



Meeting: **Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Date/Time: **Monday, 2 November 2015 at 2.00 pm**

Location: **Sparkenhoe Committee Room, County Hall, Glenfield**

Contact: **Miss. F. Gall (0116 305 3407)**

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Membership

Mr. L. Spence CC (Chairman)

Mrs. J. A. Dickinson CC	Mr. T. J. Pendleton CC
Mr. J. Kaufman CC	Mr. J. Perry
Mr. A. M. Kershaw CC	Mrs. C. M. Radford CC
Mrs. C. Lewis	Mr. G. Welsh CC
Mr B. Monaghan	Miss. H. Worman CC
Mr. L. J. P. O'Shea 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 7 September 2015	(Pages 5 - 10)
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.
6. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.
7. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.
8. Education of Children in Care. Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 11 - 26)
9. School Performance in Key Stage Tests and Examinations. Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 27 - 36)
10. Children's Social Care Complaints and Compliments Annual Report 2014/15. Director of Children and Family Services and Director of Corporate Resources (Pages 37 - 64)
11. Leicestershire's Response to Child Sexual Exploitation. Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 65 - 70)
12. School Transport and School Food. Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 71 - 76)
13. Date of next meeting.

Future meetings of the Committee are scheduled to take place at 2.00pm on the following dates:

18 January 2016
 4 April 2016
 14 June 2016
 5 September 2016
 7 November 2016

14. 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?



Minutes of a meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Monday, 7 September 2015.

PRESENT

Mr. L. Spence CC (in the Chair)

Mr. D. C. Bill MBE CC

Mr. A. E. Pearson CC

Mr. S. J. Galton CC

Mr. J. Perry

Mr. D. Jennings CC

Mrs. C. M. Radford CC

Mr. A. M. Kershaw CC

Miss. H. Worman CC

Mrs. C. Lewis

17. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2015 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

18. Question Time.

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 35.

19. 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).

20. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items for consideration.

21. 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. J. Perry declared a personal interest in matters relating to schools, as he had a family member 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.

There were no further declarations.

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

There were no declarations of the party whip.

23. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.

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

24. Quarter 1 Performance Report for 2015/16

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Children and Family Services and the Chief Executive concerning an update of Children and Family Services performance at the end of quarter one of 2015/2016. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

It was noted that educational results contained within the report did not include those for Key Stage 4 as these needed validating by the Department for Education before analysis.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- i. Concern was expressed over the increase in the number of children with three or more placements during the year, with the measure being below national averages. It was acknowledged that how a placement was defined, and how placements were recorded on Frameworki could affect changes in performance in this area. It was noted that accurate reporting was a recurring issue from Quarter 4, and that staff did not record placement information uniformly across the Department. Further to this, in 44% of cases analysed, the child or young person had experienced a quick move in placement, often moving to another placement after a one or two night stay. A short stay such as this was classed as a placement for the child or young person and this was frequently the case for children where placements had to be made as a matter of urgency. The Committee was advised that there was an increase in kinship placements, with this placement usually being the second for that child or young person. Whilst the authority was required to make attempts to place children with suitable family members where possible, this was not always successful.
- ii. In 20% of cases analysed, the child or young person was moved due to challenging behavioural issues. From January 2015 to the end of Quarter 1, it was noted that the Department had seen a rise in the number of 12-15 year olds in the care of the County Council owing to either extremely challenging behaviour, or due to them having either experienced or being at risk of child sexual abuse.

- iii. The data highlighted that performance with regard to second and subsequent child protection plans had worsened since the last quarter. Consequently, a concern was raised as to the robustness of Child Protection conferences and the indication that some child protection plans were being stepped down too early. It was explained that Child Protection conferences and the outcomes and conclusions of conferences were a product of multi-agency decision making. It was acknowledged that there was further work to be done with all agencies in exploring the length of time it took to affect lasting change in a child's life, and whether this would have an impact on the step down of child protection plans.
- iv. The report described that there was a significant theme concerning children becoming subject of second child protection plans due to repeated occurrences of domestic abuse between adults in the household. The Committee was informed that a combined approach to commissioning and addressing instances of domestic abuse in a child protection context had been established across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.
- v. A concern was expressed over the percentage of five year olds achieving good levels of development. It was questioned whether performance was below national levels due to the fact that some summer-born children were not successful in their applications to defer entry, and that there was a low level of applications generally for deferrals in Leicestershire. The Committee was advised that performance had improved this year, however it was recognised that it was not clear the impact that being a summer-born pupil had on levels of development. The Department for Education were undertaking a piece of work to analyse this issue nationally, and further to this the Director would undertake a piece of work to understand the impact that being a summer-born pupil had on levels of progress within Key Stage 1. It was noted that the County Council had received three applications for deferred entry this year, and that applications went through a rigorous process which took into account the abilities of the child at the time, and considered longer term progression, particularly in relation to transition points.
- vi. The percentage of pupils achieving two levels of progress between Key Stage 1 and 2 in Reading and Maths had fallen, though it was noted that the percentage of schools rated as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted had risen, and it was acknowledged that levels of progress was one of several measures that Ofsted used to assess school performance. The Committee was advised that the new inspection regime for schools meant that levels of progress would in the future be assessed more consistently with "deeper dives" being conducted into outcomes for individuals to understand the correlation between the two performance measures and how improvement could be made.
- vii. It was queried how data on school performance was collected and analysed, and which schools were required to submit information. It was noted that Key Stage 1 and 2 data was submitted by schools and validated by the local authority before being submitted to the Department for Education. Key Stage 4 data was provided to the local authority by the Department for Education. All schools were required to submit information, and the Committee was assured that any missing data was

