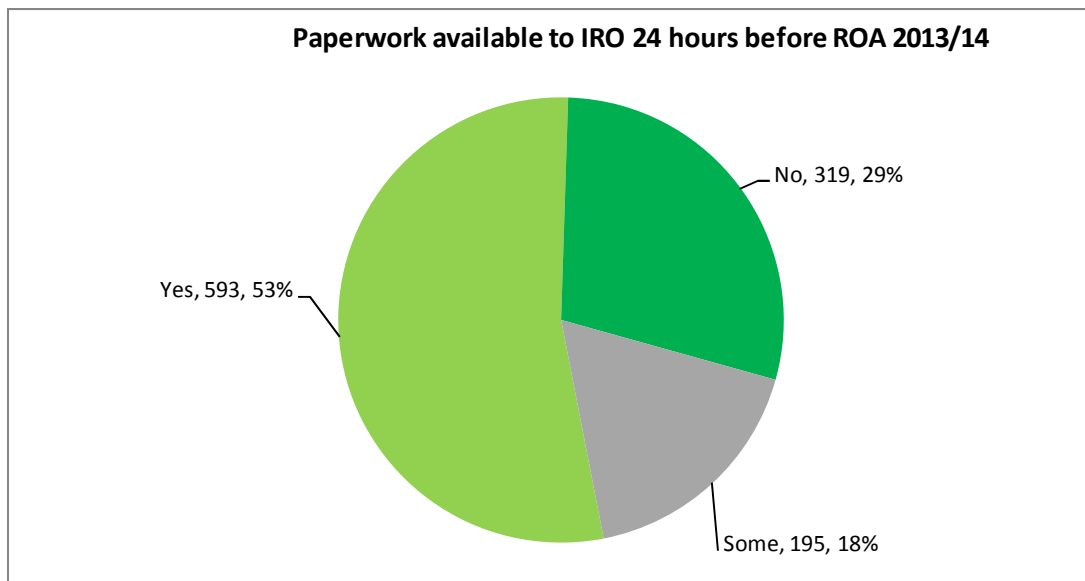


Table 4



LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES
Safeguarding & Improvement Unit

IRO Child Protection Annual Report 2013-14

Content

1. Executive Summary
2. Introduction
3. Purpose of service and legal context
4. Independent Reviewing Officer Service
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7. Children Using Sexually Abusive Behaviour
8. Future Development Activity
9. Annual Work Programme 2014-15

Appendices

Executive Summary

- 1.1 This document sets out the Independent Review Officer (IRO) report on the performance of the child protection system during 2013-14.
- 1.2 There are strengths, challenges and areas for improvement as set out below. The report identifies some development areas and includes a work programme for 2014-15 within the appendices.
- 1.3 Strengths
 - The introduction of the Grow Safety model into Child Protection Conferences (CPC) to make clearer the concerns and allow for the child and family voice to be heard.
 - Provision of a dedicated advocacy service to support children over 10 years old in the CPC.
 - Low numbers of complaints.
 - Listening & Support Service for children who go missing.
- 1.4 Challenges
 - To ensure that the category of Emotional Abuse complies with the definition set out in Working Together 2013 and DfE guidance.
 - To ensure that families receive case conferences reports within the defined LSCB timescales.
 - Securing partnership attendance at conference to ensure quoracy.
 - Ensuring that the data input into Frameworki is accurate and on time.
- 1.5 Areas for Improvement
 - Agency representation at case conferences must be secured to ensure that conferences are quorate and can take place within timescales set out in the LSCB procedures.
 - Agency provision of accurate and concise information in the prescribed LSCB format.
 - More regular recording and monitoring of IRO challenge and escalation.
 - Return interviews must be consistently carried out with children who go missing.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 is the current guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The LSCB define inter-agency processes and protocols that fully comply with Working Together.
- 2.2 Where the agencies most involved judge that a child may continue to, or be likely to suffer significant harm, the local authority's Children's Social Care should convene a Child Protection Conference. The aim of the conference is to enable those professionals most involved with the child and its family to assess all relevant information and plan how best to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child.
- 2.3 This report is an opportunity to highlight areas of good practice and areas that require improvement in relation to child protection and is the second such report. The report identifies key themes and areas of work that the Safeguarding and Improvement Unit has prioritised during the year 2013-14.
- 2.4 The data used in the report represents that used by the service to track performance in relation to child protection, missing, child sexual exploitation (CSE), and children using sexually abusive behaviour (CUSAB).

3.0 Purpose of Service & Legal Context

- 3.1 The Child Protection Conference process is a formal meeting convened under Working Together 2013 where there are serious concerns regarding the safety of a child. Working Together 2013 p41 sets out the role and remit of the Chair of the Child Protection Case conference, in that s/he:

Is accountable to the Director of Children and Family Services. Where possible the same person should chair subsequent child protection reviews;

Should be a professional, independent of operational and/or line management responsibilities for the case; and

Should meet the child and parents in advance to ensure they understand the purpose and the process.

- 3.2 The Safeguarding & Improvement Unit (SIU) was restructured in 2011 to reflect the ethos of managing and developing a high quality conference and review service, ensuring the application of high quality improvement, quality assurance and internal challenge activity.

- 3.3 The work is undertaken in accordance with legal requirements and departmental policies and procedures. The SIU's key principles in relation to child protection are to:
- Deliver an efficient monitoring and review service
 - Quality assure, analyse and provide feedback in relation to best practice standards and incorporate learning from inspections and service recipient feedback
 - Provide active internal challenge in relation to cases and repeat Child Protection planning
 - Highlighting areas of improvement to senior managers
- 3.4 The Independent Reviewing Officer Service remains independent of the operational team's line management.
- 3.5 The SIU provides an independent chair (IRO) for all Child Protection Case Conferences. Where possible the same IRO chairs all the conferences for that family, unless operational issues intervene that requires an alternative IRO to chair. The IRO always introduces themselves to the family and child (if present) to explain their role, the purpose and format of the meeting, and to establish any concerns or worries the family have about the process. These meetings take place 15 minutes prior to the start Child Protection Conference, though on a number of occasions IRO's report these meetings lasting longer due to the family not having had the Social Workers report or there not being adequate preparation undertaken in advance of the meeting. Where the report has been shared and a full discussion with the family has taken place the meetings are reported by the IRO's to be shorter and used the time in a more focused way to establish the risks and develop the plan.

4.0 Team Structure & Profile

- 4.1 The team has undergone some changes in personnel during 2013-14 as a result of maternity leave, one member of staff leaving and new staff commencing to replace. The team during this period has been at the level of 9.8 FTE represented by 11 individual IRO's.
- 4.2 The Service Manager SIU has lead responsibility for the IRO Service. Three Team Managers have lead responsibilities within the SIU for children in care, quality assurance, and child protection, child sexual exploitation, children missing/runaways, and child trafficking. The IRO Service has developed lead roles across a number of areas.
- 4.3 In addition to chairing Child Protection Case Conferences the SIU undertakes oversight and direct chairing of:
- CSE meetings
 - CUSAB Meetings
 - Lead on interface of SIU with Growing Safety developments

- Children with Complex Care Needs
 - Regional & National IRO Developments
- 4.4 Additionally, 2 IROs have been involved with the Children in Care Council, working closely with the Participation Officer for Children in Care and Care Leavers as well as the Corporate Parenting Team and Team Manager. Links have been forged with the Corporate Parenting Board where influence is exerted, as regards the overall progress and experiences of children and young people in care and care leavers.
- 4.5 There are plans over 2014-15 to further develop the specialisms within the service and have an IRO taking the lead on Care Leavers; linking with the newly developed Care Leavers focus group SYPAC (Supporting Young People After Care). Leicestershire officially signed its commitment to the Care Leavers Charter at a launch event at the end of April 2014 and it will be vital that there is accountability for the pledge it has made to care leavers – the IRO specialism will assist in this implementation.
- 4.6 The service is configured in a way that the IRO's cover both Child Protection Conferences and Looked After Reviews. This offers a number of advantages in that there can often be continuity by having the IRO chairing the Case Conference can then be the reviewing officer should the child become a child in care following the child's journey. It helps ensure IROs retain skills useful for the reviewing process, supports the maintenance and focus on the safety and welfare of children in care and also enables the management of staffing resources across the service at times of staffing shortage or emergency. The service provided from the IRO team to Child Protection as well as Children in Care continues to be given equal priority and status.
- 4.7 At present there are no plans to make any changes to the configuration of the team by splitting the team into two functional areas.
- 4.8 Individual IRO's are involved in areas of development across Children's Social Care Services. This includes the Growing Safety strategy promoting a Signs of Safety approach to families and children, the development of the neglect tool kit and Children in Care Council. Due to fluctuations in staffing levels it has not been possible for IRO's to cover other areas of development that had been in place in previous reporting periods. As the team enters a more stable staffing situation, including the recruitment of new staff with a variety of skills and interests there will be the opportunity to re-connect with some of these areas.
- 4.9 It was the plan to develop and fully implement the Signs of Safety approach to Child Protection Conferences during 2013-14. The difficulties arising from staffing fluctuations and demand during 2013-14 meant that the SIU Team Managers were called on to cover a number of Child Protection Conferences and Looked After Children's reviews. The ground work was still kept in focus during this time. A whole team training day

was held in November 2013 to critique the proposed development. A review by the SIU Management Team of Child Protection Plans had been undertaken prior to the training day. This audit comprised an analysis of 20 plans – weighted towards Initial Case Conferences. Furthermore a number of observations of IRO chair practice were undertaken during this period, the results were used within individual reflective supervision sessions and the learning was disseminated within team meetings and team development day.

- 4.10 The results of the audit were used to inform the areas for improvement of Child Protection Plans that focused on ensuring objectives were identified as a need, clear timescales were in place as well as clear outcomes.
- 4.11 A Signs of Safety licensed trainer for Child Protection Conferences has been secured to support the developments. Further work is scheduled in 2014-15 to embed the Signs of Safety approach into Child Protection Conferences.
- 4.12 A number of the IROs have begun to introduce elements of the Signs of Safety approach. The elements include; beginning the conference with a view from the parent's as to their understanding of the concerns; engaging the parent's in a discussion about their family structure and household; framing the information sharing in ways that draw on the principles of the 3 columns; and framing objectives that look at building safety and setting clear outcomes. The initial feedback from IROs has been encouraging with family and Social Workers acknowledging the way it makes clearer the concerns and allows the family a voice.
- 4.13 There are to be further developments to the Child Protection Conference process planned to take place through 2014-15. This will be in conjunction with the Project lead Co-ordinator and with partner agencies. A whole systems approach to any developments will be undertaken. The voice of the child and parent will be embedded from the outset. The outcome will be for case conferences to be risk sensible, whilst building demonstrable safety for the child.

5.0 Child Protection Conference Service

5.1 Conference Activity

5.1.1 The activity of the unit in chairing both Initial and Review Child Protection Conferences in this year compared to 2012-13 has been:

2011-12	1165 (this included 5 Rutland conferences)
2012-13	1105
2013-14	1031

- 5.1.2 The number of Child Protection Conferences convened and chaired has been a small reduction over the 3 year period. This matches a downward trend over the 3 years of reducing number of children subject to plans measured at year end (31st March) from 524 (2011-12), 393 (2012-13) and increasing to 446 (2013-14).
- 5.1.3 Over the period 2013-14 Q1 and Q2 saw a decline in the number of children subject to plans that continued the trend from the last quarter of the previous period. By Q3 a rise in the number of plans reversed this downward trend. There could be a number of contributory factors so it is not possible without finer grade data to establish the determining reasons. It could be the result of local responses to national issues of publicised child deaths. This is distributed as follows:

Type of Conference	2013-14	2012-13
Initial	274	256
Initial Pre-birth	64	57
Initial Receiving -in	25	21
Initial Re-convened	2	2
1 st Review	296	284
Subsequent Review	370	485

- 5.1.4 It is interesting to note that the activity around child protection conferences increased over the later quarters with net increases being a sustained pattern on increasing plans, that spiked initially in Q3 and continued (apart a slight drop in January 2014) to increase. **See Table 1 in the Appendix**
- 5.1.5 A number of Child Protection Plans in this period ended at the first review (149 – 33%). This would indicate that either there was effective and focused intervention that managed to reduce the level of concerns, or there may have alternative approaches to manage the risks in some of these cases to prevent them entering the Child Protection process. **See Table 2 in the Appendix**
- 5.1.6 The most frequent single categories used in plans are Neglect (18%) and Emotional (15%), which demonstrates a convergence in the proportions over the period. Multiple categories continue to be a significant level, showing a determined pattern over the final 3 quarters. Multiple categories represented 57% of the total number that is where there are 2 or more categories used. Often the categories of Neglect and Emotional Abuse are used together and this is not always necessary, reference is not often made to the definition of Emotional Abuse set out by Working Together 2013 and the DfE. IROs will continue to challenge this within conferences to ensure the category of Emotional Abuse is only used when appropriate. There is also a rigorous internal challenge within SIU to challenge the use of multiple categories. **See Table 3 in the Appendix.** This will be the subject of challenge from the IRO's to all agencies to ensure coherence in planning in a way that imparts clarity for the family.

- 5.1.7 The significant factors indicated for a child being subject to a plan are in line with national figures and research. The often cited 'Toxic Trio' (Alcohol Abuse, Domestic Violence and Parental Mental Health) account for the majority of factors involved for all conferences (initial and review). These factors individually are significant but when put together illustrate the nature of the households in which children are living.
- 5.1.8 The majority of children subject to a Child Protection Plan fall predominately in the 0-9 age range (75%), with the greater proportion in the 0-4 age range (42%). **See Table 5 in the Appendix**
- 5.1.9 The ethnic profile of children subject to plans is majority white, accounting for over 80% of children on Child Protection Plans consistently across the year. Children of mixed heritage are also at a consistent level. Those children from an Asian heritage have shown a slight increase in being subject to a plan between Q3 & Q4. Those children with a Black heritage, although representing a small overall number of children of plans has shown a slight increase over the last 2 Quarters. **See Table 6 in the Appendix**

5.2 Conference Performance

- 5.2.1 There has been ongoing concern from the IRO's of families not receiving the case conference report within the LSCB timescales. The time prior to the conference when the report is to be received is contained in LSCB Procedures Chapter 1.4.1 Section 11.2. The parents should receive the report for an Initial Conference at least 2 working days in advance and with the chair 1 working day in advance. The report for a review case conference in accordance with Chapter 1.4.4 Section 4 is to be with the parent and the IRO at least 3 working days in advance.
- 5.2.2 In 2013-14 in more than 60% of all conferences the report was only received by the family on the day of the conference. It is not possible to report on the figure for IRO's but from anecdotal information the report is slightly more likely to be received prior to the conference. The performance has improved from 2011-12 for review case conferences where 71% of reports were received by family on the day to 67% in 2013-14. The performance on initials has however deteriorated where in 2011-12 it was 48 % in 2013-14 it was 55%. This is an area where more rigorous oversight from the SIU will be put in place.
- 5.2.3 Over this period 24 conferences were not held with timescale, 20 Initial and 4 Review. This was because in 11 cases the conference was not quorate and crucial agency representation was not present that made the conference would not have a credible level of information from a key agency. In 6 cases the Locality Team Manager had entered the date of the initial s47 episode incorrectly on Frameworki. In 4 cases the unavailability of room, clerk, IRO prevented the conference being held within timescale, and there had been a miscalculation of the review date.

The later issue has been resolved in the unit by the clerks having a reference sheet that calculates the correct date by which the conferences is to be held. In 2 cases the invite list prepared by the Social Worker was poor and resulted in the incorrect professionals being invited. In one case the Social worker was in a road traffic collision it was not possible to proceed as the report was not available nor any staff to cover.

5.2.4 The availability of IRO's and members of the SIU Management to offer consultation has been publicised. This has resulted in the preparation for conference being more effective, particularly with planning for conferences with multiple parents. There have also been occasions where advance consultation has been able to offer an alternative to a conference and managing the safety and risks in a different way. The further use of this approach may offer a way forward in identifying cases where an alternative approach to building safety for the child.

5.2.5 There was an action plan introduced that addressed the delay in the distribution of minutes. This has seen some improvements and systems have been put in place to monitor the turn-around of minutes. This is through tri-angulation of information collected from the conference clerk team and the IRO's to ensure that any delays are identified. The SIU Managers review workflow on a weekly basis.

5.3 Agency Contribution & Participation

5.3.1 It is expected that agency representatives provide accurate and concise information to conference in the agreed format. The observation from the IRO's is that continues to be rarely provided by some agencies. Primary Health practitioners do provide comprehensive reports in a timely way for conferences. The reports received from the Child Protection Co-ordinators of Leicestershire Police are often received in advance, though the presence of representatives to speak to the information is often variable. It is an area where further discussion with Police colleagues is to be progressed. Reports are rarely provided from GP's in the agreed format. The information when provided is often as a letter containing the factual information but rarely with a view or analysis. Information from schools are also received in a variety of formats, and rarely in the prescribed LSCB format.

5.3.2 The reports from agency representative have not been the subject of such detailed scrutiny as those of Social Workers. There is also not the same level of data available as receipt of agency reports are not monitored outside of the record of the meeting. Suffice to say that information from agency representative is most frequently provided verbally and that adds to the amount of information that needs to be recorded contemporaneously within the Case Conference, and from the observation of practice by SIU Team Managers contributes to the length of the meetings.

5.4 The Child Protection Advocacy Service

- 5.4.1 The provision of a dedicated advocate to support young people in the child Protection conference process began on 3rd June 2013.
- 5.4.2 The service is offered to every young person over 10 years old who are subject of a Child Protection Conference.
- 5.4.3 The referral system is managed by the SIU clerical team who identify young people aged 10 and over at the time when a booking is made for a CP conference. The advocate is then notified by e-mail and makes contact to set up a meeting with young person if they wish to use the service. This contact is initially in collaboration with the parents.
- 5.4.4 Over the period since it began operating directly there have been 102 referrals to the service. The service was provided to 53 young people with the advocate representing or supporting them in 54 conferences. In addition a further 6 young people aged between 7- 9 years were supported as they were the younger siblings.
- 5.4.5 A more detailed report is being prepared by the CP Advocacy Service.

5.5 Complaints & Appeals

- 5.5.1 In the reporting period the SIU dealt with 8 complaints from parents. Of these 6 were resolved by contact with the complainant either by a meeting or letter. Two complaints also involved Locality activity and had to be handled at Stage 2. The areas of issue were of the main dissatisfaction with the contents of minutes where the complainant was of the view that there was a misrepresentation of information. In all cases the matter was investigated and the complaint was not upheld.
- 5.5.2 One appeal against a Child Protection Conference decision was heard through the revised Appeals procedure. The appeal was not upheld, though learning points around the way in which the involvement of an absent father is supported was noted for Locality Social Work practice.
- 5.5.3 There were no instances of professional disagreement or dissension in relation to a Child Protection Conference outcome during this reporting period.

5.6 Challenges & Escalation

- 5.6.1 The SIU has a role in identifying areas of concern in practice and undertaking challenge where it is required. In this reporting period it is known that IROs have had a number of lower level practice discussions on cases. Where there have been more serious concerns there has been a professional discussion. This has been recorded on 9 occasions over the period. A system to escalate was in place prior to Q2 but needed

strengthening and by Q3 this was in place. During the subsequent period it identified 9 cases where there was a need to escalate to Team Manager. The concerns were in the main around the sufficiency of the Social Workers report to conference (3), significant delay in completing objectives (1), lack of Social Work visits (1), lack of management oversight resulting in a conference being scheduled to recommend a Child in Need Plan (1), significant delay in invite list being sent out (1), not seeking legal advice and professional meeting on a case of possible child abduction.

- 5.6.2 It is recognised that this is an area where more regular recording and monitoring is needed.
- 5.6.3 In Q4 a log of conferences that had been stood down began to be recorded.
- 5.6.4 The development of Thematic reports each Quarter will be implemented to assist in managing the performance of the SUI and that of Locality activity. This will be supported by the IRO Challenge Meeting with the Assistant Director.
- 5.6.4 IRO's have been able to record on Frameworki from 2012. This has developed within the LAC process but has not been as developed in Child Protection cases.

6.0 Children who go Missing

- 6.1 The established multi-agency monthly meetings continued through 2013-14.
- 6.2 The SIU remain the area to which reports are sent where a young person has been missing from care for more than 24 hours and/or there is cause for concern. Over 2013-14 the SIU received the following number of reports.