identified and schools were contacted to provide the information in order to ensure a full accurate picture of school performance across Leicestershire. The Committee was informed that a report detailing the validated Key Stage 4 data was scheduled to be presented at the following meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Quarter 1 2015/16 Performance Report be noted;
- (b) That the Director of Children and Family Services undertake a piece of work to understand to what extent being a summer-born pupil may affect levels of progress in Key Stage 1, and that once completed, the outcome of the work be circulated to members of the committee for information.

25. Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services concerning the Annual Report 2014/2015 of the Independent Reviewing Officers for Looked After Children. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- i. The Committee expressed concern over the issue of caseloads for Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO), noting that caseloads were above the guidance within the IRO Handbook, and whether the increased caseloads had affected the quality of the service delivered by IROs. The Committee was assured that the issue of caseloads and capacity was being addressed with a recruitment campaign underway within the service. The impact of the high caseloads had meant that whilst IROs were working to statutory requirements, it had been at the minimum acceptable level rather than following the IRO handbook to its fullest.
- ii. The Committee questioned how IROs were able to ensure effective independence and what suggestions the government had offered to enable this. It was argued that establishing an effective escalation process that was fully independent of the local authority would strengthen the independence of the IRO service, and of the challenge role that IROs were able to offer. The Committee was assured that the escalation process in place at the County Council ensured a clear line of sight between the Director and the IRO service and this was felt to be an adequate safeguard to the independence of the service. Birmingham City Council commissioned a fully independent IRO service and other authorities in the UK had aligned the IRO service with that of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) which operated independently of the local authority, however there was at present no intention to roll out these methods.
- iii. It was noted that following an IRO challenge on a particular case, if it was found that there had been a delay in statutory timescales or failure to follow processes, the matter would be escalated appropriately, usually with team managers and

service managers discussing the case with the allocated worker. Should the issue not be resolved at this level, it would be raised at a challenge meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer and the Annual Work Programmes for 2015-16 be noted.

26. Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2014/2015

The Committee considered the Annual Report 2014/2015 of the Independent Chair of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Board. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- i. The Committee welcomed the Annual Report and the information contained therein, however a view was expressed that the Safeguarding Board should ensure that alongside measuring compliance, staff fully understood how to implement improvements and affect change. The Independent Chair advised that the new quality assurance and performance management framework went beyond analysing quantitative data and assessed qualitative data as well. Views of frontline practitioners and service users were sought to see if needs were being appropriately responded to and staff views were sought when designing procedures. The Independent Chair explained that the Board consistently sought to test if staff understood procedures, how they were implemented, and if they facilitated best working practices.
- ii. It was acknowledged that in a time of financial constraint, innovative methods of monitoring and implementing change were required. The Signs of Safety model adopted by Leicestershire County Council's Children and Family Services was considered to be innovative in that it stressed different ways of working to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people. Innovation allowed authorities to maintain stability, particularly within the workforce and it was noted that there was significant commitment to Signs of Safety from staff within the department.
- iii. The Annual Report outlined the membership and attendance of partner organisations across 2014/15. The Committee was advised that there were statutory members of the Board though substitutes were permissible as it was representation from the organisation, not the individual that was sought. Attendance from NHS England had not improved, and it was noted that the Independent Chair was in discussions concerning attendance from statutory members with the East Midlands Chairs' Network, and would report back to the Committee the conclusion of discussions upon completion.
- iv. Following the release of BBC figures showing that more than 5,500 alleged sex crimes in UK schools were reported to the police in the last three years, the Committee stressed the importance of agencies disseminating information to other

agencies appropriately, and the important role the LSCB could play in ensuring this. Though it was believed that this was not an issue in Leicestershire and Rutland, the Independent Chair advised that the LRSCB had a piece of work to undertake to work with all schools to identify those that were not reporting any allegations, and conduct a deep dive to understand if issues were being missed.