Total Number of missing episodes reported to SIU	30
Number of young people reported missing	15
Number reported missing from foster care	5
Number reported missing from residential home	10
Number of return interviews recorded as completed with the young person after each episode	15

- 6.3 The oversight offered from SIU on this reporting is to ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place for these vulnerable young people. Return interviews are not consistently completed with the young person

on return. This results in the young person not being able to speak about the issue that prompted them running away, it also means that services and interventions cannot be identified that could reduce or remove this risk taking behaviour. In addition important intelligence around the incident is not collected that may offer insight into patterns of behaviour.

- 6.4 It must also be noted that all the episodes of missing that fall under the reporting requirements are not received. This is highlighted from the data obtained from Leicestershire Police within the monthly meetings. This results in a follow up contact with the allocated Social Worker to ensure the information is received and logged.
- 6.5 From 4th November, 2013 the Youth Service developed the project for undertaking work with children and young people who run away from home (Listening & Support Service). The service is countywide, receiving its referrals for the most part from Leicestershire Police. The service works with children and young people who run away from home and are not Looked After, though they may be subject to a child protection plan. They offer a confidential contact that offers signposting to other services.
- 6.6 The Listening & Support Service has received from the start of its operation to 31st March 96 referrals on 76 young people as follows:

Number of times referred to service	1	2	3	4
Number of Young People	61	11	3	1

Of these young people referred 38 received support from the service, and 25 did not accept the service. Of this latter figure 16 were either receiving support from other agencies or the family had resolved the problem. A further 9 did not respond after being contacted by the service. 4 were not allocated to the service as there was already Social Work involvement.

- 6.7 There is a close link between the Listening & Support Service and the CSE leads located in the SIU.

7.0 Child Sexual Exploitation

- 7.1 The responsibility for the co-ordination of meetings in regards young people who are believed to be subject to CSE remains with SIU. One Team Manager and an IRO are involved in the management of this service as part of their other duties. The process of referral, assessment and co-ordination of meetings has continued in the format that has been in place for the past 3 years. During 2013 the initial development of a multi-agency co-located team was begun in acknowledgment of the need for a more robust response to this issue. The experience of other Local

Authority areas that had experienced serious and organised CSE was an important consideration in developing the team. A number of visits to these Local Authorities took place alongside attendance at national and regional conference.

For 2013-14 the following data has been collated on the level of activity:

Number of referrals	85
Number of Females	78
Number of Males	7
Initial meetings	21
Review meetings	13
Review meetings on previous referrals (2012/13)	12

This compares to 54 referrals made to the SIU in 2012-13

- 7.2 The outcomes from these meetings are incorporated in the Multi-Agency CSE and Missing monthly meeting. The spreadsheet is updated contemporaneously and distributed to attendees. The actions are then reviewed at each subsequent meeting. There has been a significant reduction in the number of young people in the care of Leicestershire who are reported missing being discussed at the meetings. There have been concerns identified around young people placed in Leicestershire by other Local Authorities that required contact to address risk management.

8.0 Children Using Sexually Abusive Behaviour (CUSAB)

- 8.1 The specialist IRO continues to co-ordinate referrals and offer consultation around young people where there is a concern regarding their behaviour.
- 8.2 When a child or young person is considered to have used sexually abusive behaviour, it should initially be identified as a child protection concern. Children's Social Care, in conjunction with Leicestershire Police, will make a decision as to whether or not the behaviour described meets the criteria of sexually abusive behaviour requiring intervention. When it does not meet the threshold criteria for a Child Protection Conference, but concerns remain regarding the child's sexually abusive or inappropriate behaviour, they will be considered as a Child in Need and a (CUSAB) meeting will be convened by the SIU. This co-ordinated approach will bring together information to establish an initial risk management plan and will allocate the various agencies roles and responsibilities.
- 8.3 On completion of the assessment, a meeting will be convened to consider the outcome and review the current needs of the children or young people involved. The plan will support any investigation being undertaken by Children's Social Care and Police, as well as balancing the needs of the 'alleged perpetrator' and the needs of the 'victim'. It is imperative that the

identification of support services is available for both the children, parents and/or carers.

- 8.4 A CUSAB Meeting may be required for a young person returning to the community following a custodial sentence or time in secure accommodation due to sexually abusive behaviour or serious incidents such as sexual assault.
- 8.5 The meetings are convened in line with the LSCB procedures but it is not possible to identify the extent of the level of referrals as they are currently not coded on Frameworki. Not all referrals come through to SIU as practitioners do not appear to be familiar with the process. The majority of meetings chaired by the specialist IRO are in relation to children in care.
- 8.6 As identified in the previous period (2012-13) there is a need to update the process and procedures in line with recent research on practice.

Initial Meetings	21
Review Meetings	15 (+ 19 from Initials conducted in 2012-13)
Age Range	5 - 17
Gender	95% Males

9.0 Developments for 2014-15

9.1 Child Protection

Continue with the developments made in aligning the process with the Growing Safety approach in Leicestershire. This will include conducting a re-modelling of the whole conference process; embedding new skills in the IRO's delivering the conferences; working with partner agencies in setting out expectations around attendance and participation; and rigor in regards clear SMART child protection plans.

Implement a thematic quarterly report that illustrates the performance of the service in relation to areas of practice.

9.2 CSE

Recruit, establish and progress the multi-agency operational team with CSC staff co-located with Leicestershire Police. Put in place the required operational protocols and monitor the effectiveness.

9.3 Missing

Review the present process introduced in 2012 to ensure that there is a robust oversight to young people going missing.

Review the process of reporting with Leicestershire Police and the use of the 'absent' response category.

9.4 CUSAB

Review the protocol and procedure in relation to children using sexually abusive behaviour. This will incorporate recent research and practice. A new proposed process will be developed for adoption across CSC.

Martin R Wilson
Team Manager
Safeguarding & Improvement Unit
June 2014

Performance of IRO Service against 2013-2014 Annual Child Protection Work Programme

ACTION	WHO	WHEN	RAG	COMMENTARY
Improve the level of attendance by Leicestershire Police at child protection conferences	SIU Service Manager (Victor Cook)	March 2014	A	An initial meeting has taken place with CAIU and further developments to improve attendance and reports are planned through 2014/15. Attendance has not significantly increased, but reports have now begun to incorporate analysis and risk assessment
Improve the timeliness of social work reports to conference	SIU Service Manager (Victor Cook)	March 2014	A	The introduction of the Single Assessment Form is anticipated to lead to improvement on this issue. There is to be a system of recording the receipt of Social Workers report and monitoring this on a quarterly basis.
Ensure a QA system is built in to ensure regular feedback to social work teams	SIU Team Managers (Donna Benjamin/Martin Wilson)	March 2014	A	The development of Thematic Quarterly report will be used to prepare feedback to Locality Services.
Launch Children's Right Officer Child Protection service	SIU Team Managers (Judith Jones/Donna Benjamin/Martin Wilson)	June 2013	G	The CP Advocacy Service is in place and providing a service to young people. Further developments are being considered for 2014-15

Develop Growing Safety Conference process	SIU Team Managers (Donna Benjamin/Martin Wilson)	September 2013	A	Some development has been made with training for the IRO's and a review of the CP Conferencing process. Further work will be progressed in 2014-15
Develop conference minutes distribution process	SIU (Donna Benjamin/Trish Hoyle)	September 2013	G	Completed. This process will be subject to review during 2014-15 to ensure that progress is maintained. The introduction of the Signs of safety Case Conference approach will require some changes to the distribution process.

Annual Child Protection Conference Work Programme – 2014-15

Action	Who	When	RAG	COMMENTARY
Improve the level of attendance and report analysis by Leicestershire Police at child protection conferences	SIU Service Manager (Victor Cook)	September 2014	A	To organise meeting within Growing Safety implementation plan timetable
Implement an improved child protection conference process that delivers an approach aligned to the Growing Safety approach.	SIU Managers (Martin Wilson/Donna Benjamin/Nigel Denning)	September 2014	A	Implementation Plan to be shared with LSCB and presented to SMT
To put in place the LCC operational team within the CSE and Missing Multi Agency Team	SIU Managers/IRO (Donna Benjamin/Ayshea Dalby)	September 2014	G	Recruitment process underway and much of infrastructure in place, including operational procedures
To review and develop the process and procedures for CUSAB referrals and meetings	SIU Manager/IRO (Rebecca Watson/Martin)	September 2014	G	Designated time has been identified for Rebecca Watson (Lead IRO on CUSAB) to re-write present procedures, and develop referral process

	Wilson)			
To establish a programme of review on the child protection process that assesses the quality of the service both internally and externally (this will include CSC and partner agencies)	SUI Manager (Martin Wilson)	December 2014	G	The format for the Thematic report is in place. The development of a suite of programmes to run specific reports is to be developed over this period. This will aid data collection to assist analysis.
To review and further develop the process around missing notifications	Martin Wilson	September 2014	G	To review best practice and ensure integration with CSE. To produce regular reports to senior management and Lead Member

Appendices – Tables of figures

Table 1

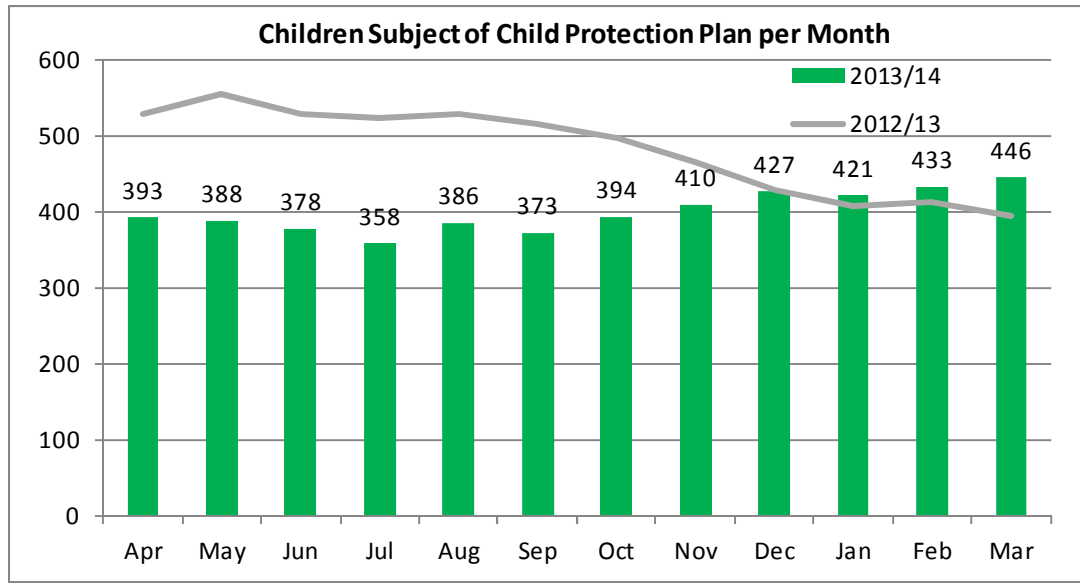


Table 2

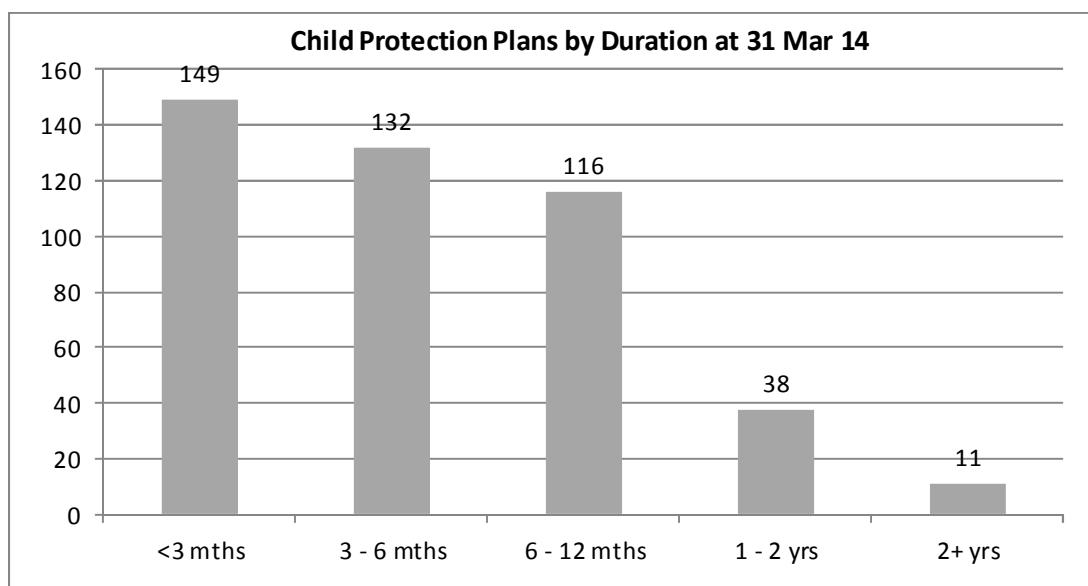


Table 3

Number CP Plans in each Category of Abuse	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Neglect	80	56	60	81
Physical	22	23	36	26
Emotional	35	29	60	68
Sexual	16	13	17	14
Multiple	225	252	254	257

Table 4

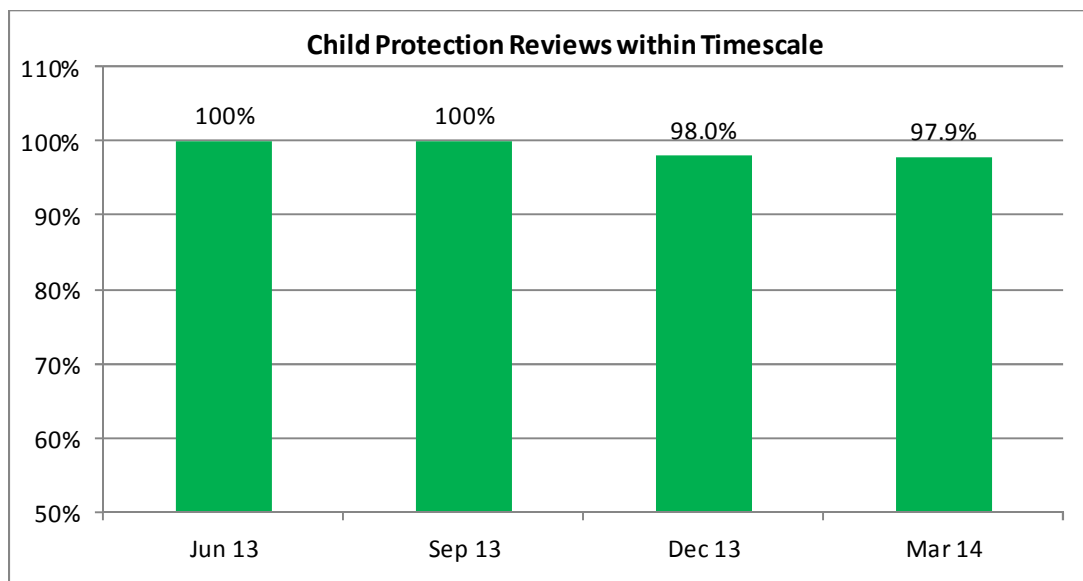


Table 5

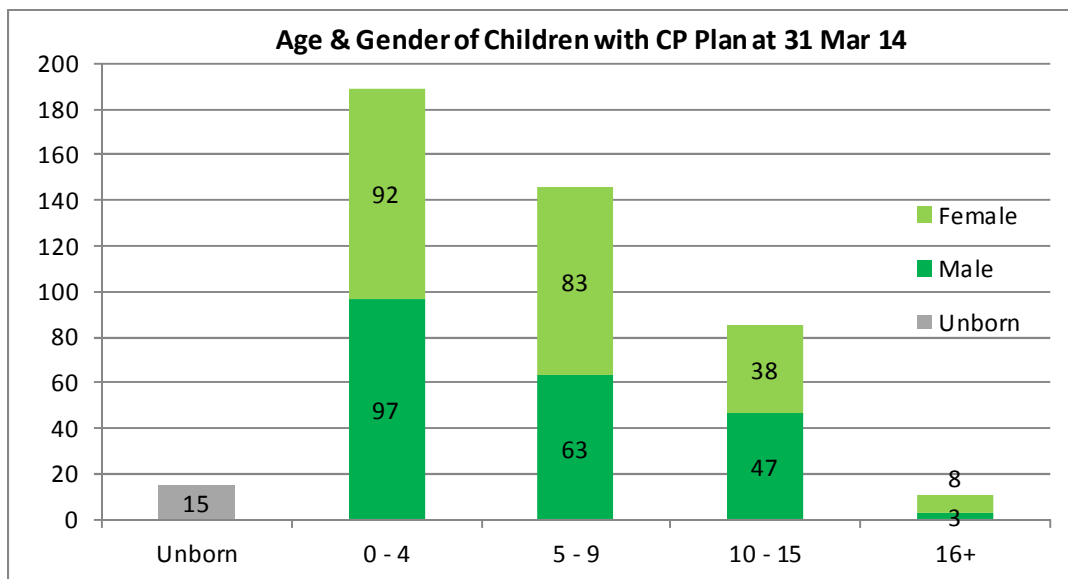


Table 6

Ethnicity of CP Plans	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
White	310	310	367	377
Mixed	31	28	31	30
Asian	21	15	18	27
Black	4	1	9	11
Other	3	4	1	1
Undetermined	9	15	1	0



**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 3 NOVEMBER
2014**

**LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD/SAFEGUARDING ADULT BOARD
ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to bring to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee's attention the draft Annual Report 2013/14 for the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Board (LRLSCB) and Safeguarding Adults Board (LRSAB) for consultation and comment.
2. The report will be presented for approval to a joint meeting of the Boards at their meeting on 31st October 2014. Any comments or proposed additions and amendments made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be addressed in the final report before it is published.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

3. The LRLSCB is a partnership that is required by regulation. The main purpose of the LSCB is to ensure, effective, co-ordinated multi-agency arrangements for the safeguarding of children and young people.
4. The LRSAB is not at present a partnership required by regulation; however it will become a partnership required by regulation from March 2015 as a result of the Care Act 2014.

Background

5. Leicestershire and Rutland LRLSCB/SAB became a conjoined board two years ago with the intention of ensuring that there are effective and efficient safeguarding services in an integrated manner. This has supported a focus on vulnerable children, adults and families.
6. The Independent Chair of the LRLSCB/SAB is required to complete an annual report and submit this to the Chief Executive, the Leader of the County Council and the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board. It is considered good practice also to present the Annual Report to the local authority's scrutiny committees primarily for them to consider whether the local authority is effectively carrying out its functions in relation to safeguarding which include ensuring that the Boards themselves are effective bodies.
7. The LRLSCB/LRSAB Business Plan for 2014/15 was presented to this Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 9th June. The Committee will, therefore, be aware of some of the strengths and areas for development that arose from the assessment of performance in 2013/14 since this informed the framing of that Business Plan.

However, the Annual Report provides a full assessment of performance that will be a key document for consideration when Ofsted carries out its 'Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers' alongside which a review of the effectiveness of the local safeguarding children board will be undertaken. It is important to recognise that Working Together 2013 requires the Annual Report to be produced and identifies a range of issues that must be covered. It is, necessarily, a detailed report but we have included an Executive Summary to assist readers in gauging the key achievements and development needs arising from the assessment of the Boards' performance across 2013/14.

8. The key purpose of the Annual Report is to assess the impact of the work we have undertaken in 2013/14 on service quality and on safeguarding outcomes for children, young people and adults in Leicestershire and Rutland. Specifically it evaluates our performance against the priorities that we set in our Business Plan 2013/14 and against other statutory functions that the LSCB in particular must undertake.
9. In addition to the Business Plan priorities the LRLSCB witnessed some significant changes in the national frameworks governing its operation. First, the Department for Education issued a revised version of Working Together 2013 in March 2013 that has required the Board to review its governance arrangements and to formulate a number of new safeguarding arrangements including a new Threshold Protocol and a Learning and Improvement Framework.
10. The Annual Report 2013/14 can be found in full at:
www.lrsb.org.uk/annualreports

(The full report and the Executive Summary will be published on 31 October 2014)

11. It includes:
 - (a) A brief overview of the local area safeguarding context with some key context data;
 - (b) An overview of the Boards' governance and accountability arrangements;
 - (c) Analysis of performance against the three key priorities in the 2013/14 Business Plan which were to:
 - (i) Improve the effectiveness and impact of the Boards;
 - (ii) Secure confidence in the operational effectiveness of partner agencies safeguarding services, both individually and collectively, supported by a more robust quality assurance and performance management framework;
 - (iii) Improve the effectiveness of communication and engagement
 - (d) An overview of performance in key statutory functions notably the Serious Case Review Sub-Group and Child Death Overview Panel – both of which are statutorily required in the children's safeguarding arena.

12. The Executive Summary to the report is attached at Appendix A and highlights key achievements and areas for development that have been drawn into the Business Plan for 2014/15.

Proposals/Options

13. The committee is asked to consider the Annual Report and to make any comments or proposed additions or amendments to the report that will be addressed prior to the final version of the Annual Report being published.

Consultation

14. All members of the Boards and their Executive have had opportunities to contribute to and comment on earlier drafts of the annual report. In addition discussions have been held with youth councils in both local authority areas to enable them to contribute their views about safeguarding in Leicestershire and Rutland.

Conclusions

15. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee should note and comment on the attached Annual Report 2013/14.

Background Papers

15. Report to the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee 11 November 2013.

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s88299/8%20-%20LSCB%20Annual%20Report%202012-13%20-%20cover.pdf>

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List of Appendices

- Appendix A -Executive Summary of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2013/14.

Relevant Impact Assessments:Equality and Human Rights Implications

17. Safeguarding vulnerable children, young people and vulnerable adults concerns individuals who are likely to be disadvantaged in a number of ways. The Annual Report sets out how the LSCB/SAB seeks to ensure that a fair, effective and equitable service is discharged by the partnership. Likewise the Annual Report and Business Plan 2014/15 extracts set out how the partnership will seek to engage with all parts of the community in the coming year.

Partnership Working and associated issues

18. Safeguarding is dependent on the effective work of the partnership as set out in national regulation, Working Together 2013, published by the Department for Education.



Safeguarding
Children Board
LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND



Safeguarding
Adults Board
LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND

Executive Summary to Annual Report

2013/14



This overview summarises the key achievements, outputs, outcomes and impact of the work of the Leicestershire and Rutland Children and Adult Safeguarding Boards in 2013/14. It also highlights the further improvements that will be sought in 2014/15.

We recognise that the annual report has to be a detailed and complex record of our work, so this summary is intended to be accessible to a wider audience, and enable readers to understand the impact of our work over the last year.

Where appropriate, this overview distinguishes between work undertaken by the children and adult boards so that information can be easily extracted for specific purposes such as inspection and peer review processes. The information is presented alongside the key priorities in our business plan 2013-16.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. R. Burnett". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Paul Burnett
Independent Chair, Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Boards

Priority A: Improve the effectiveness and impact of the safeguarding boards

What has been achieved in 2013/14?

The children's safeguarding board responded to the Department for Education's (DfE) revised Working Together 2013 document. We revised the board's statutory membership, governance and accountability arrangements to ensure compliance and issued the required 'threshold protocol' and a learning and improvement framework. The board considered and approved assessment frameworks for both local authorities.

We introduced a self-assessment tool to evaluate our performance against the new Ofsted review framework for safeguarding children boards. Areas that are not judged to be 'good' or better feature on our business plan priorities for 2014/15.

The adult safeguarding board has prepared for the Care Act 2014. This has included undertaking a self-assessment against the Association of Directors of Adult Social Care's (ADASS) 'top-ten tips'.

The board has self-assessed its own effectiveness during this year and in six out of 10 areas, members rated the board 'good'. Action is already being taken in the four areas where need for improvement was identified and is incorporated into our business plan 2014/15.

Key strengths identified in the audit were:

- Effectiveness of the Independent Chair
- Constitutional compliance with Working Together 2013 and No Secrets
- Self-audit
- Self-development and improvement
- Information and intelligence sharing
- Effective communication – particularly through 'Safeguarding Matters'

Members of the board included managers with a strategic role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children within their organisation. These members can:

- speak for their organisation with authority;
- commit their organisation on policy and practice matters;
- hold their own organisation to account and hold others to account.

Better engagement with senior leaders in partner organisations was secured through the safeguarding summit held in December 2013. This will become an annual event. This event raised the profile of both boards within the local professional community.

Attendance levels at meetings have been high and representation from schools and colleges, which was an area of concern in 2012/13, has been addressed. The private sector provider community in adult services has agreed to re-join the board after a period of absence.

“ We introduced a self-assessment tool to evaluate our performance against the new Ofsted review framework for safeguarding children boards. ”

Section 11 audits indicate sustained or improved performance against safeguarding standards in all but one agency. Performance was particularly strong in the adult services audit where eight organisations self-assessed themselves to be fully compliant with standards.

There is strong evidence of challenge between board members leading to action to improve service delivery and performance. Examples include:

- challenge from Leicestershire Police regarding increases in the number of children ‘missing’ incidents that resulted in a review of the missing protocol across Leicestershire, Rutland and Leicester and some reduction in the number of reported incidents;
- challenge from the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in relation to the notification of changes in care arrangements for children looked after with evidence of improvements in information sharing;
- challenge from a range of partners to better co-ordinate policy, practice and procedures across Leicestershire, Rutland and Leicester City which has been taken forward by the joint Executive Board between the two LSCBs. An example of how this has made a real difference was the agreement to work collaboratively on single assessment and threshold protocol which came from Working Together 2013. There has similarly been joint work on: policy and procedures; child sexual exploitation, child trafficking and missing; training and workforce development.

The board worked within its budget and linked expenditure more closely to key priorities in the business plan. Action was taken to address the long-standing budget reserve through the allocation of grants to services able to further deliver the boards’ priorities.

Effective arrangements have been put in place to ensure we work with other partnership bodies including: the Health and Wellbeing Boards, local authority scrutiny committees, the Children’s Trust in Rutland and the community safety partnerships.

The boards have delivered domestic homicide reviews on behalf of the community safety partnerships. Two reviews were delivered in 2013/14. The learning from these reviews is being disseminated through the Serious Case Review Sub-Group with any relevant improvements being included in the framework we are using to manage quality and performance.

We have worked across the area and region so that we are more efficient and consistent – particularly for agencies who operate across local boundaries. Key achievements in 2013/14 included:

- co-ordinated local authority single assessment arrangements
- LSCB threshold protocols
- LSCB learning and improvement frameworks
- Integrated work on policies and procedures across both children and adult services
- Integrated arrangements for workforce development and training
- Signs of Safety
- The Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence (DASH) tool
- Mental Capacity Act (MCA) and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards implementation (DoLS)
- Joint executive Groups for both children and adult safeguarding to improve co-ordination across the sub-region and the East Midlands

The boards have increased their focus on learning and improvement. We have not only focused on the outcomes of reviews within Leicestershire and Rutland but also in testing local performance against recommendations from serious case reviews and inquiries in other areas and nationally.

Examples include consideration of serious case reviews for Daniel Pelka, Hamzah Khan, and reports from the Office of the Children's Commissioner on child sexual exploitation and trafficking, the Winterbourne View Report and the Francis Report. There has been robust and rigorous scrutiny of the responses to these reviews as well as the impact on quality and performance management.

There has been a real focus on ensuring learning is disseminated to front-line staff through events such as the SCR learning event in February 2014.

The board has remained aware of inspections and reviews carried out in member agencies. We have monitored action plans from local authority Ofsted inspections, peer challenge arrangements across the East Midlands, Care Quality Commission inspections of both organisations and providers, and Ofsted inspections of other organisations such as CAFCASS.

What will improve in 2014/15?

Our business plan for 2014/15 sets out a number of priorities. We are seeking:

- To ensure that all agencies fulfil their responsibilities as set out in Working Together 2013. We also plan to increase compliance in the Section 11 audit which tests agency compliance with key safeguarding requirements.
- To ensure that the agencies are appropriately represented on the board, executive and sub-groups and attendance and participation levels are high so that we can achieve our objectives.
- To ensure that the board knows the safeguarding strengths and weaknesses of agencies, both individually and collectively, through challenge, scrutiny and performance management
- To drive partnerships and agencies to own, prioritise, resource, improve and positively impact on safeguarding and receives management information to scrutinise and challenge performance
- To be assured that the 'voice' of children, young people and adults is heard and acted on
- To ensure partner agency contributions secure 'value for money'
- To be ready for inspection across the partnerships

“ There has been a real focus on ensuring learning is disseminated to front-line staff through events such as the Serious Case Review Learning Event in February 2014.

”

Priority B: Securing confidence in the operational effectiveness of agencies (individually and collectively) through robust quality assurance and performance management of safeguarding

What has been achieved since 2013/14?

A new quality assurance and performance management (QAPM) framework has been introduced. This is made up of four areas: quantitative data, qualitative information, service user perspectives and staff perspectives.

The framework now draws on performance information from all agencies. It also focuses on better engagement with children, young people and adults as well as front line staff in planning, delivering, monitoring and evaluating service delivery and performance.

This new framework has enabled the Safeguarding Effectiveness Sub-Group (SEG) to exert greater rigour in scrutinising performance and alerting both the executive and boards to areas that require action and intervention to improve performance. This has enabled the boards to focus on strategy and performance rather than process and procedure.

The sub-group has developed a more robust and extensive programme of audits to test front line practice and to identify areas for learning and improvement.

The child's journey in Leicestershire

We have seen increases in the number of children receiving early help through the first response arrangement. The Supporting Leicestershire Families initiative has also helped to improve the lives of the most vulnerable families.

- There were 15,228 contacts. There were 5,895 referrals – which is low compared to statistical neighbours
- The percentage of referrals proceeding to initial assessment has decreased from 84.5% to 80% in the previous year
- Initial and core assessments are being completed more quickly and systems have been improved.
- The number of children on child protection plans has increased from 393 to 446 but remains low in comparison to statistical neighbours. The highest number of plans relate to emotional/physical abuse
- The rate of completion of child protection plan reviews has fallen to 55%
- The number of children in care has increased from 446 to 490 but remains low in comparison to statistical neighbours
- 9% of children in care experienced three or more placements in the year which is in line with statistical neighbours

The child's journey in Rutland

The number of common assessment framework (CAF) assessments completed has increased by 45% from 62 in 2012/13 to 90 in 2013/14.

The number of contacts to children's social care has increased, reflecting the national trend. However, the number of referrals to children's social care has decreased by 36%, evidence that the use of early help has been very effective in slowing down the referral rate and that thresholds are being applied more rigorously by the duty team.

The percentage of referrals progressing to initial assessment has increased from 71.4% to 85.3%, indicating good use thresholds, resulting in appropriate referrals.

93% of initial assessments were carried out within 10 days and 93% of core assessments were carried out within 35 days.

There has been an increase in the number of children with child protection plans – 34 as compared to 23 in the previous year. The largest category of abuse is neglect.

All child protection plans have been reviewed within timescale. No child protection plans lasted longer than two years.

The number of children in care has increased by 29 to 34. No child experienced more than three placements in the year.

100% of children in care had their reviews on time – this matches performance in the previous year.

The views of the independent reviewing officer (IRO) services

The annual report provides a perspective on the quality of services to children in need of protection and care from the IRO services. They report a number of improvements, including:

- The success of the Grow Safety (previously Signs of Safety) model in Leicestershire has improved the focus and effectiveness of reviews particularly in terms of enabling the voice of the child and family to be better heard and to secure a better focus from professionals on outcomes and risk;
- In Rutland, multi-agency training has taken place within early help and child protection services. The Signs of Safety model will be implemented by 31st March 2015
- Improvements in advocacy services for children;
- Reductions in the number of complaints
- The introduction of a listening and support service for children that go missing.

The reports do however identify areas for improvement relating to the timeliness of distribution of papers for reviews, the levels of attendance and quality of reporting of some partner agencies, the need for better responses to children's needs from some services such as CAMHS. All the issues raised by IROs have been incorporated into our business plan for 2014/15

“ All child protection plans have been reviewed within timescale. ”

Private fostering

Concerns remain about the low number of private fostering arrangements known to the two local authorities. A major awareness raising campaign is underway in 2014/15 to address this.

Serious case reviews and child deaths

No serious case reviews (SCRs) were undertaken during 2013/14.

The LSCB did engage in SCRs in three other areas – Lancashire, Lincolnshire and Birmingham – which featured children that had been resident in Leicestershire.

The Safeguarding Effectiveness Group (SEG) has done targeted work to improve practice in response to past reviews, from those undertaken in other areas and from audits used to test the impact of previous learning.

A range of learning events and conferences has been delivered to disseminate learning and to support action to improve practice.

The Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) has completed reviews on 47 child deaths – which are similar to levels in statistical neighbour authorities. The highest number of notifications still remains those under one year of age.

The SEG has increased the level of reporting and number of individual agency and multi-agency case audits. This has included audits to test the impact of SCR recommendations and an audit of strategy meetings which had been identified as a concern in the previous year.

Action has been taken where audits have identified the need for improvement.

Assurance that adults are safe

In Leicestershire

There has been a 28% increase in the number of referrals

64% of referrals related to residential or nursing care homes. This compares to 63% in the previous year which shows that the ratio between residential and community settings has remained much the same.

53% of referrals were substantiated or partially substantiated.

Neglect remains the most significant. There has been an increase in the proportion of referrals relating to neglect and a decline in those relating to physical abuse.

There are still an increasing number of referrals arising from unacceptably poor standards of care.

In Rutland

There were 91 referrals leading to investigation which is higher than last year.

68% of these referrals related to residential or nursing care home settings with only 32% from the community which is a significant shift in ration from last year.

Of the completed referrals 47% were substantiated or partially substantiated.

“There has been a 28% increase in the number of referrals”

Areas of safeguarding risk in Leicestershire and Rutland

The boards have sought assurance that action is being taken to address those areas of safeguarding risk that were identified as priorities in our business planning process for 2013/14. The annual report outlines progress that has been made in relation to:

- Child sexual exploitation and trafficking
- Children missing
- Domestic abuse
- Suicide and self-harm
- PREVENT
- Learning disabled adults including those in residential settings
- The implementation of the Mental Care Act (MCA) and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)
- Older people – particularly those living in residential care and nursing homes

Positive progress has been made in all these areas. We have put in place more robust and rigorous arrangements to identify, assess and respond to risk.

However, these do remain high priority risks. Clearly, the positive action taken has sometimes had the effect of increasing the number of cases reported – which is what was expected. We must ensure that our focus is balanced between prevention and response to identified risk if we are to see reductions in safeguarding risk in these areas.

Workforce development

Significant progress has been made to deliver a comprehensive programme of training and development in safeguarding for children and young people.

The range of training and number of attendees has increased. A total of 1174 people were trained and post-training evaluations have been very positive.

An important development this year has been the competency framework for children and adult safeguarding training. This provides a more robust and rigorous tool to evaluate the impact of training on service delivery and on outcomes for children, young people and adults. It monitors competences across the workforce – and allows better targeting of training. The new framework was launched in April 2014.

Workforce capacity

The boards have begun to monitor workforce capacity to better identify safeguarding risk in our organisations and systems.

Agencies proposing service reductions are asked to present safeguarding risks to the board. We have asked for assurance that funding and staffing levels are managed to mitigate any risk.

Caseloads amongst social workers have remained steady in most areas but increasing numbers of contacts and referrals will need to be carefully monitored to ensure that staffing capacity is sufficient to respond to need.

Within this annual report, we have included headlines from the annual report of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) responsible for overseeing allegations made against staff.

The number of cases has not changed significantly from last year but, in Leicestershire, the proportion relating to sexual abuse has risen. This may be a result of heightened public awareness and confidence in reporting as a result of high profile media coverage of cases such as the Saville case.

Improvement sought in 2013/14 and built into the business plan

Priority 2a: To be assured that children and young people are safe

To be assured:

- of the quality and impact/effectiveness of services across the 'child's journey'
- that thresholds for safeguarding children are clear, understood and consistently applied
- that the impact of universal and early help intervention reduces the numbers of children requiring protection and care
- that the quality and impact of single and multi-agency children protection practice is effective
- that children at high risk/vulnerable are being identified (e.g. child sexual exploitation, children missing from home and care, bullying) and risks managed to secure a positive outcome

Priority 2b: To be assured that adults in need of safeguarding are safe

To be assured:

- of the quality and impact/effectiveness of services to adults in need of safeguarding
- that thresholds for safeguarding adults are clear, understood and consistently applied.
- that the impact of universal and early help intervention reduces the numbers of adults requiring protection and care.
- that the quality and impact of single and multi-agency adult protection practice is effective.
- that adults at high risk/vulnerable are being identified (e.g. mental health, domestic violence) and risks managed to secure a positive outcome

Priority 2C: To be assured that services for children, services for adults and services for families are effectively coordinated to ensure children and adults are safe

To be assured:

- that young people who are receiving services from children's services successfully transition to adult services where necessary
- that adults who are assessed as posing risk to children, young people and adults in need of safeguarding (such as MAPPA – Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements- and MARAC– Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) are effectively managed and that risk to others is mitigated
- that services that work with “whole” families are effectively coordinated – e.g. Supporting Leicestershire Families and Changing Lives Rutland and secure added value in ensuring and co-ordinating effective safeguarding.

“Children at high risk/vulnerable are being identified and risks managed to secure a positive outcome”

Priority 3a: To be assured of the quality of care for any child not living with a parent or someone with parental responsibility

To be assured:

- that partner agencies are fulfilling their responsibilities as corporate parents
- children/young people who are privately fostered are identified and supported
- that awareness is raised of the notification requirements for private fostering, and the effectiveness of this is monitored
- that children and young people placed in Leicestershire and Rutland from other areas are safe

and

- To establish and maintain robust interface with other looked after children bodies (charity, respective roles and responsibilities)

Priority 3b: To be assured of the quality of care for any adult supported by registered providers

To be assured:

- that adults living with or receiving services from registered providers are safe
- that providers are effective in carrying out their safeguarding responsibilities and that as a result service users are safe.
- that safeguarding roles and responsibilities and outcomes are explicit in commissioning, contracting, monitoring and review of services

Priority 4: To be assured that our learning and improvement framework is raising service quality and outcomes for children, young people and adults

- Apply the framework and ensure its effectiveness
- Ensure learning from national and regional SCRs and other learning processes is incorporated into the practice of partner agencies and the partnership
- Ensure the effectiveness of CDOP for Leicestershire and Rutland and that lessons from child deaths are understood and consistently acted upon
- Implement the performance management framework and ensure its effectiveness
- To ensure that policies and procedures are 'fit for purpose'

Priority 5: To be assured that the workforce is fit for purpose

- To be assured that the workforce is competent as measured by the competency frameworks through quality assurance
- To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training and development in terms of the impact on the quality of safeguarding practice and outcomes for service users
- To be assured that the workforce is safely recruited
- To be assured that allegations made against people who work with children and adults are dealt with effectively
- To hear the voice of practitioners

Improving the effectiveness of communication and engagement

What has been achieved in 2013/14?

A communications strategy and a participation and engagement strategy were agreed by the board.

'Safeguarding Matters', a bi-monthly publication to staff across the partnerships in both counties, was launched in February 2013 and has been positively received by staff.

A new website was launched in January 2014 and initial monitoring of 'hits' suggests increasing and wide access to the site – in April over 9,500 hits were recorded a 37% increase on the previous month.

There has been engagement with the youth councils and with young inspectors in Leicestershire and Rutland to enable the voice of children and young people to be heard in identifying priorities for action in future business plans.

A major schools survey was also carried out through which we engaged schools councils in identifying safeguarding priorities for the new business plan – 110 schools participated including 10 from Rutland

A range of publications and leaflets has been issued to better disseminate key information and service availability including a leaflet on private fostering.

There was a major media and communications exercise to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation and trafficking targeting a range of audiences including schools, taxi companies, sport, leisure and hotel industries and the wider community. There is evidence that these campaigns have led to greater levels of reporting.

Improvement sought in 2013/14 and built into the business plan

Engagement with children and young people needs to be extended to cover both broad audiences and very targeted groups – such as looked after children, disabled children, those subject to child protection plans, black and minority ethnic groups. We also need to improve how we engage with children and young people at the point of service delivery.

Engagement with front-line staff requires significant development.

The website will be revised to reflect new national frameworks such as Working Together 2013 as well as including bespoke areas for professionals, the wider community and children and young people themselves.

“ The new website received over 9,500 hits in April 2014 ”

Safeguarding Adults Board

Ensuring the effectiveness of services and keeping adults safe.

Work undertaken by the board.

The board has received regular reports from agencies on actions taken in response to both the Winterbourne View and Mid-Staffordshire Hospital/ Francis reports.

The board has been provided with assurances that local providers have produced action plans to address any local concerns and it continues to receive updates on their implementation.

The board has extended the scope of its work include prevention and early intervention both through scrutiny of safer communities initiatives and the Supporting Leicestershire Families programme.

A range of initiatives has been undertaken to learn from investigations – such as serious case reviews and serious incident learning processes.

These include: the Safeguarding Matters publication; a range of other communication channels; training and workforce development and direct work within service teams.