- v. It was noted that police attendance at Board meetings was only 50% throughout 2014/15, but attendance in the current year had been 100%. Similarly, attendance from the police at case conferences had improved this year, though the Board continued to challenge in an effort to secure full attendance.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the contents of the report and the information provided be noted;
- (b) That comments made be submitted to the Local Safeguarding Children Board for consideration;
- (c) That the Independent Chair report back to the Committee the outcome of discussions with the East Midlands Chairs' Network concerning attendance of statutory partners of Local Safeguarding Children Boards.

27. Dates of future meetings

RESOLVED:

It was noted that future meetings of the Committee were scheduled to take place at 2.00pm on the following dates:

2 November 2015
 18 January 2016
 4 April 2016
 13 June 2016
 5 September 2016
 7 November 2016

2.00pm – 3.15pm
 07 September 2015

CHAIRMAN



**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 2 NOVEMBER 2015**

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN IN CARE

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY
SERVICES**

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee about the role of and work undertaken by the Leicestershire Virtual School in supporting the education of Leicestershire's children in care.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Local Authority has a duty to monitor the results of children in care. 2015 results referred to in this report are provisional only and no national benchmark data is available for KS4 measures at the time of writing.

Background

3. As at October 7 2015, the number of children in care in Leicestershire of statutory school age is 288. Key Stage test and examination results in schools are not at the desired level as children in care experience a range of challenges and difficulties but the County Council needs to have the same high aspirations for children in care as it has for all other children.
4. As corporate parents, the County Council must maintain high ambitions for children in care, ensuring that all schools, settings, relevant services and partners maintain high expectations and do the best to improve educational outcomes. Members who are School Governors visibly support this agenda in schools and at related governor and leadership forums and discussions.
5. The County Council actively engages with education in all forums it is involved in, supporting and encouraging better progress. Members' input is crucial and relevant in meetings and panels where children in care are involved but is also relevant at other forums and committees, considering the implications for education, where discussions take place about children in care. As corporate

parents the County Council, must ask itself, and Members ask themselves, the question of 'is this would be good enough for my own child?' The answer should determine the Council's actions.

6. Appendix A provides additional information about key stage tests and examinations including year on year trends compared with national and local trends. Also included is some feedback from stakeholders, information about the numbers of children in care in good or better schools, current numbers of children in care, the breakdown of SEND and information about Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and Pupil Premium Plus (PPP).

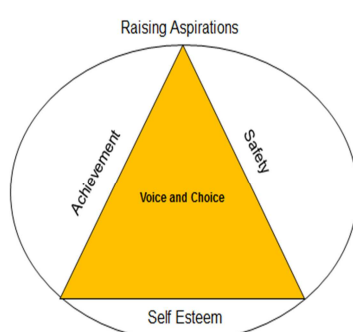
Particular Difficulties Experienced by Children in Care which impact their Education

7. Children in care are not a homogenous group and their needs are many, complex and varied. Whilst some children in care do achieve at school over time, many others do not and this is evidenced in the national, regional and local attainment gaps between children in care and all other pupils.
8. *A Better Education for Children in Care* from the Social Exclusion Unit (September 2003) states that the five key reasons why children in care under achieve at school are:
 - a) Their lives are characterised by instability;
 - b) They spend too much time out of school;
 - c) They do not have sufficient help with education if they fall behind;
 - d) Primary carers are not equipped to provide sufficient support and encouragement for learning and development;
 - e) They have unmet emotional, mental health and physical needs that impact on their education.
9. These same issues still apply to the Council's children in care today. These are key drivers for the underachievement currently experienced by the majority of children in care and were recently exemplified by HMI at the Ofsted East Midlands regional conference on improving educational outcomes for children in care.
10. The majority of children in care have not had stable home lives and the most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of physical/emotional/sexual abuse and/or neglect. This in turn may mean that children in care may have unmet attachment and trauma needs which can negatively impact on their readiness to learn and which can be triggered at different points in their school lives.
11. In common with other Local Authorities regionally, there is an increase in the number of children taken into care during their secondary education which is evidenced in the Council's Virtual School numbers over the last three years. A

number of these children may already have been struggling to cope before being taken into care and the outcomes for pupils at risk of being taken into local authority care before the decision was made may already be poor. The damage to their education may already have been done before they became an 'official' statistic. Accordingly, and often in spite of average or better KS1/2 outcomes, some older young people enter care with large deficit models in terms of education, engagement and attendance. It is much more difficult for schools and settings to make a perceived difference in terms of educational outcomes in these circumstances within the given timeframes.