In August 2012, a conference was held on the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). This was attended by 120 professionals from across the partnership. An action plan to improve practice and procedures was produced and is being monitored by the Safeguarding Effectiveness Group.

The board has continued to provide a comprehensive programme of training and workforce development to support staff in delivering effective safeguarding and securing better safeguarding outcomes for service users.

The Safeguarding Adults Training Network has met on a bi-annual basis to ensure that learning and improvement is effectively disseminated. On average, there have been between 35 and 40 professionals attending each meeting.

The Training Effectiveness Group has developed the 'Competency Framework' that underpins the training and development offer and formulated a competency log to better evaluate the impact of training on practice.

The Procedures and Practice Sub-Group revised or developed new procedures primarily in response to learning from reviews. These included:

- Pan-East Midlands Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) procedures
- Information sharing agreement
- Thresholds document
- A range of risk assessment and risk management tools.

Improvement sought in 2014/15

Safeguarding referral rates continue to rise. Whilst this may in some part be the result of improved awareness resulting from both training and communication activity the reasons for these increases will be more fully analysed to identify required improvement particularly in prevention and early intervention.

More work needs to be undertaken to understand patterns of repeat referrals from residential providers and to evaluate the effectiveness of intervention designed to improve care standards.

Work will be done to improve the clarity and understanding of thresholds.

Work will be undertaken to better understand first contact in Leicestershire and its impact on preventing adults coming in to the formal adult protection system as part of our aim to reduce safeguarding referrals and to prevent adults requiring specialist services.

Regular reporting of performance on MCA and DoLS legislation will be included in the QAPM framework for the SAB.

The evaluation of training needs better to identify impact on both the quality of service delivery and outcomes for vulnerable adults and further development in training evaluation is planned to support this.

Quality assurance and performance management (QAMP)

What has been achieved since 2013/14

The QAMP framework was revised to extend the range of impact evidence collected and to include information from all partners. The new framework comprises four key quadrants: quantitative data; qualitative data; the views of service users and; the views of front line staff. .

A safeguarding adults compliance audit was introduced to test compliance in all agencies against key standards. This has provided a baseline from which we can now judge improvement. Levels of compliance were high but agencies that self-assessed themselves as partially or non-compliant with standards have now set in place actions to address this.

Improvement sought in 2014/15 and built into the business plan

Work will be undertaken to further embed the new QAMP framework for 2013/14 that it:

- extends the quantitative scorecard to include a wider range of safeguarding performance data from partner agencies;
- extends the range of qualitative evidence particularly the number of multi-agency audits undertaken
- includes evidence drawn from engagement with adult service users and from front-line staff.

Communication and engagement

What has been achieved since 2011/12?

A communications strategy and a participation and engagement strategy were agreed by the board.

A new brand identity/logo for the SAB was adopted and launched.

'Safeguarding Matters', a bi-monthly publication to staff across partners in both counties, was launched in February 2013 and has been positively received by staff.

Improvement sought in 2014/15 and built into the business plan

The business plan for 2014/15 continues to prioritise improvements in our work to engage with and secure the participation of children, young people and adults. This will include a programme to refresh key leaflets.

A key priority next year is to ensure that safeguarding is everyone's business and that the 'voice' of children, young people and adults is heard and acted on

Our focus next year will be to work with existing engagement and participation groups so that safeguarding can feature on their agendas and facilitate more voices being heard. This will include working with Healthwatch to enable them to include safeguarding in their interfaces with patients both children and adults.

“ ‘Safeguarding Matters’, a bi-monthly publication to staff across partners in both counties was launched in February 2013 and has been positively received by staff. ”





**CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE -
3 NOVEMBER 2014**

**ACTION TAKEN SINCE THE PUBLICATION OF THE INDEPENDENT INQUIRY
INTO CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN ROTHERHAM**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of report

1. This report shall set out the steps taken thus far following the publication of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham, led by Professor Alexis Jay, in August 2014. That report had been commissioned to consider the extent of child sexual exploitation in Rotherham and the response of that Council and its safeguarding partners.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. This report is made within the context of national guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', published by the Department for Education 2013, and the formal duties set out for the Lead Member for Children and Family Services and the Director of Children and Family Services published by the Department for Education in 2012.

Background

3. The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham investigated that Council and its safeguarding partners responses to the incidence of child sexual exploitation from 1997 until 2013. At the point of publication the report received considerable attention from national media.
4. In view of this the County Council has initiated a number of internal checks in relation to some of the conclusions of the Inquiry.
5. In addition, the Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) has commenced a multi-agency audit to ascertain local progress in relation to the conclusions of the Inquiry.

Action Taken So Far in Relation to the Inquiry

6. An immediate audit to determine whether any children known to the County Council had been placed by us in Rotherham, or had moved there with their family. The purpose of this was to determine whether in the light of the Inquiry any further steps were required regarding any such children's welfare. The initial result of this check has been that in the past five years one child has been placed in Rotherham. This was in a special school placement and no indicators of concern regarding this child's welfare have come to light.

7. A check has been made of staff employed by the Children's Social Care and Early Help Service to determine whether any employee had previously been employed in Rotherham. The purpose of this check was to consider whether any of the allegations being voiced in the media about current and former Rotherham employees required action within the County Council. The result has been that there is no record of any employee in Children's Social Care or Early Help Services having been employed in Rotherham.
8. A further check was made to determine whether any children in the care of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council that may have been placed in the County. This has shown that we have not been notified of any placement of this kind.
9. In addition to the above a review of complaints made by children and young people into our Children's Rights Team or the formal complaints process is underway. This will seek to determine whether there are any matters raised as complaints that require reconsideration.
10. The LSCB has commenced an audit of the main conclusions of the Inquiry. This is to determine the extent to which the multi-agency partnership has addressed the conclusions of the Inquiry and whether any further action is required. This will be reported to the LSCB on 31 October 2014.

Action Already Taken

11. In April this year, an all-Member briefing took place regarding child sexual exploitation which focussed on the role of elected members in their constituencies, as Corporate Parents and as scrutineers of County Council's policy and practice. Subsequently the newly formed Children's Social Care panel has agreed that child sexual exploitation shall be its priority.
12. This year staff from the County Council have joined with the Police to form a multi-agency operational team specifically dealing with child sexual exploitation.
13. As part of the awareness raising campaign in Spring this year, entitled 'Can You Spot the Signs?' more than 8000 children in schools locally benefited from a theatre based workshop called 'Chelsea's Choice'. This production was also seen by staff and a small number of Elected Members. In the wake of this a number of disclosures of abuse were made and responded to, an emergency advice line was established for school staff, and designated safeguarding training for schools was refreshed to include signs of child sexual exploitation.

Resource Implications

14. Resources required to respond to Child Sexual Exploitation are yet to be fully understood. As a provisional step three members of staff have been placed within the joint team with the police. This can only be regarded as a provisional step and resource requirement will require further analysis.

Background Papers

15. The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham can be found at:
http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/1407/independent_inquiry_cse_in_rotherham

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

None.

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Equality and Human Rights Implications

16. This report considers matters arising from an Independent Inquiry in another council the focus of which is a very vulnerable group of children and young people.

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What are all of these meetings about?

Child Protection Plan

This is something that professionals agree on, that is needed to help keep you safe and help things change for me better. This is like a list of things to do by social worker, family and professionals.

Child Protection Conference

Everyone meets to say what we are worried about, what's working well and what still needs to happen or change. I will ask you what you think and tell people in the conference.

Core Group Meeting

We have these meetings in between the conferences to make sure everyone is doing their part of the child protection plan.

Looked After Child Review

If children are staying in foster care, these meetings check that everything is going ok and there are no problems.



If you are ever not sure - just ask!



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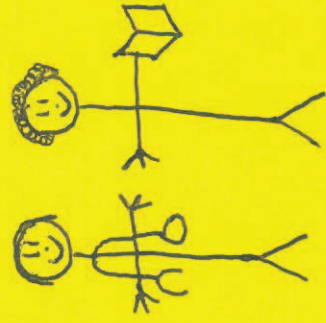
What does a Social Worker do?



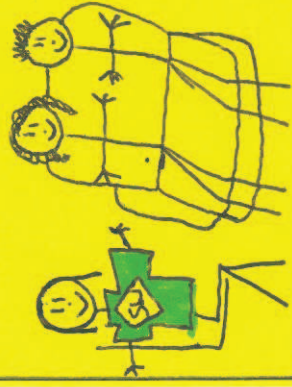
When people are worried about a child or family a social worker tries to help



They will visit you at home or at school.



Talk to people like doctors and teachers.



Talk to your parents and family.

When we try and help families we ask:

What are we worried about?



Whats working well?

What needs to happen/change?



If things don't change and get better, social workers help make hard decisions like if you are still ok to be living in one same home, or somewhere else



...and



The most important thing

is what you think and

what you want to say.



My name is Hollie Mitchell

and I am your social worker

Tel. 0116 3054400 / 07534284074

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What does a Social Worker do?



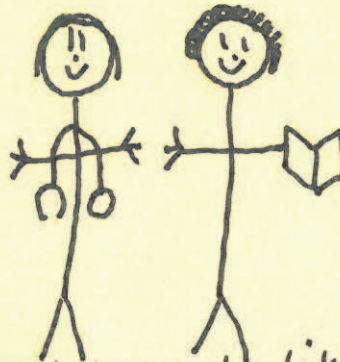
When people are worried about a child or family a social worker tries to help.



They will visit at home



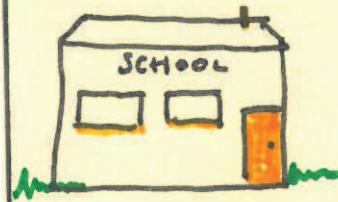
Talk to your parents and family



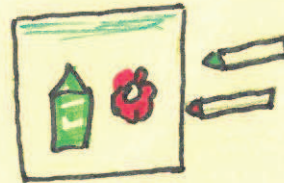
Talk to people like doctors and teachers

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What else does a Social Worker do?



Visit at school Want to know what you think



We might do drawing together

Talking and listening

My name is Hollie Mitchell 😊
and I am your social worker
Tel. 0116 3054400 / 07534284074

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**CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE -
3 NOVEMBER 2014**

SIGNS OF SAFETY AND LEICESTERSHIRE'S GROWING SAFETY STRATEGY

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the progress of the Growing Safety Strategy. This Strategy provides a practice methodology for front line staff and was introduced in November 2012.
2. Growing Safety is the County Council's approach to the implementation and use of the practice methodology known as Signs of Safety. This is an approach that has its origins in Western Australia and which is underpinned by considerable academic research.
3. In March 2014 an information report was provided to Overview and Scrutiny Committee which described the Growing Safety Strategy and project delivery model. That report set out the ambition of this strategy, to transform social work practice using this academically validated practice methodology.
4. To note the progress of the implementation of Growing Safety and the intention to bring forward a plan for strategic implementation across the County Council and with our partners.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

5. Following the national child abuse tragedies of 2008 and 2009 the Government commissioned a review of social work practice, led by Professor Eileen Munro from the London School of Economics. One of the main conclusions of the review was that social workers should be assisted to move their practice from compliance to competence and thus become more confident in their day to day work with children and families by placing the importance of making and sustaining professional relationships at the heart of their practice.
6. Signs of Safety is an internationally recognised practice methodology designed to help workers think their way into and through their work with children and families, providing tools and techniques to create purposeful professional relationships. The approach seeks to create a more constructive culture that empowers families and builds on their strengths. Importantly the approach builds a common understanding of risk with partner organisations, such as the police, schools and colleagues in the NHS.

Background

7. As indicated above the Growing Safety Strategy was introduced in Leicestershire in November 2011. This is Leicestershire's central response to Professor Munro's challenge that social workers should reclaim their practice and move away from an episodic practice model. Leicestershire's approach to implementation since November 2011 can be described as a groundswell model. In other words, the process has been embraced by front line staff and managers and its implementation has been largely driven by their enthusiasm.
8. The principle benefit of the Growing Safety Strategy is that it provides staff with an agreed operating model and a range of tools for working with children and their families. This means that staff increasingly can have an ability to clearly articulate that "because we have done this..., the result has been...." The workers knowledge and enthusiasm for this way of working is evidenced in their written work, meetings and observations.
9. In recognition of Leicestershire staff's enthusiasm and progress with the implementation the County was chosen to host the Signs of Safety International Gathering which was held in May 2014. This five day conference was led by Dr Andrew Turnell the Signs of Safety Co-creator and was attended by Professor Munro, and not only practitioners from Leicestershire and local authorities from this country, but also practitioners from across the world.
10. During this second year (April 2014 – March 2015) of the project we have focussed on the importance of staff forming strong and purposeful relationships with children to ensure that their voice is clearly heard and taken into account in their work. As a result of this:
 - There is much more evidence of direct work with children;
 - Internal Departmental audits show improved consistency in the work with those children by using the Growing Safety tools such as, Three Houses and Wizard/Fairy Tools (Appendix 1);
 - Better focus on children in the case records and in staff supervision;
 - Most importantly, more children are directly involved in work that is about their lives and their safety.
11. It is very encouraging that the feedback we have had from parents and carers about the impact of the introduction of the Growing Safety strategy is positive. Parents and carers tell us directly that they understand what they need to change to keep their children safe and are helped by the plans about their children's safety being clearer.
12. There is a very clear evidence base to the methodology demonstrated by the Department of Education Innovations Project grant of £4.7 million to work intensively with ten local authorities in England, including Leicestershire, over

the next eighteen months, to implement Signs of Safety practice across all their children's services and to re-design the organisations to support better this way of helping children, young people and families.

13. The Implementation of the strategy is supported by input from the County Learning and Development Service. The following people have been trained:
 - The Senior Management Team;
 - All current social care practitioners;
 - Eighty-five Early Help staff;
 - Forty Four Supporting Leicestershire Families.

14. In addition the strategy has begun to focus on our key partners and their staff, and as a result presentations have been made to the Family Justice Board, Leicestershire Safeguarding Childrens Board and Leicestershire Police. It is of particular importance that staff from across the partnership have begun to attend Growing Safety training.

15. The next stage of the approach is to step up our ground swell implementation to a whole systems model. To this end the County Council is part of a consortium of local authorities whom along with Professor Munro has bid to the Department for Education's Innovation Fund. The objective of this is twofold, to benefit from common learning across the authorities and to ensure that Growing Safety is adopted across the County Council and with our partners at a strategic level.

Consultations

16. At the heart of the implementation of this strategy has been the contributions of staff and the comments of parents and carers. Parents and carers comment that they increasingly understand why their family has a social worker and what they need to do to make their children safe. They say it helps them identify and secure support within their own family networks.

Resource Implications

17. The current implementation of Growing Safety is incorporated into the existing Budget.

Conclusions

18. This is the second year of the Growing Safety Strategy that has had a tangible impact upon the work of staff and their impact on children and families' lives. This has included; better understanding of children and their parents/carers, more evidence that through staff's improved confidence in using the Growing Safety tools that children have been kept safe. There is a real sense of enthusiasm for the approach amongst the staff.

Background Papers

None.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

None.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 - Three Houses and Wizard/Fairy Tools

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Equality and Human Rights Implications

19. The work of the Children and Family Service is frequently with those children and families who are most vulnerable. This practice methodology has significantly improved staff's ability to work effectively with this group.

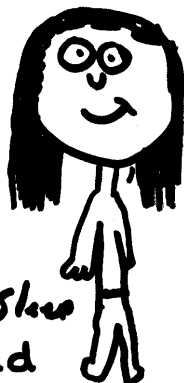
Child: Katie

Date:

House of Good Things



She lets Me sleep
when I am sad
and make's Michaela
Me happy.



She Makes
Me feel safe
and know
that everythings
ok.



he is
funny
and makes
Me laugh
when
I am
sad.

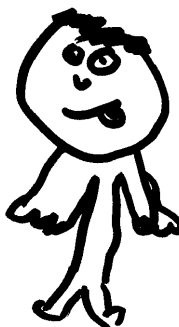


She is caring
she is nice
and she tells
Me every things
going to be
ok and take
care of Me.



he Make
Me happy
because
he snuck I am
over
Me. and see's

he is nice
and when
sad he
cack-cacks Me
Place I like.



Child: Katie

Date:

House of Worries



he Makes
Me sad Sometimes
because he goes
to the pup
I don't like
it..

MUM



I am
up
set



I am
too

calm
down

Child: Katie

Date:

House of Dreams

Pos
Reas
Pease
So Mum
and Picky
Wont shout
and Go
Rup!

My daddy

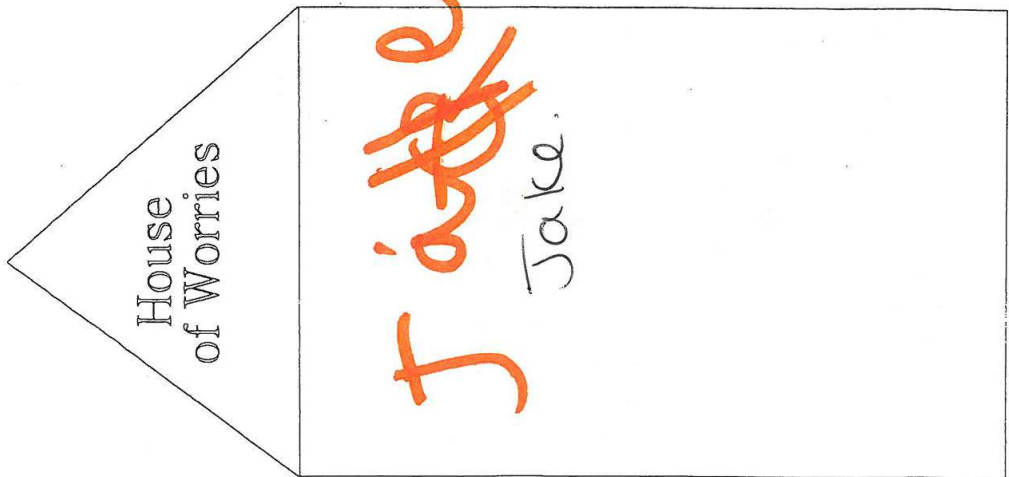
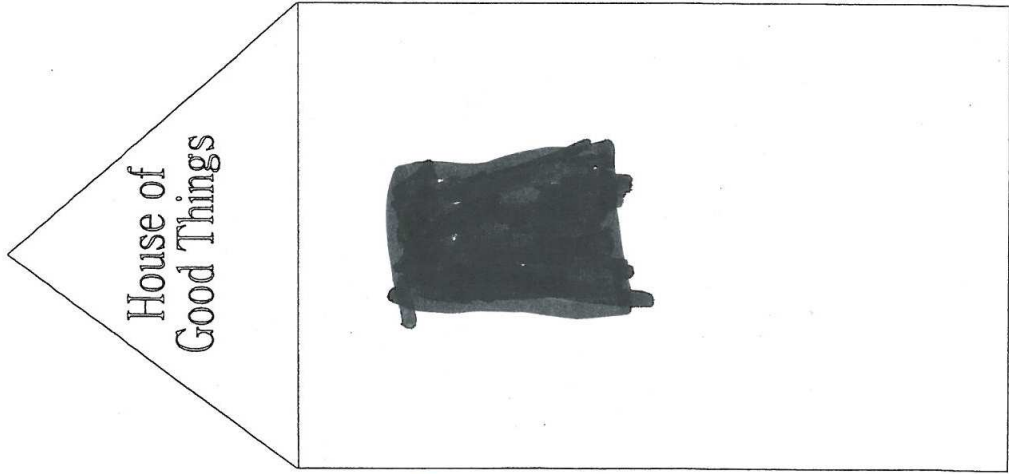
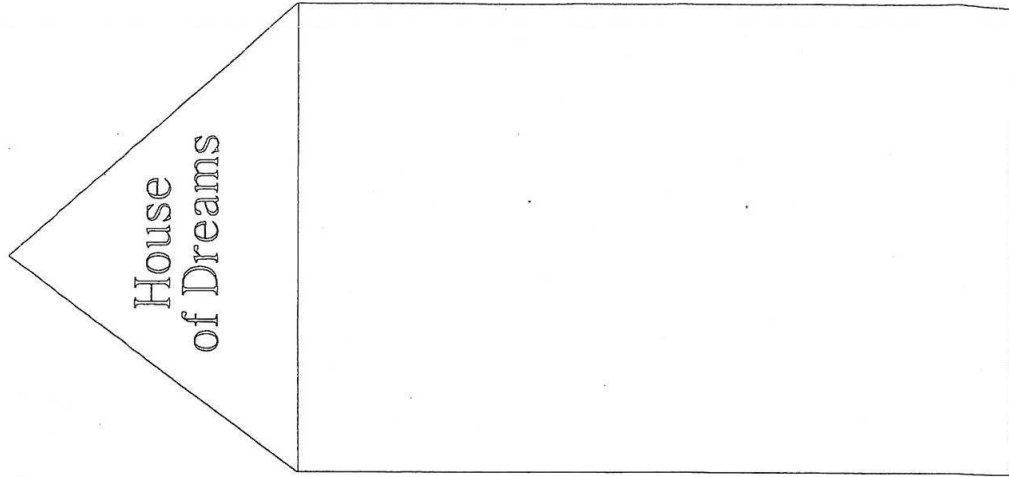


brother
shewen to
see
me



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Natasha



Things that make me feel safe



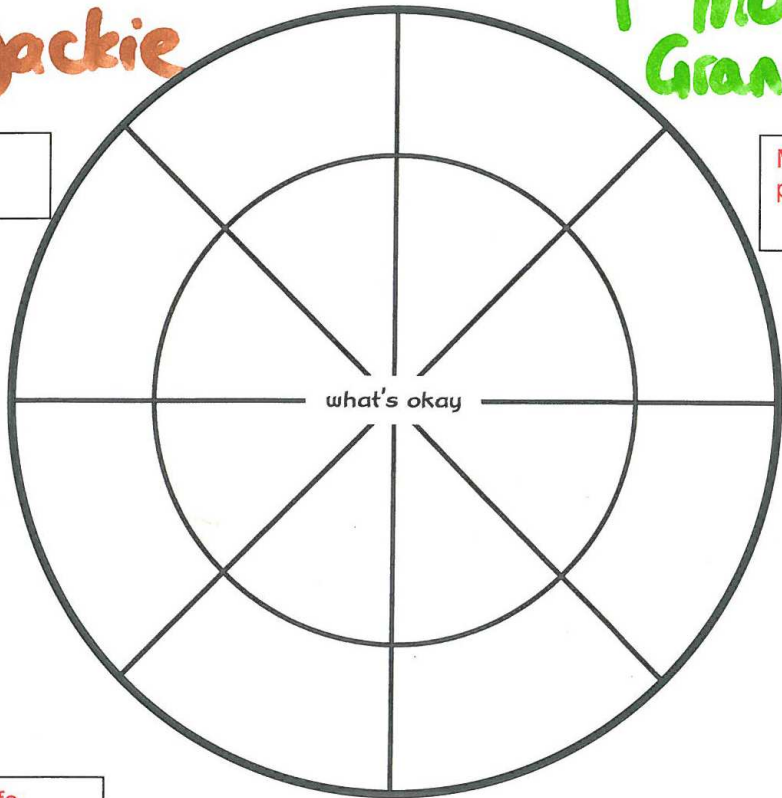
Safety Circle

Mummy
Jama
K.M: Jackie

Andy MGM
Mum's +
Grandad's
house

My safety
people

My safe
places



My safe
numbers

Who I can talk to

Friends: Jacob +
Andy TA
Family: Julie, Jackie
Andy, Lewis
Teachers

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CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 3
NOVEMBER 2014

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW OF OUTCOMES IN KEY STAGE
TESTS AND EXAMINATIONS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE CHILDREN AND FAMILY
SERVICES

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide information to Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee about the performance of schools, including inspection outcomes, statutory tests and examinations.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Local Authority has previously agreed targets each year with the Department for Education (DfE) to support improvements in Key Stage assessments and GCSE results. There is no longer a requirement to do this. However, the local authority continues to have a duty to monitor these results and report upon them. Final results by school and by local authority are made public during the autumn term through the DfE website.

Background

3. Appendix 1 provides additional information about key stage tests and examinations including year on year trends compared with national and statistical neighbour trends where these are available. Appendix 2 provides a glossary of terms.
4. Statistical neighbours are the group of authorities identified by the DfE as most comparable socio-economically with Leicestershire. Therefore it is helpful to compare performance to this group of local authorities as well as to national outcomes. The statistical neighbours are Central Bedfordshire, Essex, Hampshire, Dorset, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Sussex and Worcestershire. There are 152 local authorities nationally.
5. It should be noted that some of these results remain provisional until they are formally confirmed by the DfE. Whilst there is not usually any significant change in the results, there is a chance that the final percentages may change slightly.

Overall performance and evaluation

Foundation Stage (age 5)

6. Leicestershire has shown significant improvements from last year and in 2014 the percentage of children in Leicestershire achieving a Good Level of Development has increased by 11.9% to 58.3%. This is 2% below the provisional national figure of 60.3%, a smaller gap than in 2013 when the gap was 5.3%. Girls are outperforming boys and there is a gap of 17 percentage points. Quartile data is not yet available.
7. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium achieving a Good Level of Development has increased by 10 percentage points to 35.2%. This means that the gap has widened since 2013.
8. The average point score across all Early Learning Goals for Leicestershire is 33.9 which is in line with national and an improvement from 2013. Evaluation of the current data indicates that there has been an increase in all Early Learning Goals. The biggest gains have been made in number and writing, although writing still lags behind other Early Learning Goals and remains a priority.

Key Stage One (age 7)

8. The percentage of children in Leicestershire achieving the Phonics benchmark at Year 1 was 76%. This was a 2% increase on last year's top quartile performance and remains above the national average.
9. Leicestershire continues to perform above the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science at all levels of assessment and standards have improved in all areas. Overall, Leicestershire was equal or above national levels in 10 of the possible 11 Key Stage 1 measures according to the DfE statistical release.
10. Leicestershire compares well with statistical neighbours with the majority of Key Stage One measures around the middle or top half of the eleven comparators.

Key Stage Two (age 11)

11. Leicestershire showed a much improved Key Stage Two performance in 2014. First release DfE data places Leicestershire equal to national levels of 78% for the headline measure of Level 4 Reading, Writing and Mathematics attainment compared to 1.8% below last year. Leicestershire is level or above national levels for 7 of the 10 Key Stage Two attainment measures using the DfE's statistical first release. Leicestershire has improved its position against statistical neighbours compared to 2013 and is ranked mid-table for most comparators.

12. The percentage of pupils making progress by two levels between Key Stage One and Two has improved in all the key areas – Reading, Writing and Maths, although progress remained behind national levels as reported in quarter 2 performance report. This remains a priority.
13. The percentage of children achieving three levels of progress in Leicestershire increased in all subject areas, with increases ranging from 4.5% to 5.2%. There is no DfE national data release for this measure.

Key Stage Three (aged14)

14. There is no national collection of Key Stage Three attainment. However, the majority of Leicestershire schools still submit data to the performance team on a voluntary basis for analysis and comparison. Schools who did not submit data for 2014 are excluded from the 2013 figures to ensure year on year comparison is consistent. Current information is based on 90% of schools.
15. The percentage of children reaching Level 5+ in Maths and English at Key Stage Three rose to 90.7% in 2014 compared to 88.7% in 2013.
16. Each individual subject area – English, Maths, Science, Reading and Writing – improved on average by 1.5%.
17. Leicestershire performance is significantly above the latest national figures available, with Leicestershire 2014 English, Maths and Science attainment an average of 9% above national 2013 figures.

Key Stage Four (age 16)

18. The figures for GCSE results are recently released and provisional. The pass rate has fallen across England due to changes in the way the DfE calculate the figure. The two main changes are: 1) only the 'first entry' for a pupil is counted whereas 'best entry' was previously counted i.e. if the same student re-took the exam and passed. 2) Vocational courses now count for less in calculating GCSE equivalents. There is no available statistical neighbour information for this key stage.
19. The percentage of pupils achieving the benchmark 5 GCSEs A*- C was 55.9% using the 'first entry' of the pupil. This was 0.4 percentage points above the national average.
20. When 'best entry' was considered, the Leicestershire percentage rose to 58.2% against a national average of 58.5%. This is not directly comparable with 2013 as it does not take into account changes to the weighting of vocational courses.
21. The percentage of pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate has risen to 16.7%. The national figure last year was 18%.

Key Stage Five (age 18)

22. Key Stage Five data includes only state funded provision and currently excludes Further Education Colleges. Key Stage Five performance improved overall with the main sub-categories of A level and vocational qualifications showing small increases in average point scores.
23. A Level points per entry increased by 0.5 to 208.8 although remained behind the national average. Vocational points per entry increased by 4.1 which is above the national average. Points per entry overall in Leicestershire rose by 1 and remained behind the national average.

Children in Care

24. Results for Children in Care are still awaiting validation. Early provisional data suggests that performance for the headline Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 measures will be similar to 2013.
25. This indicates that approximately half of children in care achieve Level 4+ in Reading, Writing and Mathematics at the end of Key Stage Two; and less than 10% of children in care achieve 5 A*-C GCSEs (including Maths and English). It should be noted that GCSE performance at all levels has fallen nationally.

Not in Employment Education and Training (NEET)

26. The NEET level in Leicestershire was 3.0% at the end of August 2014. This represents 633 Year 12-14 young people. Leicestershire is first among statistical neighbours for NEET.

Ofsted outcomes (schools)

27. The percentage of Leicestershire schools rated as Good or Outstanding is currently 84.6% (September 2014). This is above the latest national figure available of 80% (June 2014) and is an improving picture. The average for statistical neighbours is 79.6%
28. The percentage of Leicestershire pupils attending a Good or Outstanding school is currently 79.1%. This is 1.2% above the latest national figure available. The average for statistical neighbours is 77.6%.
29. The percentage of Leicestershire primary schools rated as Good or Outstanding is higher than the percentage of Secondary schools. The same pattern is repeated for the percentage of pupils in Good or Outstanding schools.
30. The number of Special Schools rated as Good or Outstanding is currently 83.3%. However, it should be noted that 5 out of 6 are rated as Good or Outstanding and each school represents 16.7% of the total.

Conclusion

31. The available performance information and most recent analysis indicates that more children in Leicestershire are achieving positive outcomes which ensures that they are developing the skills and knowledge at each stage of their learning in readiness for the next stage of their education. Further analysis is needed to establish an accurate picture of the performance of different groups, for example, those with special educational needs. The emerging priorities which have been shared with schools are:

- Writing in the early years;
- Improving rates of progress between key stages;
- Narrowing the gap between pupils eligible for pupil premium, including Children in care and their peers in all subjects and in all phases;
- Maths at Key Stage Four and Five.

Background Papers

33. None. Figures are derived from the DfE Research and Statistics department which collates data on behalf of all local authorities.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

34. None.

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Equality and Human Rights Implications

32. These are the results achieved by all Leicestershire children and young people in the summer of 2014. The analysis of groups will inform any further targeted intervention where underperformance is identified.

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CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3
NOVEMBER 2014

QUARTER 2 2014/15 PERFORMANCE REPORT

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND
FAMILIES

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update of Children and Families performance at the end of quarter 2 of 2014/15.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. Children and Families performance is reported on a quarterly basis to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The previous report covered performance to quarter 1 of 2014/15.

Background

3. The report is based on the set of performance measures aligned with the priorities set in the new County Council Corporate Strategy to 2017/18, agreed by the Council in May 2014.
4. The report is now divided into the four key priority areas identified by the Children and Families department:
 - Children and Young People are Safe
 - Children and Young People achieve their potential
 - Children and Young People have their Health and Wellbeing and Life Chances Improved
 - Thriving Communities

Changes to the report

5. Statistical neighbour benchmarks have changed marginally in most cases due to an update of the statistical neighbour group. Dorset has replaced Kent as one of the 11 areas judged as similar to Leicestershire.

Performance Summary

6. From 21 measures that have new data available, 9 have improved since Q1, 7 show no significant change and 5 show negative movement.

Children and Young People are Safe

7. Indicators in the section 'Children and Young People are Safe' saw little movement from Quarter 1 with the exception of two measures. The number of 'Child Protection Plans lasting 2 years or more' decreased to 0.6% (i.e. improved performance), which would be top quartile performance by the 2013/14 measures available. This measure involves small numbers of children and 0.6% represents 3 children. The percentage of 'Children becoming subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time' increased and would now be higher than the national average (worsening performance).

Children and Young People Achieve their Potential

8. The number of eligible families taking up Free Early Education Entitlement for 2 year olds and 3 year olds increased for both age groups.
9. The 'inequality gap in achievement across all early learning goals' is now available and shows a narrowing of the gap by 2.8% to 30.8%. This would be top quartile performance in 2013 but 2014 comparisons are not yet available.
10. Provisional GCSE and A Level data is newly available. Leicestershire compares favourably with national averages for 5 A*-C GCSEs and A Level average point scores have increased.
11. A full suite of 2014 education data will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny committee in a separate report.

Ofsted outcomes

12. At the time of writing, all Ofsted school inspections in Leicestershire since the new academic year began have returned an outcome of Good or Outstanding. This has had a positive impact on both the percentage of schools rated as Good or better and the percentage of pupils in Good or better schools. Both measures are above the national average.

Economy/Employment and Skills

13. The latest data shows a Leicestershire NEET figure of 3%. This is the lowest amongst statistical neighbours.

Children and Young People have their Health and Wellbeing and Life Chances Improved

14. Data for the average waiting time for CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service) assessment has now been received. Latest data shows a small decrease in waiting times compared to the 2013/14 end of year figure (9.1 weeks reducing to 8.7 weeks).
15. Breast feeding at 6-8 weeks data has been received for quarter 1 and shows an increase in prevalence. This was an area of targeted work for district health services. Quarter 2 data is not yet available.

Thriving Communities

16. Supporting Leicestershire Families is currently supporting 373 families, an increase of 74 when compared to the previous quarter. This number includes a turnover of families as some families have their needs met and new families are identified and worked with.
17. New Youth Offending data for Quarter 1 has become available. This shows very little movement overall although the number of first time entrants to the criminal justice system rose over a rolling 12 month period.

County Council Annual Performance Report

18. The County Council's Annual Report is due to be published later in the year. This will provide a comprehensive list of indicators relevant to the Children and Families department along with final 2013/14 performance. 46 indicators relevant to Children and Families are included of which 24 saw an improving trend; 5 had no significant movement; 8 had a declining trend; and 9 were not comparable.

Conclusion

19. This report provides an update on Children and Families performance at the end of quarter 2, 2014/15. Progress will continue to be monitored in all outcome areas, with a particular focus on indicators with declining performance.

Recommendation

That the Committee note performance at quarter 2 and comment on any significant performance issues.

Background Papers

None.

Circulation under Local Issues Alert Procedure

None.

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List of Appendices

Appendix A - Children and Family Services performance dashboard for quarter 2, 2014/15

Equality and Human Rights Implications

20. Addressing equalities issues is supported by this report. The education of vulnerable groups is reported on directly to the relevant Assistant Director and will be covered in a specific education report.

Children and Families Performance FY2014/15 Q2

* denotes 2013 year end comparative data (earlier for some health measures)

Outcome	Supporting Indicator	Latest data	Direction of travel		Change from 2013/14 year end	Status RAG	National benchmark (quartile 1 = top)	Statistical benchmark Neighbour	2017/18 target
			from previous data	from 2013/14 year end					
Children and Young People are Safe	% child protection cases which were reviewed within timescales	Q2 2014/15	96.8%	→	-1.1%		n/a	98.2%**	100%
	% children with 3 or more placements during the year	Q2 2014/15	14.8%	→	+7.1%		3*	12.1%**	<9%
	% children in same placement for 2+ years or placed for adoption	Q2 2014/15	65.4%	→	-2.2%		3*	63.8%**	70%
	% children who wait less than 20 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family	-	-	-	-		-	-	65%
	Care leavers in suitable accommodation	Q4 2014/15	61.1%	n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a	Top quartile
	Care leavers NOT in education, employment or training	Q4 2014/15	38.9%	n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a	Top quartile
	Child Protection plans lasting 2 years or more	Q2 2014/15	0.6%	→	-4.2%		1*	2.84%**	n/a
	Children becoming subject to a child protection plan for second or subsequent time	Q2 2014/15	18.7%	↓	+6.2%		4*	16.5%**	n/a
	% eligible 2 year olds taking up FEEE	Summer Term	75.3%	→	+10.3		n/a	n/a	80%
	% eligible 3 year olds taking up FEEE	Summer Term	89.8%	→	+1.4		n/a	n/a	95%
Children and Young People Achieve their Potential	% of reception pupils reaching a Good Level of Development	2014	58%	→	+11.7%		n/a	n/a	60%
	% inequality gap in achievement across all early learning goals	2014	30.8%	→	-2.80%		n/a	n/a	Top 20%
	% KS2 pupils achieving L4 in Reading, Writing and Maths	2014	78.6%	→	+4.4%		3	78.1%	85%
	% pupils progressing by 2 levels in Maths between KS1 and KS2	2014	87.7%	→	+2.5%		4	88.1%	Above national average
	% pupils progressing by 2 levels in Reading between KS1 and KS2	2014	89.8%	→	+3.9%		4	89.9%	Above national average
	% pupils progressing by 2 levels in Writing between KS1 and KS2	2014	91.5%	→	+3.4%		4	92.2%	Above national average

Children and Young People Achieve their Potential

% pupils eligible for FSM achieving L4 in Reading, Writing and Maths	2014	57.6%	↑	+5.5%	n/a	n/a	n/a	Above national average
% pupils achieving 5+ A*-C GCSEs (inc. Eng and Maths)	2014	55.9%	↓	-3.6%				70%
% pupils making expected progress from Key Stage 2 to 4 in English	2014	67.5%	↓	-0.6%				Above national average
% pupils making expected progress from Key Stage 2 to 4 in Maths	2014	65.1%	↓	-4.9%				Above national average
% pupils eligible for FSM achieving 5+ GCSE A*-C (inc. Eng and Maths)	2013	7.4%	↑	-1.2%			4*	6.7%*
Secondary School persistent absence rate	2014	208.8	↑	+0.5			-	215
A Level - average points per entry	Q1 2014/15	95.1%	↑	+0.3%			n/a	n/a
17 year old participation	Aug-14	3.0%	→	+0.2%			1*	5.03%
NEET 16-18	2013	85%	-	-			2*	85.4%*
% L2 by age 19	2013	-	-	-			-	-
% Children in Care achieving L4 in Reading, Writing and Maths at KS2	2013	-	-	-			-	-
% Children in Care achieving 5+ A*-C GCSE (inc. Eng and Maths)	2013	-	-	-			-	-
% Schools assessed as Good or Outstanding	Sep-14	84.6%	↑	+2.6%			2	79.60%
% Pupils in Good or Outstanding schools	Sep-14	79.1%	↑	+2.1%			2	77.60%
% Special schools assessed as Good or Outstanding	Sep-14	83.3%	→	-16.7%			4	88.20%
% of pupils offered first choice primary school	2014	90%	-	-2%			n/a	n/a
% of pupils offered first choice secondary school	2014	96.2%	-	-0.50%			n/a	98%

Children and Young People have their Health and Wellbeing and Life Chances Improved									
Under 18 conception data	2012	21.7	n/a	n/a		Better*	27.7*	-	
% women smoking at time of delivery	2012/13	11.30%	n/a	n/a		Better*	12.7%*	10.80%	
Emotional health of looked after children - mean SDQ scores	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<15	
Waiting times for assessment by CAMHS	Q1 2013/14	8.7 weeks	→	-0.4		-	-	Reduce	
Number of looked after children having health checks	2013/14	74.20%	→	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Increase	
Number of looked after children having dental checks	2013/14	73.50%	→	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Increase	
Number of looked after children with up to date immunisations	2013/14	86.40%	→	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Increase	
% children with excess weight 4-5 year olds	2012/13	21%	-	-		Better*	22.2%*	<20%	
% children excess weight 10-11 year olds	2012/13	31.13%	-	-		Better*	33.3%*	Top quartile	
% children aged 5 with one or more decayed, missing or filled teeth	2011/12	n/a	-	-		-	-	Reduce	
% mothers breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks	Q1 2014/15	47.30%	→	-		Worse*	47.2%*	Increase	
Reduced youth re-offending	2013/14	1.04	→	n/a		n/a	n/a	Top quartile	
Reduced first time entrants to the youth justice system	Q1 2014/15	234	↓	+22		n/a	n/a	Top quartile	
Minimal use of custodial sentences for young people	-	-	-	-		n/a	n/a	<5%	
Reduce % people reporting they have been a victim of ASB	Q1 2014/15	7.8%	→	+0.1		n/a	n/a	Reduce	
Numbers of families supported through SLF service	Sep-14	373	→	+95		n/a	n/a	480	
% of SLF payment by results families target achieved	Aug-14	100%	-	-		n/a	n/a	-	
Feedback from families and evaluation provides evidence of positive impact (average satisfaction across services)	2013/14	90.25%	-	-		n/a	n/a	-	
Thriving Communities									

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**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 3
NOVEMBER 2014**

MTFS SAVINGS AND THE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to address issues raised by the professional association of educational psychologists (AEP) in its letter to the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding decisions about the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the proposals for departmental MTFS savings at its meeting on 20 January 2014 and again on 1 September 2014.
3. The County Council's budget, including the current MTFS, was agreed at the full County Council meeting on 19 February 2014.