The Role of the Leicestershire Virtual School (VS)

12. In an effort to narrow achievement gaps over time for children in care, the 2014 Children and Families Act stated that every LA must have a Virtual School Head (VSH) for children in care in order to:
 - a) Discharge the LA's duty to promote the educational achievement of children in care wherever they live or are educated;
 - b) To work in partnership with all agencies to ensure appropriate education provision;
 - c) Ensure quality Personal Education Planning (PEP);
 - d) Manage the Pupil Premium Plus funding for children in care.
13. The Virtual School (VS) for children in care (cic) to Leicestershire has been named *The Fox Academy* by Leicestershire children in care and care leavers.
14. The Virtual School is 'virtual' in the sense that it works to support children and young people in care in many different schools, colleges and settings as if they were in a single school. In accordance with the statutory duty as outlined in *Promoting the Education of Looked After Children 2014*, children and young people are placed on the Council's Virtual School roll and are supported by members of a team acting as corporate parents with specific focus on education.
15. The primary aim of the VS is to promote educational achievement and positive outcomes for all children in care to Leicestershire, regardless of where they are living in the country, in an effort to support schools to narrow the attainment gaps between children in care and their peers.



16. The VS is an essential advocate for the importance of education for all children and young people in care and care leavers and is concerned to raise self-esteem, expectations and aspirations, to remove barriers to learning and to work with schools, colleges and settings to enable Leicestershire's

children and young people to improve their educational outcomes and life chances. As the Golden Triangle exemplifies, the VS expect adults involved in a child in care's life to aspire for the very best for children and young people in terms of educational success.

17. The VS does not teach the Council's children in care; responsibility and accountability for this rests firmly with schools and settings. The VS's remit has significantly extended beyond the 5-16 age focus and now support to a group of pre-school children in care in partnership with the Early Years Service is offered to ensure effective transition into Primary provision. Additionally, since 2013 the VS have been supporting an increasing number of young people in Years 12, 13 and 14 and in Higher Education and provides support to all Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and Young People (UASCs).
18. Statutory Guidance is clear that improving educational outcomes and reducing achievement gaps for children and young people in care must necessarily be a collaborative focus of all corporate parents involved in their education and care. Whilst work is undertaken with a full range of key stakeholders and school leaders, including Head Teachers, Behaviour Partnership Heads and Designated Teachers in schools (a statutory post to support children in care in all schools), the VS work with School Governors who are vital to securing accountability for this agenda and achieving greater successes for children in care.
19. The role of the Lead Member is absolutely crucial in terms of raising expectations, promotion and influencing this agenda. All Members, many of whom are School Governors, are able to impact positively on the education of Leicestershire's children in care. The Virtual School is keen to involve all Members more fully in their work and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further.

Key Aspects of the Virtual School's Work (See Appendix A for supporting data and stakeholder views)

20. In robustly monitoring the attendance, exclusions and the attainment and progress of Leicestershire's children and young people we obtain unique oversight of their education which is shared with relevant partners with the aim of securing accountability for their educational outcomes, supporting and challenging partners as necessary to help children and young people to achieve their full potential.

How does the VS support children and young people?

21. The VS has a unique, specialist and strategic perspective on children's education which is used to:
 - a) Advocate on their behalf and champion their right to the best education;
 - b) Nurture recovery and progress over time;
 - c) Understand their needs and promote understanding of these in others.

22. Through effective partnership and collaboration, the VS ensures that children placed out of county receive the right support for their education, travelling to conduct their PEPs. The aim is to ensure that the emotional and mental health needs of all children are recognised and met and that their education is stabilised enabling them to learn effectively. The VS supports transition points and works with relevant services to ensure early interventions are identified and in place. Children's attendance at PEPs is encouraged and a range of participation opportunities as part of the Raising Aspirations and Pupil Voice Programmes is offered, e.g. University Taster Days, the Geese Theatre Project and the Tall Ships Challenge.

23. Whilst the majority of the Council's children and young people in care attend 'good' or better schools, overall, achievement gaps are not narrowing and they need to make better progress over time and in relation to starting points.

24. The VS collaborates to support Early Years children to make positive transitions into schools. As at 16 October 2015, 120 young people in care and care leavers between the ages of 16-19 in Y12-14 have provided their consent to the VS, enabling the tracking and monitoring of their progress and attainment over time in partnership with schools, colleges and services. The numbers doing so continues to increase with new entries into care and has increased over the last two years. This means that the VS now support more young people in Y12 than last year and this rolling programme also includes support for all unaccompanied asylum seeking young people.

VS Local Partnership Work

25. A developing information management system is essential to effective performance, enabling the tracking of attendance, exclusions and progress and attainment of all children and young people on the VS roll to inform effective and timely interventions. The VS works with Designated Teachers to identify strengths and gaps to maximise support and provide opportunities for children and young people to be involved in extending their engagement in learning and related participation projects.

26. The VS undertakes ongoing work with schools/settings, the local Behaviour Partnerships, the Educational Psychology Service, School Admissions and Pupil Services, Foster Carers, SENA and Social Care to ensure education is prioritised, also arranging, chairing and writing up multi-agency Personal

Education Plan (PEP) meetings to ensure educational targets and provision and pathways are clear and robust for each child in care. The VH is a member of Leicestershire Secondary Head's forum.