Background

4. The reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee about the MTFS 2014/18 have identified that the Children and Young People's Service had made savings of just over £30m during the financial years 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2014, primarily in education services. The MTFS savings for the financial years 2014/18 for the new Children and Family Services total £13.24m and are set out in Table 1 below. The 2015/16 savings target includes an agreed saving of £240k for the Educational Psychology Service.

Table 1

	Children and Young People's Service £000	Youth Offending Service (YOS) £000	Children and Family Services £000
2014/15	3,400	0	3,400
2015/16	8,290	350	8,640
2015/16	1,000	90	1,090
2017/18	0	110	110
	12,690	550	13,240

5. The Committee was also informed in the September report that the Department has created a coherent transformation programme for the 19 separately identified savings areas, plus the YOS, and that this includes 4 major areas of transformation:
- remodelling children's social care;
 - remodelling early help services;
 - remodelling special educational need and disability services;
 - remodelling other education services.
6. The individual services contained in d) above were set out in the previous reports as service teams in scope of redesign and are:
- Pupil services team
 - Education of Children in Care team
 - Oakfield School (Pupil Referral Unit – primary phase)
 - Special Educational Needs Assessment (SENA) service
 - Disabled children's service
 - Specialist teaching services
 - Educational psychology service

The Committee was informed that “the deliverables and benefits are currently being defined.”

7. On 7 October 2014, the Regional Office of the Association of Educational Psychologists wrote to the County Council requesting that various matters be brought to the attention of the members of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee. That letter is attached at Appendix A. The key questions in the report are:
- why has the agreed MTFs saving of £240k, as agreed by the County Council, now risen to £391k without Member approval?
 - why this was not mentioned at the meeting of the Overview and

Scrutiny Committee on 1st September, when there is a minute of an officer meeting on 20th August 2014 that the savings target was now £391k?

- c) who has been consulted and what has the response been? How, if at all, have their views been taken into account in this proposal?
8. Additional comments to be addressed in the report are that:
- a) schools are not aware of the full implications of the proposals;
 - b) now is not the time to cut the role with a view to the requirements of the Children and Families Act;
 - c) AEP is confident that the £240k in savings could be achieved through income generation.

Questions raised by AEP and responses

Why has the agreed MTFs saving of £240k, as agreed by the County Council, now risen to £391k?

- 9. During the summer and autumn period 2013, the Director, in setting out the financial challenges for the County Council and the department, requested that all service managers go through an exercise to identify a minimum of 10% savings in their budgets. The intention being to look at this option as a starting point towards finding even greater savings through a more strategic approach. The Educational Psychology Service identified savings of £240k and this was incorporated into the MTFs process.
- 10. Subsequently, the service manager, in discussion with the Director, explained that this would mean stopping services for some children part way through the academic year as the budget operates to the financial year. The Director agreed that this should be avoided and agreed that the service could continue to offer support until the end of the academic year 2015, but that the savings would still need to be met in full in the financial year 2015/16. Schools were informed by the service and the service manager started discussions with staff.
- 11. It was also agreed that this was an opportunity to fully review the current format and functions of the Service to achieve clarity about what are statutory functions, 'core' functions and other functions. Initial proposals were presented to the departmental management team for discussion on 4th June 2014 and options on proposals were presented to the departmental transformation board on 23rd July 2014. This is attached at Appendix B.

12. Two options were presented by the Service Manager: one totalling a saving of £391,011; the other achieving an additional savings of £3000. The paper also stated that “It is understood that the staffing structure in place on 1st August 2015 may continue as a permanent reduction.” (page 6, paragraph 1). The minute from the meeting is attached at Appendix C. It was agreed that an action plan be initiated to include both options.
13. At the next meeting of the departmental transformation board on 20 August, as a note on the review of the minutes of 23 July 2014, it was stated that: “The Board noted that the agreed saving for 2015/16 was £391k and (will) remain for the period of the MTFS”. This is an internal minute as part of the deliberations regarding the MTFS planning for the future where it is already known that there will be a need to make savings beyond the current £13.24m target. The plans for further savings will be taken through the proper process for political decision making. Nevertheless, regardless of future need, the requirement to achieve the full savings in the current MTFS for this service (£240k), and fulfil the obligation made to schools, at the request of the service, to continue provision until the end of the academic year 2015, will require an action plan to save £391k.

Why this was not mentioned at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1st September, when there is a minute of an officer meeting on 20th August 2014 that the savings target was now £391k?

14. The papers for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1 September 2014 were completed prior to the departmental meeting on 20 August 2014. There was no specific discussion at the Overview and Scrutiny meeting about the Educational Psychology Service. In any case, it would not have been appropriate to discuss plans for the next MTFS at this meeting as this was not the subject of the agenda item. Proposals for the next MTFS will be the main agenda item for the January meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, prior to decisions by the Cabinet and approval of the budget at the County Council meeting.

Who has been consulted and what has the response been? How, if at all, have their views been taken into account in this proposal?

15. The Service Manager has been in discussion with her staff since the MTFS was approved earlier this year.
16. The papers presented to the departmental management meeting in June 2014 and the departmental transformation board in July set out the plan to “start formal dialogue with schools, settings, families and partners.”
17. The minutes of the departmental transformation board meeting on 23 July

2014 note an agreement to: “start a formal dialogue with schools (including trading dialogue), settings, families and partners about the future shape and function of LPS.”

18. Formal consultation with staff will start once the final draft Action Plan has been agreed.

Additional comments from AEP and responses

Schools are not aware of the full implications of the proposals.

19. Schools were first contacted in May with a view to ascertain the level of service that they might wish to purchase from the Service in future, in light of the changes proposed as a result of the need to save £240k from the 2015/16 budget. Schools have since been contacted again. Agreement has been given to begin formal discussions with schools as set out in paragraph 15 above.

Now is not the time to cut the role with a view to the requirements of the Children and Families Act.

20. Unfortunately, the Children and Families Act, whilst bringing additional duties to the County Council does not bring additional resource. The significant savings required by Children and Family Services needs to respond to new legislation whilst also fulfilling statutory duties. The current service provided by the Educational Psychology Service offers the statutory function, plus additional ‘core’ functions, plus traded functions. In the proposed revised structure, the ‘core’ functions will still be provided free of charge to schools over and above the statutory role of the Service.

AEP is confident that the £240k in savings could be achieved through Income generation.

21. The original analysis of traded income for the Educational Psychology Service showed that the large majority of this income was being provided by other internal departmental services, all under their own budgetary pressures and so this cannot be relied on in the future. Additional income from schools accounted for a small percentage of the traded income in comparison.
22. Schools were approached in May 2014 in order to ‘test’ the market for trading. The results of this showed that:
 - 29 schools returned the questionnaire (10% of all schools);
 - 16 indicated that they would purchase a service.

The analysis regarding the income that this would generate on a full cost recovery basis is yet to be considered by the department. Full details of the questionnaire are contained in Appendix B at pages 10 and 11.

23. If it could be demonstrated that the income from trading could provide the required income, at full cost recovery, to maintain staff roles this could be considered as part of the Action Plan. However, the traded activity cannot include those elements of the role that constitute the statutory function of the local authority.
24. As set out in the paper to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2014, "There is interest from a number of service areas within the Department to trade their services, particularly in the area of training provision for school based staff where there is a limited supply of other high quality providers. This is currently being explored but must be able to be a fully cost-recoverable option and cannot be established as an alternative form of funding for services that must be provided as a statutory responsibility of the Local Authority."

Engagement and Consultation

25. In accordance with HR procedures, full consultation with staff will commence once the draft Action Plan is finalised.

Background Papers

26. Cabinet – 15 January 2014 - Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/15 2017/18

[http://politics.leics.gov.uk/Published/C00000135/M00003986/AI00036650/\\$4ProvisionalMTFS201415201718.docxA.ps.pdf](http://politics.leics.gov.uk/Published/C00000135/M00003986/AI00036650/$4ProvisionalMTFS201415201718.docxA.ps.pdf)

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 20 January 2014 – Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/15-2017/18

[http://politics.leics.gov.uk/Published/C00001043/M00003905/AI00036688/\\$MediumTermFinancialStrategy.docxA.ps.pdf](http://politics.leics.gov.uk/Published/C00001043/M00003905/AI00036688/$MediumTermFinancialStrategy.docxA.ps.pdf)

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 1 September 2014 - Implications of MTFS Savings

[http://politics.leics.gov.uk/Published/C00001043/M00003905/AI00036688/\\$MediumTermFinancialStrategy.docxA.ps.pdf](http://politics.leics.gov.uk/Published/C00001043/M00003905/AI00036688/$MediumTermFinancialStrategy.docxA.ps.pdf)

Circulation under Local Issues Alert Procedure

27. None

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List of Appendices

Appendix A - Letter from AEP 7th October 2014

Appendix B - Paper to departmental transformation board 23rd July 2014

Equality and Human Rights Implications

28. The majority of the work of Children and Family Services is targeted towards vulnerable and disadvantaged children, young people and families. Where proposed savings are likely to have an adverse impact on service users protected under equalities legislation, an Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) is carried out prior to any final decisions being made. At this stage in the transformation programme there are no specifically identified adverse implications for protected groups, and the opportunities to innovate are providing mitigation. However, the EHRIAs are re-visited at various stages in the project plans and so any adverse implications that may arise can be identified and taken into account.

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Our Ref: Local Authorities/Leicestershire

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Chief Executive's Department
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LE3 8RA

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7 October 2014

For the Members of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny
Attention of: Committee

Dear Members of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee,

Leicestershire County Council: Scale of Budget Cuts for the Educational Psychology Service.

The Association of Educational Psychologists is an independent trade union and it represents some 90% of educational psychologists who are currently in practice in England and Wales. I am writing to you on behalf of our members employed by Leicestershire County Council.

I refer the "Questioning by Members of Overview and Scrutiny" document, which appears at the end of the Agenda page of your proceedings. It is considered relevant to the content of this letter.

At your meeting on 1 September 2014, Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered, at Agenda Item 10, a report from the Director of Children and Family Services entitled, 'Service Developments and Plans to Meet MTFs Savings'. The report contained an appendix i.e. 'Appendix A – 19 February 2014 County Council Meeting' (a copy is attached for your reference).

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The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee made the following decision:

"That the implications of the planned programme of departmental savings across Children and Family Services, required as part of the County Council's MTFS and Transformation Programme, be noted."

In 'Appendix A' it is stated that the, 'Reduction in the Educational Psychology Service', which is reference S14, would be £240,000 for the financial year 2015/2016 and sustained at that level for 2016/2017 and again for 2017/2018.

The figure of £240,000 represents an 18% cut to the service and, consequently, unless alternatives can be found and agreed, there will be some redundancies arising from it.

However, at a meeting of a group called the 'Children and Young People's Service Transformation Board' held some 11 days earlier i.e. on 20 August 2014, which was also attended by the Director of Children and Family Services, the minutes record:

"Educational Psychology Service: The Board noted that the agreed saving for 2015/2016 was £391,000 and [would] remain for the period of the MTFS."

So that means a cut of £391,000 for 2015/2016 which will be sustained for the years 2016/2017 and for 2017/2018. We are not at all clear who "agreed" the savings of £391,000.

This is an increase in the level of the cut agreed by the democratically elected Members of Leicestershire County Council on the 19 February 2014 of some £151,000. Or put another way, it raises the cut from 18% to 29%.

We are surprised that this 'decision' was not reported to Overview and Scrutiny and is not reflected in the minutes of your meeting.

In addition, we have looked through Leicestershire County Council's website for evidence of an 'elected Member' decision in the proceedings of meetings of the various Council Committees since 19 February 2014 that would authorise such an increase and we have failed to find one.

If there is such a minuted decision, then we would be grateful if you could direct us to it.

However, if this 'decision' does not enjoy transparent elected Member support, then we would view it as being 'ultra vires' and any dismissals for reason of redundancy resulting from it would also be considered 'ultra vires' and therefore would arguably be unfair dismissals.

On 2 October 2014, I wrote to Sam Weston, in Democratic Services, to advise him that I intended to write to the members of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee about this matter. However, I did agree that he could first try and secure an explanation from Children and Family Services. He contacted Gillian Weston in Children and Family Services.

I attach that correspondence for your reference.

The key part of the response from Children and Family Services is as follows:

“The service considered the options to achieve the full saving in the 2015/16 financial year and provided proposals that honoured the services commitments to schools for the 2014/15 academic year. However, to do that it was deemed necessary to implement a restructure commencing in September, part way through the financial year. As a result the savings need to be delivered over 7 months and therefore need to make a greater reduction in the service, this reduction delivers a full financial year saving of £391,000.

The governance arrangements within the Children and Families Department surrounding the delivery of departmental savings are through the department’s Transformation Board, the proposed restructure delivering savings of £391,000 was agreed at this Board on August 20th following extensive discussions within the department and with the service manager.”

This response is not satisfactory for the following reasons:

1. Firstly, it appears to confirm that there is no democratic accountability for the “agreed” decision of Transformation Board to increase the saving from £240,000 to £391,000.
2. Secondly, just because the proposed £240,000 savings have to be ‘shoe-horned’ into seven months rather than twelve months, that does not explain why the saving for 2015/2016 has to be a whopping £391,000.

What I think it may mean is that, because the redundancies are starting part-way through the financial year, that they have to be at a greater level than they would have been if the redundancies had been implemented for the start of 2015/2016 in order to achieve a saving of £240,000. Consequently, if they are sustained at that level into 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 then the full year savings for those years would be £391,000, as a direct consequence of a decision to start later in the year 2015/2016. There is clearly no democratic accountability that would allow the Children and Family Service to sustain a £391,000 cut to the Educational Psychology Service in years 2016/2017 and 2017/2018. That is not what Appendix A says about the Educational Psychology Service.

3. Thirdly, I am very mindful of the fact that one of the key questions, Overview and Scrutiny is expected to consider is: *“Who has been consulted and what has the response been? How, if at all, have their views been taken into account in this proposal?”*.

My concern is that the schools do not appear to be aware of the full implications of what is being proposed in 2016/2017 and 2017/2018. Their Educational Psychologist Service is now apparently planned to ‘fall off a cliff’ in September 2015 and I am not at all sure that that was either the intention of the elected

Members on 19 February 2014 or what the schools would envisage is going to happen.

Finally, on your same agenda, you considered the implications of and the responsibilities arising from the Children and Families Act 2014 and allied Code of Practice published in July 2014.

Now is not the time to be cutting educational psychologists by 29% as their statutory role has been enhanced and expanded as a result of the legislative changes. They ought, for example, to be playing a key role in the new EHC plans.

The Association of Educational Psychologists is confident that the £240,000 in savings can be achieved through income generation, if the service is allowed to trade to its capacity, and, accordingly, the impact of redundancies can be mitigated fully.

When we are eventually consulted over the savings to be made, this argument will form the centre-piece of our submission.

In the meantime, we are keen to establish what the level of the savings authorised is and see the audit-trail behind that decision.

We wait to hear from you.

Yours faithfully,



Stuart Moules
Regional Officer (North)

Enc.

- Attachment 1: Email trail between Stuart Moules and Sam Weston dated 2 October 2014 16:37
- Attachment 2: Email trail between Stuart Moules and Sam Weston dated 2 October 2014 14:14
- Attachment 3: Letter dated 2 October 2014 from Stuart Moules for the Attention of Members of Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Attachment 4: Appendix A

Copy to: AEP members in Leicestershire

Ann Harding

From: Stuart Moules
Sent: 02 October 2014 16:37
To: 'Sam Weston'
Cc: Aimee Mitford
Subject: RE: Leicestershire County Council: Scale of Budget Cuts for the Educational Psychology Service

Dear Sam

Thank you for this. I am afraid it is not satisfactory insofar as it concedes that there is, as we thought, no elected Member decision to support the process described.

I will now write directly to the members of the Committee .

Thank you though for your efforts .

Kind regards

Stuart Moules
Regional Officer (North)

From: Sam Weston [mailto:Sam.Weston@leics.gov.uk]
Sent: 02 October 2014 16:17
To: Stuart Moules
Cc: Aimee Mitford
Subject: RE: Leicestershire County Council: Scale of Budget Cuts for the Educational Psychology Service

Dear Stuart,

Please find attached below a response to the issues you raise which I have sent on behalf of the Assistant Director of Children and Families here at the County Council.

Please note that there will be an opportunity to raise issues through a consultation process that will take place when the action plan is launched in January.

Sam Weston

Democratic Services
Chief Executive's Department
Leicestershire County Council
0116 305 6226
sam.weston@leics.gov.uk
leics.gov.uk



The County Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2014/15 – 2017/18 was agreed on 19 February 2014 and included a financial saving for the educational psychology service of £240,000 for the 2015/16 financial year. The Council faces challenging savings targets: Children and Family Services has been required to deliver savings of £30.2m between 2010/11 and 2014/15 and is required to deliver further savings of £12.69m over the four year period of the medium term financial strategy.

The service considered the options to achieve the full saving in the 2015/16 financial year and provided proposals that honoured the services commitments to schools for the 2014/15 academic year. However, to do that it was deemed necessary to implement a restructure commencing in September, part way through the financial year. As a result the savings need to be delivered over 7 months and therefore need to make a greater reduction in the service, this reduction delivers a full financial year saving of £391,000.

The governance arrangements within the Children and Families Department surrounding the delivery of departmental savings are through the department's Transformation Board, the proposed restructure delivering savings of £391,000 was agreed at this Board on August 20th following extensive discussions within the department and with the service manager.

The Council is currently in the process of defining the saving requirement for 2015/16 to 2018/19, through this process all growth and savings are in the process of being reviewed and amended where appropriate. This process will confirm savings for the educational psychology service of £391,000 and will be subject to the Council's budget setting process.

Gillian Weston
Assistant Director, Education, Learning and Skills
Children and Family Services
Leicestershire County Council
0116 305 6432

From: Aimee Mitford [<mailto:Aimee.Mitford@aep.org.uk>]
Sent: 02 October 2014 14:14
To: Sam Weston
Cc: Stuart Moules
Subject: Leicestershire County Council: Scale of Budget Cuts for the Educational Psychology Service

Dear Sam

Further to our telephone call yesterday, please find attached a copy of the letter I discussed with you and the relevant appendix. I have not attached a copy of the Transformation Board minutes referred to in the letter as I only have a paper copy of it and I am not in the office to pdf it for you. If you want a copy then please say so and I will send it to you next time I am in my office, which is Tuesday next week.

I am happy for you to undertake some investigations of your own but I do need to be clear that what I am looking for specifically is a minute of a meeting, at which Councillors approved the uplift in the savings from the published £240,000 to the £391,000 figure now being formally touted within Children and Families. As I say we have looked and cannot find one.

If you cannot direct us to such a minute, then please let me know as I will then ask you to send my letter to each member of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Kind regards

Stuart Moules
Regional Officer (North)

Association of Educational Psychologists
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Frankland Lane
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DH1 5TA

'the voice of the profession'

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Ann Harding

From: Aimee Mitford
Sent: 02 October 2014 14:14
To: sam.weston@leics.gov.uk
Cc: Stuart Moules
Subject: Leicestershire County Council: Scale of Budget Cuts for the Educational Psychology Service
Attachments: 2014.10.02 Letter to Leicestershire (Elected Members).pdf; 2014.10.02 Attachment 'Appendix A - 19 February County Council Meeting.pdf

Dear Sam

Further to our telephone call yesterday, please find attached a copy of the letter I discussed with you and the relevant appendix. I have not attached a copy of the Transformation Board minutes referred to in the letter as I only have a paper copy of it and I am not in the office to pdf it for you. If you want a copy then please say so and I will send it to you next time I am in my office, which is Tuesday next week.

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Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Kind regards

Stuart Moules
Regional Officer (North)

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ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS

'the voice of the profession'

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For the attention of Members of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2 October 2014

Dear Members of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Leicestershire County Council: Scale of Budget Cuts for the Educational Psychology Service.

At your meeting on 1 September 2014, Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered, at Agenda Item 10, a report from the Director of Children and Family Services entitled, 'Service Developments and Plans to Meet MTFS Savings'. The report contained an appendix i.e. 'Appendix A – 19 February 2014 County Council Meeting' (a copy is attached for your reference).