27. The Virtual School manages and distributes (through finance) the Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) funding, asking schools to complete a plan for each child in care outlining intended use and impact of the funding against specific PEP targets. This is monitored by the VS on an ongoing basis.
28. It necessarily promotes the importance of the emotional well-being of children and young people on a daily basis. By working with relevant professionals on the innovative ongoing *Attachment Aware Schools Project*, it supports others to understand important research and practice developments to better help it's children and young people to overcome barriers which may impact on their educational achievement over time.
29. The VS develops and delivers a range of well-received training packages for key stakeholders including bespoke training for whole school staff groups, foster carers, school governors and Designated Teachers in schools and colleges. Effective collaboration with the child and a range of stakeholders and wider services is essential to the work and it can only be effective if it listens to and works with other relevant professionals as part of the team around the child.

VS Regional and National Work:

30. The VH/VS reach extends beyond Leicestershire as it is actively influencing and shaping regional and national debate and legislation. The VH collaborated with the Regional HMI School Team which shaped and influenced regional workshops and Ofsted/LA meetings, leading to good practice visits to schools and ongoing dialogue with the HMI Lead for children in care.
31. Earlier this year, the VH was asked by another LA in the region to undertake a peer review of the VS. This work and the subsequent report was well-received and regarded as very helpful. The VH has strong peer support mechanisms in place to support ongoing work.
32. Building on the good practice and success of local project work with schools, the VS is one of only five in the country leading on a national Attachment Awareness project involving local schools feeding into action research with Bath Spa University.
33. Along with another VH college, the VH represents the East Midlands on the National VH Steering Group, working to shape policy, practice and legislation alongside the DfE lead for children in care. The VH is also involved in work

around the development of this body into a national registered charitable organisation which will be launched soon.

34. Leicestershire is one of six LAs involved in current research with the Rees Centre which also involves a small group of post-16 young people and their views concerning the education of children in care (forthcoming).

2015 Key Stage Test and Examination Results for Children in Care

All data is provisional and subject to change. Unless stated otherwise, all data is based on pupils who were in care for at least one year prior to March 31st of the year of attainment.

Foundation Stage (age 5)

35. The percentage of children in care to Leicestershire achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) is 30% which represents a good increase of 19% against the 2014 figure of 11%. This rise is above both the national rise of 5.9% for all pupils and the local rise for all pupils in Leicestershire of 5.4%.
36. The cohort number is so small (10 pupils) that comparison with all pupils nationally and locally is not worthwhile. Figures for the 6 months financial cohort are slightly higher at 33% for GLD as there are 15 pupils in the cohort.
37. This is a fluid cohort, reflecting the mobility that exists in Early Years with regard to children in care as many children in adoptive placements experience a lack of stability which can impact on educational progress.

Key Stage One (age 7)

38. The percentage of children in care achieving the Phonics benchmark at Year 1 is 40% (4 out of ten pupils) against 75.9% of all pupils in Leicestershire and 77% of all pupils nationally. One more child than last year achieved this measure.
39. There were 21 pupils in the 6 months financial cohort of which 10 pupils, 47.6%, achieved the Phonics benchmark. Whilst figures are below local and national figures, there is some good progress being made. As cohort numbers are very small, it is difficult to draw meaningful comparisons.
40. There have been good improvements on last year in reading, writing and in numbers of children achieving in reading, writing and maths; the majority of the 12 months financial cohort (8/11 pupils) achieved at Level 2 in reading, writing and maths, including 1 child who achieved a L3 in reading. 3/11 children were working below the test levels.

41. This is a highly mobile cohort but outcomes are good and improving over time at L2+. Whilst gaps against national remain, they are narrowing slowly and there is some pleasing achievement for individuals at L3.

Key Stage Two (age 11)

42. There were 18 pupils in the 12 month financial cohort and 55.56% (10) pupils achieved L4+ in Reading, Writing and Maths. Whilst gaps between all pupils local and national remain wide, the performance of children in care achieving L4+ in Reading, Writing and Maths rose by 1.3% to 55.6%. This is similar to national and local levels for all pupils but this is a very small cohort and skews results against local and national percentages.
43. L5 achievement was also up against 2014 figures as 1 child achieved L5 in Reading, Writing and Maths and 2 children secured L5 in Reading, GPS and Maths. Within the whole VS cohort 1 child achieved L6 in Maths. However, securing L4+ in Reading, Writing and Maths remains a priority for children in care to ensure a good grounding in English and Maths on which to build at Secondary School.
44. Overall the percentage of pupils making expected progress in English and maths over time and in relation to starting points is good for this small cohort.

Key Stage Four (age 16)

45. The figures for GCSE results are provisional and in line with schools' predictions: within the full cohort of 47 young people 5/47 pupils (10.64%) achieved 5A*-C EM; within the 12 month financial cohort of 26 young people 2/26 pupils (7.7%) achieved this measure. The latter is the same result as in 2014. Locally, 56.1% of all pupils in Leicestershire achieved this measure – a decline of 0.4% from 2014. There is no national or statistical neighbour information available yet.
46. Gaps remain high at Key Stage 4. Appendix 1 provides a summary of 2014 results and trends over time.