The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee made the following decision:

"That the implications of the planned programme of departmental savings across Children and Family Services, required as part of the County Council's MTFS and Transformation Programme, be noted."

In 'Appendix A' it is stated that the, 'Reduction in the Educational Psychology Service', which is reference S14, would be £240,000 for the financial year 2015/2016 and sustained at that level for 2016/2017 and again for 2017/2018.

The figure of £240,000 represents an 18% cut to the service and, consequently, unless alternatives can be found and agreed, there will be some redundancies arising from it.

However, at a meeting of a group called the 'Children and Young People's Service Transformation Board' held some 11 days earlier i.e. on 20 August 2014, which was also attended by the Director of Children and Family Services, the minutes record:

"Educational Psychology Service: The Board noted that the agreed saving for 2015/2016 was £391,000 and [would] remain for the period of the MTFS."

So that means a cut of £391,000 for 2015/2016 which will be sustained for the years 2016/2017 and for 2017/2018. We are not at all clear who "agreed" the savings of £391,000.

This is an increase in the level of the cut agreed by the democratically elected Members of Leicestershire County Council on the 19th February 2014 of some £151,000. Or put another way, it raises the cut from 18% to 29%.

4 The Riverside Centre Frankland Lane Durham DH1 5TA

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www.aep.org.uk

We are surprised that this 'decision' was not reported to Overview and Scrutiny and is not reflected in the minutes of your meeting.

In addition, we have looked through Leicestershire County Council's website for evidence of an 'elected Member' decision in the proceedings of meetings of the various Council Committees since 19 February 2014 that would authorise such an increase and we have failed to find one.

If there is such a minuted decision then we would be grateful if you could direct us to it.

However, if this 'decision' does not enjoy transparent elected Member support, then we would view it as being 'ultra vires' and any dismissals for reason of redundancy resulting from it would also be considered 'ultra vires' and therefore would arguably be unfair dismissals.

Finally, on your same agenda, you considered the implications of and the responsibilities arising from the Children and Families Act 2014 and allied Code of Practice published in July 2014.

Now is not the time to be cutting educational psychologists by 29% as their statutory role has been enhanced and expanded as a result of the legislative changes.

The Association of Educational Psychologists is confident that the £240,000 in savings can be achieved through income generation, if the service is allowed to trade to its capacity, and, accordingly, the impact of redundancies can be mitigated fully.

When we are eventually consulted over the savings to be made this argument will form the centre-piece of our submission.

In the meantime, we are keen to establish what the level of the savings authorised is and see the audit-trail behind that decision.

We wait to hear from you.

Yours faithfully



Stuart Moules
Regional Officer (North)

Enc.

Cc: AEP members in Leicestershire

APPENDIX A

Reference		2014/15 £000	2015/16 £000	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000
	<u>SAVINGS</u>				
	<u>CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES</u>				
	Efficiency savings				
S1	Contract related savings	-730	-730	-730	-730
S2	Reduced demand arising from Supporting Leicestershire Families Programme			-1,000	-1,000
S3	Realignment of parenting support services within the early help programme	-500	-500	-500	-500
S4	Reduction in cost of support for homeless 16/17 year olds	-100	-100	-100	-100
S5	Reduced demand for Short Breaks For Disabled Children	-300	-300	-300	-300
	Total	-1,630	-1,630	-2,630	-2,630
	<u>Service Reductions</u>				
S6	Cost and volume reduction in social care placements		-1,500	-1,500	-1,500
S7	Review and consolidation of Voluntary Sector Support		-800	-800	-800
S8	Re-focus of Careers Information, Advice & Guidance	-250	-650	-650	-650
S9	Alignment of family support contracts		-400	-400	-400
S10	Non replacement of posts		-120	-120	-120
S11	Reduction in Early Learning & Childcare Service resulting from legislative changes to LA responsibilities	-800	-700	-700	-700
S12	Early Learning & Childcare Service Local Authority / Dedicated Schools Grant budget switch	-530	-1,280	-1,280	-1,280
S13	Departmental structure changes	-350	-410	-410	-410
S14	Reduction in Educational Psychology Service		-240	-240	-240
S15	Remove Family Information Service		-120	-120	-120
S16	Reduction in Management Fees for Children's Centre Programme		-240	-240	-240
S17	Redesign Safeguarding Service		-500	-500	-500
S18	Reduction in Early Help Services		-2,100	-2,100	-2,100
S19	Redesign Services for Disabled Children		-1,000	-1,000	-1,000
	Total	-1,770	-10,060	-10,060	-10,060
	TOTAL	-3,400	-11,690	-12,690	-12,690

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Children and Family Services

Transformation Board

Date: 23rd. July 2014

Transformation of Leicestershire Psychology Service (LPS)

Purpose:

As a requirement of the MTFS efficiency targets, the Leicestershire Educational Psychology service is required to be redesigned to make the necessary savings.

Decisions needed by the Board:

The Board is asked to agree to;

1. Initiate an Action Plan to restructure the service in order to achieve savings identified under MTFS of £240,000 by July 31st. 2015.
2. Start a formal dialogue with schools, settings, families and partners about the future shape and function of LPS.
3. To use the transformation of LPS creatively to further develop its' traded activity, in order to extend a more flexible offer to schools and promote partnership work with other teams.

Introduction

The Leicestershire Psychology Service (LPS) is a central service providing statutory functions on behalf of the Local Authority and other activities that facilitate joint working with partners, aid decision making for individual young people and a range of preventative work with other teams.

The core purpose of LPS is to advise the LA and partners on compensatory and restorative interventions for those with complex difficulties and disabilities whose needs go beyond early intervention, to ensure that children and young people are ready for school and achieve their potential in school. Through their training and experience, educational psychologists (EPs) are uniquely placed to provide a detailed, holistic analysis of the child's/young person's additional needs, involving observation, talking to the child, individual assessments and consultation with the adults who know the child well. Distressed children, whether through attachment difficulties, trauma, loss or mental health problems will significantly underachieve in school and educational psychologists will also focus on an assessment of the executive functions which inhibit learning.

Educational Psychologists always work through other adults; empowering others and sharing skills is core business. Knowledge and experience of a wide range of conditions, whether genetic or acquired, allows EPs to support parents and schools

with their expertise regarding the child's anticipated 'journey', with a focus on positive outcomes and inclusive, practical ways forward.

Background

Children's special educational needs are becoming increasingly complex, resulting in increasing pedagogical challenge for EPs and other specialists to ensure that schools and settings make the adjustments required, in order that our most vulnerable children achieve their hoped for outcomes. An observable increase in the search for a label or 'diagnosis', amongst parents and other professionals is a key driver.

Between 2004 and 2010 the number of families with a disabled child has risen from 700,000 to 950,000 and the total number of children with severe learning difficulties has risen by 5.1% (DfE). It is well known that disability clusters with disadvantage and parental mental health problems, including drug and alcohol use. In 2004 there were 928 new requests to the LPS, 1278 in 2013 and an anticipated 1374 in 2014. The LPS has 2,677 active cases and currently 16.2 EPs (12.8 excluding management responsibilities). This is a caseload of 209 children/young people per EP.

In Leicestershire, referrals to CAMHS have risen by 47% and the number deemed 'inappropriate' is rising. These distressed children either struggle to attend school or challenge the capability of mainstream schools to meet their complex needs. These children/young people are currently a key priority for schools in discussion with their link EP.

The LPS has a link role to schools, providing a service on a locality 'patch' basis. Wherever possible, families of schools and the pre-school children referred in the area are seen by the same educational psychologist. It is now possible for a child to have the same educational psychologist from birth to 25 years. The educational psychologist is often the first point of contact between schools and the LA on SEND matters.

The LPS is divided into three area teams based around Melton/Charnwood, Harborough/Blaby/Oadby and Wigston and NWL/Hinckley and Bosworth. Due to the locality basis of their work, educational psychologists work in schools/settings, touchdowns or their homes, only attending county hall on a planned basis for meetings or supervision or face to face communication with their business support assistant.

The SEN Code of Practice 2014 is the most far-reaching programme of change for the SEND responsibilities of Local Authorities in twenty-five years. EPs link role with schools is an integral element to the success of the changes and promote equal confidence in parents and schools.

The statutory functions and other core activities of Leicestershire Psychology Service, on behalf of the LA, are as follows:

Statutory functions:

1. Providing statutory advice as part of Education and Health Care Plan Assessments (SEND Code of Practice 2014 9.47 'advice and information **must** be sought from an educational psychologist').

APPENDIX B

2. If not already available, providing statutory advice as part of converting statements of SEN to Education and Health Care Plan Assessments. 'An EHC needs assessment must be conducted as part of the transfer review'. Advice will not be sought... 'if such advice has been previously provided and it is sufficient for the purposes of an EHC needs assessment' *Transitional and Savings Provisions DfE June 2014*. The LPS has 790 active cases of children with Statements of Special Educational Needs. This is 26% of children/young people with statements where there is likely to be recent advice. 74% of children/young people will need an EHC needs assessment and EP advice **must** be sought as part of this process.
3. The statutory functions above will be the same for Colleges of FE.

Core business (a holistic assessment and analysis of needs which supports decision making and the setting of appropriate outcomes):

4. Providing updated advice/attending statutory reviews within Leicestershire in order to advise on provision/placement on behalf of the Local Authority (SEND Code of Practice 2014 9.172 'a local authority SEN officer **MUST** be invited...the school **MUST** seek advice from all parties invited').
5. To maintain and monitor the progress of the most complex children/young people placed in specialist, independent schools, in order to advise the Local Authority on provision/placement, to support placement stability and take part in multi-agency work. A focus of EP work will be to advise the LA as to whether the young person can return to local provision and to support the transition.
6. Contribute to safeguarding the most complex children/young people placed in specialist, independent schools part of multi-agency work.
7. On behalf of LA, to support schools/settings following a critical incident in partnership with Social Care and CAMHS.
8. Attending SENDIST Tribunals, Equality Act 2010 Tribunals and other legal proceedings in order to provide expert advice on behalf of the Local Authority.
9. All casework arising from the Early Years Panel (SEND Code of Practice 5.15 'support can take a number of forms including specialist support from an educational psychologist').
10. All casework allocated from SAPS for children/ young people missing education for mental health reasons. (SEND Code of Practice 10.47 'young people in alternative provision because of their health needs should have....appropriate support to meet the needs of those with SEN')
11. A new responsibility for LA's under the Children and Families Act 2014 to provide pre EHCP SEND support to young people 18-25 years in the Colleges of F.E, similar to that provided to schools.
12. As part of LLR's Autism Diagnosis Pathway, educational psychologists contribute to multi-agency diagnostic teams.

****For current preventative work please see Appendix III: LPS Progress within the Transformation Programme.***

The structure of the Leicestershire Psychology Service is attached (Appendix I a).

Remodelling LPS

The remodelling of LPS is based on the following:

1. maintaining a central psychology service where staff are deployed to work in specified areas of the county.
2. maintaining a core offer of dedicated link EP time for schools for statutory work.
3. maintaining central capacity of EP time for core activities identified by the LA namely:
 - Critical Incidents
 - Legal Work (SENDIST Tribunals, legal proceedings arising from the Equality Act)
 - Early Years referrals from Early Years Panel
 - ASD diagnosis work with FYPC (Health)
4. All other activity is traded.

The amount of time for the statutory and core work has been calculated based on the current year's activity. With regard to traded activity, there are a number of existing commissioned projects and traded work is already undertaken with schools and other partners (Appendix 1). The table provides information to the end of the financial year (2013/14). There were many more requests during the summer term as schools came to the end of their allocated sessions. Only 1.3% of service time is currently retained for training. All other traded work is supported by Locum Educational psychologists.

It is proposed that LPS trade more actively and creatively, in order to re-invest any surplus into flexible, creative, preventative work with partners (please see Appendix III: LPS Progress within the Transformation Agenda). Specifically, there will be the opportunity for more commissioned assessments and bespoke training, therapeutic work and support from two specialist teachers.

Partners in Early Help and Oakfield School are developing a commissioning strategy with schools and LPS trading will aim to join up with this. Income generation will allow additional funds to invest in building capacity within Early Help, by supporting other adults to understand and work with the most complex children. Particular areas of development are work with children missing education for mental health reasons or work with a school following a critical incident/bereavement.

Most other East Midlands Psychology Services are successfully trading. Trading will allow the exploration/development of new markets such as the independent sector, the Behaviour Partnerships, other LA's or G.Ps. Trading may also allow for the sponsorship of Trainee Educational Psychologists/interns to enhance capacity and create the opportunity to become a centre of excellence for trainee EPs (TEPs).

Predicted time needed for statutory and core functions from 1st. September 2015:

Table 1: Statutory and core functions with future estimated contact time in EP sessions (approx. half days) based on actual work 2013/14.

Statutory offer to schools/settings (including independent/non maintained special schools) i.e. total number of link EP sessions for EHC needs assessment work. In the first six months of 2014 there have been 170 statutory assessments. Prediction for full year = 340. 2.5 sessions x 340 = 850	850
Statutory work relating to transfer of Statements of Special Educational Needs (2,800 statements to be converted by April 2018) to EHC Plans. Predicted workload from SENA review plan = 428pa. Assume 74% = 317pa 317 x 2.5 sessions = 793	793
Statutory EHC needs assessments in Colleges of F.E	??
Critical Incidents (assume 2 very serious incidents x 20 sessions)	40
Legal Work (SENDIST Tribunals, Equality Act): 15 x 8	120
Casework arising from EY Panel (pre EHC needs assessment)	211
Casework arising for PME	226
ASD diagnosis: 46 x 2 sessions (direct requests from paediatricians so far in 2013/14)	92
TOTAL	2332 + FE work

- Given the available budget (please see below), a re-structure would allow the equivalent of 10 fte EPs (not including management time) for delivering link time to schools/settings.
- Service capacity will be 2443 sessions contact sessions, which allows for statutory and core work.
- There is some additional capacity (111 sessions) to provide a statutory service to the Colleges of FE and to support the delivery of some commissioned activity.
- Pre EHCP assessment/advice and preventative work will be commissioned.
- Appendix II sets out the current commissioned activity.

Achieving the MTFS Efficiency Target:

The MTFS efficiency target of £240,000 will almost entirely be achieved through a reduction of direct staffing costs and a subsequent reduction in associated indirect staffing costs. The MTFS efficiency target needs to be achieved in financial year 2015/16. The service budget target from 1st April 2016 would therefore be £1,106,566.

The LA has given schools an assurance that current levels of LPS service delivery will be maintained throughout the academic year 2014/15. Efficiency savings generated by a reduction in staffing costs cannot therefore be implemented until August 2015. The 15/16 MTFS savings target will almost entirely need to be achieved during the 8 months from 1st August 2015 to 31st March 2016. Permanent

APPENDIX B

staffing posts would be lost from August 2015. It is understood that the staffing structure in place on 1st August 2015 may continue as a permanent reduction. The full year effect of the staffing reductions would therefore result in a saving of £391,011 with the service budget reduced to £955,555.

The following staffing structure will result in savings of £391k in 16/17:

Option 1: One PEP and two SEPs with casework

PEP (20% casework, lead on specialist area, service manager and professional lead) Soulbury B Scale 14	£76,343
2 SEPs (North/South Locality management, lead on specialist area, 40% casework) Soulbury B Scale 9	£138,387
9 fte EPs with wholly link casework responsibility (schools and early years, contribution to one specialist area). Soulbury A Scale 9-11 (one E.P is 7)	£588,741
1 Business Support Manager to include 20% casework support to PEP (LCC 24)	£28,381
3 fte Business Support Team (BST): each provides support for 4+ approx professional staff (including TEPs and Locums) LCC 14/15	£64,701
Budgets for travel, training, materials, phones, DBS checks etc	£59,000
Full Year Total Cost of new structure	£955,555
14/15 budget	£1,346,566
FULL YEAR EFFECT OF SAVINGS	£391,011

- This restructure reflects a 29% reduction of the current staffing element of the full budget. The MTFs efficiency target is 18% of the current budget.
- This model means the redundancy of two part-time specialist teachers (1.3), 4.2 EPs and 3.1 business support team.
- One SEP and 2.6 Senior Practitioner EPs will become Maingrade EPs.
- One Business Support Officer will become a Business Support Assistant.

Option 2: One PEP and one SEP with no casework

- This model achieves a further saving of £3,000.
- There will be 10 maingrade EPs instead of 9 but no difference to contact sessions available to schools/settings.

Risks:

- Criteria to access the LPS will be essential in assisting partners to differentiate between activities that are 'core' and 'commissioned'. This will be a change for schools but can be piloted in 2014/15 as part of a greater focus on trading.
- A Locum E.P costs **£520 per day**, while full cost recovery of a Local Authority E.P is **£331 per day**. Since Locum EPs are essential for traded activity, it will be hard to make any surplus in 2014/15.
- Schools may choose to go elsewhere for additional assessments and training.
- It may be difficult to source enough Locum E.Ps. The scarcity of educational psychologists nationally is likely to result in an upward direction of charges.

- Vulnerable children with challenging behaviour, poor attendance and parents who are regarded as 'uncooperative' may not be prioritised for assessment by schools when they have to pay for an EP assessment.
- Some schools may pass on charges to parents (this is usual practice in the independent sector).
- If an SEP has no casework, they may lose a unique 'on the ground' insight into issues facing locality schools/settings, which enhances management capability and credibility.
- The PEP and SEPs are fourth and fifth tier officers respectively. It would be unusual for LA officers at this level to have no casework.

Financial Implications:

Current total budget 2013/14: £1, 346, 566

Future budget following re-structure 2015/16: £955,555

Estimate of possible additional staffing-related savings arise from: travel £7.5k, mobile phones £2.4k, training £15k, conferences £3k, books and materials £2.5k and contingencies £1k.

People implications

In order to achieve the MTFs efficiency target, since the LPS budget is predominantly made up of salaries, savings can only be achieved through a loss of posts.

As this is a service for schools/settings, young people and families, these partners will need to be kept up to date with proposals and have an opportunity to contribute to shaping the Service.

An action plan will be required.

Contract/Procurement Implications:

Where using Locum Educational psychologists on an extended basis, consideration may be needed for a framework of approved providers which satisfy a set of standards. However, all practitioner psychologists must be registered with the HCPC.

Resource Implications

- Backfill from Locums will continue.
- The LPS will continue to require adequate storage space for retained paper files, test equipment and materials, training materials and resources whether centrally based or in localities.

Equalities issues/implications:

- Since there is only capacity for statutory and core work, important preventative work with other agencies and services is at risk unless it is commissioned
- There will be a reduction in support to PME due to the loss of the two specialist teachers: joint work with Early Help may ameliorate this risk.
- Health has already amended the LLR Autism diagnostic pathway to allow two health professionals (from different services) to make an ASD diagnosis but this is not considered to be ideal as it is no longer a 'multi-agency' diagnosis.

APPENDIX B

- The Association of Educational Psychologists recommends an EP to child ratio of 1:5000. The ratio in Leicestershire with 12 EPs will be 1:6568 when calculated on school age pupils but will be considerably higher when the age range 0-25 is taken into account.

Safeguarding issues/implications:

The Psychology Service undertakes a range of activities that promote safeguarding.

Environmental Implications:

None

Information Management Implications:

The LPS are part of the Local Authority's information management strategy.

ICT Implications:

- Preparation and follow up time is an essential part of EPs core work with schools and settings. For this to take place more efficiently in schools/settings or other localities, EPs need access to efficient word processing devices, access to the County Hall intranet and access to the internet.
- This requires a review by ICT and an Action Plan.

National/Local Political Implications

- The re-structure of the Leicestershire Psychology Service is politically sensitive in that these reductions are being made at the same time as the Children and Families Act (2014) has become law, with the increased expectations of children and families to have SEND recognised and supported in a timely way.
- EPs are central to the effective implementation of the new Code of Practice and the re-shaping of the Local Authority's SEND agenda.

Author: Morag Gornall and Chris Bristow

Date: 11th. July 2014

Appendix I: Traded Income 2013/14 (Financial Year)**Current Traded Income (2013/14):**

Activity	Income	Commissioner
Additional Assessments	£3,271	Schools
Bespoke Training	£2,745	Schools/Partners
Central Training	£4,225	Schools
Commissioned Projects:		
ELSA	£12,525	Schools
Thinkwise (academic year)	£35,000	Public Health
EP for ECiC	£10,000	EdCIC service
NWLeics Solihull	£16,940	NWL District Council
IAPT Systemic Family	£6,000	CAMHS
IAPT School Anxiety	£12,000	CAMHS
YOS	£11,355	Early Help
Social Worker Supervision (calendar year)	£1,248	Social Care
TOTAL	£115,309	

Staffing Costs:

2 x TEPS	£32,000
Locum Backfill	£31,184
Staff additional hours	£29,267
TOTAL	£92,451

Proposed Preventative Offer through traded activity**To Schools:**

1. Additional assessments
2. Therapeutic work with groups or individual students
3. Support from specialist teachers:
 - Further work on interventions following EP advice
 - Supporting a young person with school anxiety
4. Bespoke training
5. ELSA
6. Thinkwise
7. Training from the specialist teachers.

To Other LA Services:

1. Solihull Approach Foundation Training
2. Solihull Approach Parent Group Facilitator Training
3. Commissioned Projects

To Partners:

1. Commissioned Projects
2. Conferences:
 - Mental Health in Schools and the SEND Code of Practice
 - Learning differences: Dyslexia, ADHD, Selective Mutism, Dyspraxia, ASD

Appendix II: Questionnaire sent to Schools May 2014**Commissioning psychology services from Leicestershire Psychology Service**

Dear Colleague,

During this school year, it has been possible for schools to commission additional assessments and in-school training from Leicestershire Psychology Service. A number of schools have already used this facility and it is hoped to be able to offer a wider range of commissioned services in 2014/15. Sessions for core work (preparation and planning around SEN support and EHC Plans, work for Children in Care and other vulnerable young people and children / young people at risk of exclusion) will continue as before.

It would assist if you would indicate below what additional services/sessions you would like to buy next year and indicate a number, if at all possible. This is not a commitment to purchase but an aid to forward planning. All additional assessments and training must be backfilled by a locum Educational Psychologist and it would help if I had some indication, from the start of the year, how much locum backfill might be needed.

Please e-mail this document back to me (morag.gornall@leics.gov.uk).

Thank you for your help, it is much appreciated.

Morag Gornall

Principal Educational Psychologist

May 2014

Name of School:	
Contact Person:	
Telephone/e-mail:	

I am interested in the following additional services: **Number**

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1) Additional E.P assessments - £500 per day (assessment plus report) | _____ |
| 2) Training for school staff: | |
| • One hour £110 | _____ |
| • Half day £300 | _____ |
| • Whole day £600 | _____ |
| 3) Therapeutic intervention for a young person or group at £70 per hour | _____ |
| 4) Support from a specialist teacher at £55 per hour: | |
| • To support intervention recommended by E.P | _____ |
| • To support a young person with school anxiety | _____ |
| • Training on relationships/emotional well-being | _____ |

Results from Questionnaire Survey June 2014

Number returned: 29

10% return

Requesting commissioned work: 16 (60%)

Assessments	Training	Therapeutic	Specialist Teacher
11	8	5	10

Appendix III

Leicestershire Psychology Service within the Corporate Transformation Programme: Progress to Date

LPS has made considerable progress in achieving the objectives of the Corporate Transformation Programme as detailed below:

a) Work The Leicestershire Pound:

- LPS has 2,677 active cases and currently 16.2 EPs (12.8 excluding management responsibilities). This is a caseload of 209 children/young people per EP. Such high caseloads are only possible through EPs level of skill and experience.
- Full cost recovery of an EP is £331 per day compared to an average of £520 per day for a locum EP.
- EP 'patches' are as close to home address as possible to reduce travelling time.
- EPs work with others to return young people to Leicestershire provision following statutory review, from specialist, independent schools out of county. This work represents a considerable saving to the Local Authority.
- Early intervention work through two EPs with a specialism in infant mental health is proving to be cost-saving for the Local Authority. Of the 90 children worked with pre-school, only 10 have been re-referred by their schools.

b) Manage Demand through Prevention:

The LPS has initiated or joined with others in a range of preventative programmes:

i) Infant Mental Health:

This programme has been developed over 3 years to reflect the principles of the cross-party manifesto 1001 Days. The first 1001 days of a child's life is a critical window of opportunity when parents are particularly receptive to offers of advice and support. By the 1001st day, a baby's brain has reached 80% of its adult weight. Investment in the first 1001 days is crucial if Leicestershire is to achieve desired learning and relationship outcomes for all children.

- Direct LPS support for families where relationship breakdown between the parent and the baby/child is evident. These cases arise from EY Panel. This is the only area of our work where the LPS works directly with parents through an individual programme of support. Of the children on the programme who have moved on to school, only 10% have been raised as a concern by their schools.
- A shared approach to parenting with Early Help through the Solihull Approach (Solihull NHS Trust). The LPS has trained other teams, primarily from Early Help, in using the Solihull Approach with families and delivering Solihull Parent Programmes. This work is on-going through a plan to share LPS's programme 'Thinking about Baby and Me' and train further Early Help cohorts in delivering Solihull Approach Parent Programmes and the Solihull Approach.
- Planned supervision of Early Help staff delivering Solihull Approach Parent Programmes.

ii) Preventative Mental Health Work

- On-going work with Early Help to develop an LLR parent strategy, to include CAMHS and the voluntary sector.
- Work with CAMHS on the Increasing Access to Psychological Therapy Programme (IAPT) to support children missing education for mental health reasons.
- LPS is part of the joint CAMHS training partnership and co-delivers Tier 1 training with CAMHS practitioners.
- Commissioned work from Public Health to deliver Thinkwise, a group work programme in schools aimed at Year 5 children at risk of depression and anxiety. This group work in schools is delivered with an LSA, in order that the school can be independent with the programme in the future.
- Promoting the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant Programme (ELSA) in schools, which trains one member of the school staff to run emotional well-being and relationship group work in schools and be a source of advice and support for other school staff. Once the course has been completed, the LSA has on-going group supervision from LPS.

c) Integrate with Partners:

Joint work with other services:

- ECIC: the head teacher of the virtual school commissions additional time from LPS for casework support and advice and to support the Attachment Aware Schools Programme. Further joint work between the teams is planned, for example on the Caring about Reading Programme and supervision through Solution Circles but also for LPS to become more integrated through the Attachment Aware Schools Programme, in order to achieve the best possible learning outcomes for children in care.
- Social Care: The Psychology Service delivers training for Foster Carers, which is delivered free of charge. Social Care has commissioned LPS to provide joint reflective supervision with FRCD.
- YOS: the YOS manager has commissioned casework support from LPS. Discussions indicate that this additional support has been highly valued and is allowing for a more holistic approach towards the additional needs of young people entering the criminal justice system.
- ASD-HOW: the LPS has been commissioned to work jointly with AOS to train Home Outreach Workers in supporting families at home where the child's ASD is proving a challenge. Parents have reported that they have had difficulty receiving any help as less specialist workers will not provide a service if the child has a diagnosis of ASD.
- Work with AOS-Intensive Support and LRI neuropsychologist (acquired brain injury) – additional time given to both services to address the complexities of successfully including young people with complex ASD/anxiety and mental health needs and young people experiencing the adverse affects of brain injury in ordinary classroom settings.
- Work with SAPS to develop a strategy for addressing the needs of young people missing school for psychological and mental health reasons, including a full assessment of additional needs and support for small steps programmes to effect a positive return to school. Without such help, this group of young people is likely to experience a poor outcome in terms of examination passes and capacity to work.

Joint work with Schools/Early Years Settings and other Partners:

- Educational psychologists always work through other adults, so empowering others and sharing skills is our core business. Psychologists are trained to ensure that joint work is a mutual reflection on the child's SEND with parents and school/setting staff, recognising the expertise of others while bringing our own specialist skills and knowledge to the table.
- Educational psychologists know that partnership working is essential to their work and will try to attend the following multi-agency meetings whenever their diaries allow.
 - IEP review meetings for EY children (LPS, EYSENIS, setting, parents, SLT)
 - Early Support Meetings (chaired by Menphys)
 - Casework reviews with CAMHS
 - Casework meeting called by the neighbourhood co-ordinators, CAF in Leicester City or FYPC Care Navigation meetings.
 - Core Group Meetings called by Social Care
 - MDT meetings for ASD diagnosis (CAMHS/Paediatrician/EP/Parents/SLT)
 - Senior EPs and PEP attend a range of multi-agency steering groups, panels and partnerships.

d) Recognise Communities and Individuals:

- Educational psychologists primarily work in the existing communities of schools and early years settings but are always willing to meet parents at home if that is preferred. Anti-discriminatory practice and valuing diversity is central to our work, through recognising the communities to which families belong.
- Contact will be made with the voluntary sector where they are involved with a child/family to ensure a joined-up approach.
- Increased capacity through trading might allow opportunities for joint preventative work with the voluntary sector in the future.
- Contact with the voluntary sector is maintained through the many steering and planning groups attended by LPS management e.g IAPT steering group, CAMHS Commissioning and Performance Group, CAMHS Joint Training Forum.

e) Work Effectively:

- LPS has a time allocation model where equity of delivery to schools is transparent.
- The LPS reviews parent satisfaction through questionnaires and through a yearly questionnaire to schools. We have a feedback form for children/young people to comment on their experience.
- All professional staff have monthly supervision and twice yearly PDR.
- The EPs are regulated by the practitioner standards of conduct, performance and ethics of the HCPC.



In accordance with the procedure agreed by the Scrutiny Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners and Chairmen, Deputy Chairmen and Spokespersons of the CYPs and ACH Scrutiny Committees in July 2011, this paper is circulated for information. Please contact the Committee Officer if you would like to see a further paper on the issue included on a future meeting for discussion.

**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 3
NOVEMBER 2014**

**PROGRESS ON THE REMODELLING OF THE FOSTERING SERVICE WITH
SPECIFIC REGARD TO CHILDREN IN CARE WHO EXPERIENCE THREE OR
MORE PLACEMENT MOVES**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of report

1. The report is provided in response to a request from the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding children who have experienced three or more placement moves.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The County Council adopted a new Placement Strategy in December 2013 called 'Choices'.
3. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report in September 2013 regarding the national reform to adoption services.

Background

4. At the meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1 September 2014 Members expressed concern about the number of children in the care of the County Council who were experiencing three or more placement moves. The preferred policy of the County Council, as set out in the Choices strategy is that children in care should be supported to achieve a permanent and secure placement, preferably in a family setting. This would provide the best circumstances where children can thrive, be safe and where necessary make up the gap in their educational attainment with their peers.
5. The Quarter 1 performance reported to the Committee on 1 September 2014 was 15% (60 children) and the direction of travel was noted as declining performance. In Quarter 2 this has slightly improved to 14.8%. The statistical neighbour benchmark is 12.1%.

Local Context

6. In the period ending 30 June 2014 there were 470 children in care. This represents an increase of 25 of 445 children in the previous 12 months. At the same time the County Council's availability of 'in-house' foster carers reduced by 16 due to retirement. This has meant that fewer children who have come into the care of the County Council have been placed with the County's own foster carers. Instead more have been placed with foster carers purchased from the independent sector. Analysis shows that this cohort of children are more likely to move placement as the independent fostering agency seeks to match the needs of that child to those skills available within their pool of carers. One particular group of five siblings have moved four times into the County Council's care then back home then back into our care.
7. There is a further group of young people with challenging and risk laden behaviour who are also more likely to change placement as the service attempts to cope with their behaviour and reduce the attendant risks associated with this. This can be to disrupt harmful relationships with dangerous adults or to reduce the likelihood of their going missing from the placement. Included in this group are a few children with severe emotional needs whose needs comprise both health and social care elements. One of these young people is recorded to have moved on ten occasions.
8. In addition to the matters that directly relate to children the service has also been undertaking a major data improvement activity about children in care. One aspect of this has been to set definitions about the key address to be recorded for each child in care. This has led to a large amount of data changes which have included changes of address to comply with the agreed definition. This has served to inflate the number of children shown to have three or more moves (of address).

Action Now Being Taken

9. Central to the Transformation Project to re-model Children's Social Care are two priority areas; to establish a Placement Commissioning Strategy, and to increase the number of ability of County Council foster carers.
10. The intention of the Placement Commissioning Strategy will be to ensure that both County foster carers and those from the independent sector are better able to provide permanent and secure placements. One element of this is to set out to recruit a cohort of County foster carers who have enhanced skills to work with the most troubled of our children and young people.
11. The Joint Solutions Panel (JSF) is an internal group that tracks the progress of individual and groups of children in the care of the County Council. The JSF has identified that as at 30 September 2014 there are 451 children in care, of whom; 162 meet the criteria of being permanently in care, that is placed in a permanent and secure placement; 142 children are progressing toward permanent status, such as by awaiting an adoption order or for their placement to be celebrated as permanent; this leaves 68 children who are

subject to current legal proceedings; 49 who are in an assessment of their need and 30 young people who are in the process to moving to independence.

Resource Implications

12. There have been a number of challenges regarding the department's Placements budget over the past few years and it is anticipated that there will be a significant overspend. This position is similar to the pattern of projections in previous years which have been mitigated by underspends in other parts of the department's budget.
13. This budget is subject to demand, but nevertheless, Leicestershire continues to have a very low number of children in care (third lowest in the country).
14. The transformation project: Remodelling Social Care, has a work stream dedicated to placement commissioning.

Equal Opportunities Implications

15. Children in care are, by their very nature, vulnerable and additional support is required to support them into successful adulthood. Finding the right placement is a vital part of this support.

Background Papers

16. Report to Cabinet – December 2014 – Choices Strategy
Report to Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee – September 2013 – Adoption Reform
Report to Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Quarter 1 Performance Report 2014/15

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

17. None

Officer(s) to Contact

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CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 3
NOVEMBER 2014

ASSESSMENT OF KEY THEMES FROM OFSTED SINGLE INSPECTION
OF CHILDREN’S SERVICES

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform the Overview and Scrutiny Committee about the learning from the first year of the new Single Inspection Framework for children’s services, and to describe the preparation for inspection Leicestershire.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. Since the launch of the new Ofsted Single Inspection Framework in June 2013, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has received a number of related reports as follows:
 - (a) 9 September 2013 – Safeguarding Assurance;
 - (b) 11 November 2013 – Annual Report of the Local Safeguarding Children Board 2012/13;
 - (c) 20 January 2014 – Performance Report for First Response Central Duty and Children’s Social Care;
 - (d) 20 January 2014 – Supporting Leicestershire Families Performance Monitoring Report;
 - (e) 9 June 2014 - Local Safeguarding Children Board/Safeguarding Adult Board Business Plan 2014/15 and Performance Management Framework
 - (f) 9 June 2014 - Children Missing Education and Pupils Missing Out on Education.
3. Additionally, at its meeting on 1 September 2014 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish a separate Children’s Social Care Panel.
4. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has also received reports about the departmental budget, savings, and transformation activities relevant to children’s social care and early help.

Background

5. Following Professor Eileen Munro's review of the child protection system in 2011 Ofsted established a new programme of inspection development. Its aim was to focus on improving the way in which inspection evaluates the experiences of children and their families and the progress that they make in direct response to the professional help and support that they are given. The development of a single inspection programme, subsuming four separate inspections of protection, care, adoption and fostering, and adding a new area of early help was launched in June 2013, together with the intention to simultaneously review Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs). Inspections began in November 2013.
6. Inspection grading judgements are on a four point scale: outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate. Ofsted has made it very clear that it is unlikely that any LA will receive an outstanding judgement. The notice for inspection is one day. The inspection takes approximately 33 days.
7. Given the significance of Eileen Munro's influence on these reforms Ofsted asked her to evaluate the first four months of inspection (11 local authorities). Her observations and recommendations were focused on the process of inspection and have enabled Ofsted to refine the system to make it less bureaucratic, more consistent and more transparent regarding the 'width' of judgements.
8. As at 23rd September 2014 a total of 33 inspections have taken place of which:
 - 9 (27%) were judged good;
 - 18 (55%) were judged adequate/requires improvement;
 - 6 (18%) were judged inadequate.
9. The simultaneous reviews of the LSCBs have resulted in the following judgements:
 - 11 (33%) were judged good;
 - 15 (46%) were judged adequate/requires improvement;
 - 7 (21%) were judged inadequate.

Learning from 33 inspections

10. The strongest local authorities demonstrated the following:
 - (a) the needs of and risks to children are effectively assessed and inform clear decisions and plans supported by chronologies;
 - (b) social workers have trusting relationships with families and children and work directly with them and there is usually a theoretical base to the work;
 - (c) the capacity of parents is well considered and they are given help to parent and protect their children;

- (d) protection is given when it is needed, with the best interests of children in view;
 - (e) there is an integrated professional 'offer' of early help;
 - (f) domestic abuse is taken seriously and effective help is provided;
 - (g) when children need to be looked after the legal decisions are good, permanent homes are found quickly, there are enough carers, children can live with siblings and children do well;
 - (h) adoption staff are experienced and there are few delays;
 - (i) leaving care is well-planned and accommodation is good;
 - (j) management oversight of practice is a priority and managers know the cases well.
 - (k) performance is understood and leaders, including politicians, understand the strengths and weakness, have an action plan, and learn from practice;
 - (l) resources are prioritised, shared and targeted; the working environment is good, vacancies and workload are well managed and there is good quality training and supervision;
 - (m) there is good evidence of engagement with children and their voice is important.
11. Those local authorities that required improvement or were inadequate were not delivering to the standards set out above, and additionally, had issues regarding multi-agency responses, thresholds, the quality of professional practice and any sense of "grip".
12. In those LSCBs that were judged good the following were demonstrated:
- (a) there was clarity of responsibility between the Chair, the Director and the Chief Executive;
 - (b) the Board was well connected to decision makers through the Health and Wellbeing Board, including CCGs;
 - (c) priorities were agreed for all agencies, including the local authority;
 - (d) resources were shared;
 - (e) improvement initiatives were developed across the Board;
 - (f) the quality of professional practice was prioritised in all training;
 - (g) Section 11 audits were continually developed for new practice challenges;
 - (h) learning from practice was clear and regularly shared with staff and evident in improved practice;
 - (i) the Chair holds partners to account at the highest level.

13. Those LSCBs that required improvement of were inadequate were not delivering to the standards set out above, and additionally, did not have comprehensive performance data and could not demonstrate the impact and effectiveness of the Board.

Leicestershire preparation

14. Children and Family Services has an Improvement Board that focuses on various elements of inspection readiness from data, to audit, to case tracking, and staff preparedness, etc. On each day that the call from Ofsted could be received, the department undertakes a number of 'practice' activities, looking at key lines of enquiry and requiring immediate response from staff.
15. The Departmental Management Team (DMT) has inspection readiness as a weekly agenda item, where it can address strategic matters. The DMT also carries out a programme of 'annual conversations' with service teams to 'test' inspection readiness.
16. A self-evaluation is kept up to date to ensure that an evaluation of issues and successes are to hand together with performance information.
17. The department is involved in a peer review arrangement with other local authorities in the region. Lead Members, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Spokes are involved.
18. Similarly, the LSCB has carried out an audit of inspection preparedness and continues to work across partner agencies to ensure readiness.
19. Children and Family Services and the LSCB maintain good contact with other areas that have been inspected to learn lessons.
20. Children and Family Services has a good working relationship with regional Ofsted link officers and Senior HMI. Earlier in 2014, as a result of 'volunteering' for a pilot Ofsted inspection of Early Help, the department received helpful feedback that has been useful in preparation for the full inspection. During September all Senior HMI and HMIs were trained in the single inspection framework. Ofsted has also developed a 'consistency panel' which meets in week 5 of the inspection schedule. Ofsted has also delivered 18 improvement seminars to date and in December will work with the sector to plan further seminars.

Resource Implications

21. Inspection preparation is extremely resource intensive. Whilst there are no specifically dedicated resources currently in the department, there are a number of individual posts that have an identified lead role.
22. When the inspection finally arrives in Leicestershire, there will be a need for the whole organisation to be able to provide support for the month-long

duration of the process, including data, ICT, etc.

Other considerations

23. At the time of writing there is also a national consultation regarding an intention to develop an additional multi-agency inspection process.

Risk Assessment

24. An inadequate Ofsted judgement brings with it reputational risk for the County Council and could lead to DfE intervention.

Environmental Implications

25. None.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

26. The report will be circulated to all members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Background Papers

27. Ofsted Single Inspection Framework:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/inspection--forms-and-guides/f/Framework%20and%20evaluation%20schedule%20-%20children%20in%20need%20of%20help%20and%20protection%20CLA%20and%20care%20leavers%20-%20scbs.doc>

Officers to Contact:

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Equality and Human Rights Implications

28. The current child protection system is based on the Children Act 1989, updated by the Children Act 2004. In 1989, governments worldwide promised all children the same rights by adopting the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. These rights describe what a child needs to survive, grow, participate and fulfil their potential. They apply equally to every child, regardless of who they are or where they come from.

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