Key Stage Five (age 18)

47. VS cohort Key Stage 5 results are drawn from a range of schools, colleges and settings and cover a wide range and level of qualifications. There have been some very pleasing individual results and achievements this year with a small group of young people going off to university.

LA Support for Children in Care who are Not in Employment, Education and Training (NEET)

48. LCC has commissioned Prospects to support post-16 young people to find appropriate destinations as at 1st September, improve numbers who are in employment, education and training (EET) and to support vulnerable groups, including children and young people in care and care leavers, until they are 18 years old.
49. NEET figures from Prospects for August 2015 are as follows:
- The numbers of Children in care in Years 12, 13 and 14 who are NEET is 15.2% (12 young people)
 - The numbers of Care Leavers in Years 12-14 who are NEET is 38.6% (22 young people) as against the overall LA NEET figure of 3.1% which is high.
 - NEET care leavers aged 17-21 years are monitored by social care.
50. The NEET Strategy sets out five main actions to ensure NEET figures for children in care and care leavers in Years 12-14 are reduced:
- a) Minimise the number of times children in care need to move to a different school during their education by establishing better joint planning between children's social care and education services;
 - b) Commit the local authority to upholding the highest possible education expectations as a corporate parent for any child in care pre and post 16 such as attending parent evenings, showing interest in their homework, inspiring expectations and finding mentors who have succeeded into work from being a child in care;
 - c) Identify new ways of measuring positive progress in emotional resilience and wellbeing of children looked after;
 - d) Improve the Information advice and guidance support to children looked after at the end of Key Stage 4 to ensure they make a successful transition into learning and then stay in learning up to the end of Key Stage 5;
 - e) Improve attainment figures for children looked after across Key Stage 4 and 5
51. In terms of VS work:
- a) The VS is considering how to raise expectations around education for corporate parents and has enhanced its training package for use with Foster Carers and is about to begin work with School Governors. The Council's Attachment Awareness and Trauma training promotes the importance of strategies to secure emotional wellbeing;
 - b) Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) is delivered by schools for young people aged 14-16 years. LCC has commissioned Prospects to provide careers IAG support to all young people post 16 as part of raising levels of participation in EET. The VS has contributed to this work and a

teenage parent has achieved well this year following our support. The VS also holds Prospects to account through discussions, data reporting and reports at Strategy Group;

- c) The VS liaises with YOS to ensure that educational pathways for young offenders are in place;
- d) Joint Solutions Forum supports joint planning on placements and education;
- e) From September 2015 all new children into care post-16 will receive a PEP from the VS to inform their Pathway Planning for education and this will include all NEET young people.

Ambitions for the Education of Children in Care

52. As at June 2015, 83% of children in care to Leicestershire attend good or better schools. A judgement of 'good' by Ofsted does not necessarily mean that a school's approach is best for a child in care. It is the Council's aim, and a key driver for VS work with schools, that all children and young people will belong to a 'good school for children in care' - such schools are inclusive and nurturing in approach, provide 'statutory duty plus', and:
- a) Enable children in care to swiftly access and fully engage in their education to make good progress and obtain good educational outcomes;
 - b) Ensure the Designated teacher is up-to-date with relevant training about children in care and on attachment and trauma so that relevant strategies are put in place to better support our children;
 - c) Provide supportive strategies and targeted interventions to meet educational and emotional needs within the school setting;
 - d) Develop and value effective partnerships with the Virtual School, foster carers, social workers and health professionals, founded on a clear understanding of professional accountabilities and responsibilities.
53. Children in care will benefit from strong and consistent corporate parenting focused on their education - all corporate parents will understand, recognise and actively promote the central importance of education in improving and transforming the lives and opportunities for children and young people in care:
If this was my child, would this be good enough?
54. Children in care and care leavers will be familiar with the work of the Virtual School and how it can support their education - enabling them to feel they know where to go to for additional trustworthy help, support and guidance with their education and training. The voice of young people will better inform planning/shape events for the VS.

55. All children in care will have the very best Designated Teachers to support them so the Virtual School will further develop the capacity of Designated Teachers (and Governors who appoint them) to understand the needs of children in care and will support them to undertake PEPs. Every school has a named Designated Teacher in line with statutory guidance, to advocate and support children in care to effect progress. The Virtual School will spend more time training, evaluating, quality assuring, challenging and tracking the work of others to secure greater accountability for improved educational outcomes in schools and settings for our children in care,
56. Children in care and care leavers will benefit from increased educational stability, teaching practice informed by attachment and trauma and strategies to overcome barriers to learning and a wider set of measures to better understand their progress and successes over time and in relation to starting points.

Conclusion

57. Improving rates of progress between key stages and particularly between KS2-4 remains a priority. There is improvement in progress at EY, KS1 and KS2 in relation to starting points which needs to be built upon.
58. Instability, high levels of complex needs and length of time in/point of entry into care are key factors influencing GCSE attainment at Key Stage 4. Numbers of pupils with SEND and the small numbers within cohorts also need to be taken into account when attempting comparisons with other groups. It is, therefore, very important to recognise the importance of a progress model for measuring the many educational successes and achievements of children in care over time and in relation to starting points.
59. For children in care to Leicestershire the VS remain committed to securing timely access to good quality, stable education provision leading to good qualifications in English and maths. This remains a focus of VS work and challenge in partnership with schools, settings and relevant services.

Background Papers

60. Statutory guidance for local authorities
www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children

Statutory guidance for school governing bodies
www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children

children

The Rees Centre <http://reescentre.education.ox.ac.uk>

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

61. None.

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List of Appendices

63. Appendix A – Feedback and Results of CiC

Equality and Human Rights Implications

64. The majority of the work of the Children and Families Services is targeted towards vulnerable and disadvantaged children, young people and families. The priorities for the Virtual School remain: improving progress over time in relation to the often low starting points of CiC; raising end of key stage attainment levels; and narrowing the achievement gap between CiC and 'all' pupils.

Appendix A: Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Virtual School (VS) - November 2 2015

Ofsted grading of schools for children in care in and out of county:

	Leicestershire				Out of County				Overall			
	Number of schools with Current CIC	Percentage of schools with Current CIC	Number of Current CIC attending	Percentage of Current CIC attending	Number of schools with Current CIC	Percentage of schools with Current CIC	Number of Current CIC attending	Percentage of Current CIC attending	Number of schools with Current CIC	Percentage of schools with Current CIC	Number of Current CIC attending	Percentage of Current CIC attending
Outstanding	23	20.72%	58	25.22%	11	22.00%	16	25.40%	34	21.12%	74	25.26%
Good	70	63.06%	134	58.26%	30	60.00%	37	58.73%	100	62.11%	171	58.36%
Requires Improvement	14	12.61%	28	12.17%	3	6.00%	4	6.35%	17	10.56%	32	10.92%
Inadequate	4	3.60%	10	4.35%	2	4.00%	2	3.17%	6	3.73%	12	4.10%
Not Registered with Ofsted	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	4	8.00%	4	6.35%	4	2.48%	4	1.37%
Total	111		230		50		63		161		293	

As at 22 June 2015, 83% of Leicestershire children in care attend good or better schools

As at 22 June 2015, 83% of children in care to Leicestershire attended good or better schools, regardless of where they are being educated in the country which is good.

The VS works in partnership with School Admissions and Pupil Services locally and in other LAs, along with representatives of Virtual Schools in other LAs to ensure that as many as possible of our children in care are placed in good schools. Occasionally in close collaboration with social care and the school and carer it is deemed best to place a child in a school which requires improvement due to other factors and the child's progress is closely monitored by the VS. If a child is in a school which goes in to a category it is not our policy to remove that child automatically and, once again, we will monitor progress robustly.

Pupil Premium Plus Funding for Children in Care

As of 14th October 2015, the Virtual School has received 81% of the pupil premium plans for the 2015 to 2016 financial year and 93% of these have been approved to date through robust quality assurance undertaken by the Virtual School team. Our officers are supporting completion of plans from the beginning of the autumn term for those schools who have not yet returned them.

Current Number of Children in Care as at 7 October 2015

As at 7 Oct 15 - Number of Children in Care			
	Female	Male	Total
Rec	7	8	15
1	10	7	17
2	4	10	14
3	7	8	15
4	10	14	24
5	8	13	21
6	7	12	19
7	13	15	28
8	8	11	19
9	16	17	33
10	15	24	39
11	12	32	44
Total	117	171	288

As at October 7th 2015, there are 288 children and young people (CYP) of statutory school age on the roll of the Leicestershire Virtual School.

61 of these children are placed and are being educated in schools/settings out of county.

In Years 12-14 there are 113 children in care and 57 care leavers; a total of 170, including unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASCs).

There are 27 UASCs currently in care: in Years 8 to 11 there are 5 young people and in Years 12 to 14 there are 22 young people.

Primary	125
Secondary	163
Total	288

The VS also supports a small number of young people in Higher Education.

High Levels of Special Educational Needs:

Children and young people on the Virtual School roll have a range of complex needs, including unmet attachment and trauma needs, mental health and emotional wellbeing needs and a large number of them have a range of special educational needs. As at October 2015, the breakdown of SEND is as follows:

SEN Status	Number of Pupils	Percentage of Total Cohort
Education Health and Care Plan	17	5.9%
Statement	46	16.0%
SEN Support	72	25.0%
School Action Plus	19	6.6%
School Action	6	2.1%
Total on SEN Register	160	55.6%
None	128	44.4%
Total Cohort	288	

Personal Education Plan (PEP) Audit Activity

PEP quality assurance activity last term using our quality assurance templates indicated that of those KS1-KS5 PEPs sampled, 88.2% were good. Learning points from this work, which include explicitly questioning the school about the impact of Pupil Premium Plus funding in all PEPs, have been shared across the team. Regular, ongoing quality assurance activities involving all Improvement Officers/Managers are planned which will also include joint EY transition PEPs and peer support and quality assurance of PEPs which should evidence further improvements overall in this figure.

Currently the Virtual School attend all PEP meetings for all our children in care, including those placed out of county and social workers are invited to all PEPs which are organised by the Virtual School. From October half term some PEPs will be chaired and written up by Designated Teachers and will be quality assured by members of our service. Transitional support and training is being provided by the Virtual School, who also deliver new Designated Teacher induction training.

PEP Completion

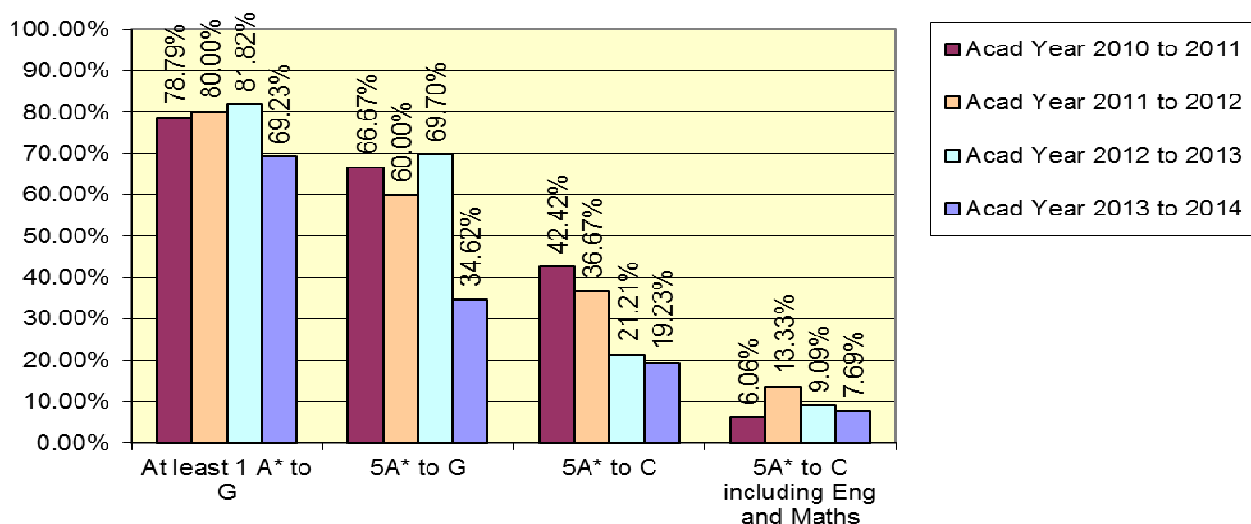
PEP completion rates are good but vary according to snapshots taken over time. The percentage of PEPs completed within 6 months is:

- October 2014 95.4%
- March 2015 98.2%
- June 2015 98.3%
- October 2015 95.8%

2014 Results OC2 (12 months financial) Cohort KS4:

- In Leicestershire in 2014 there were 26 young people in the Year 11 OC2 cohort; 12 boys (46%) and 14 girls (54%). 2/26 young people (7.69%) achieved 5A*-C English and maths.
- 20/26 pupils (77%) had a special educational need (SEND) and there were some pleasing individual results amongst this cohort.
- Of the SEND cohort, 14 had a statement and of these 6/14 achieved 1+A*-G, 1/14 achieved 5A*-G and 7/14 did not achieve any GCSE results; 4/20 were School Action Plus and of these 25% achieved 1+A*-G and 75% achieved 5A*-G. 2/20 were School Action and of these 1 achieved 1A*-G and 1 achieved 5A*-C.

Comparison of GCSE results for Children in Care who are in care for continuous 12 months as at 31 March



- 6/26 young people were not entered for any English and Maths qualification; all of these young people had a Statement of Special Educational Needs and attended a special school and 1
- 1/26 achieved Grade D in English and nothing in maths.
- 19/26 young people achieved qualifications in both English and maths.

At Key Stage 4 attainment against the key measures of 5+A*-C and in 5+A*-CEM is not improving year on year. In 2013 for the 12 month financial cohort results for 5+A*-C were 19% and for 5+A*-CEM 8% which is below those for CLA national (31% and 12%) and standards are well-below what is expected nationally (56%) and in comparison with local results (56%). At Key Stage 4, 24% of young people made at least 3 levels of progress in English and 20% in maths.

Achievement in English and maths remains a key priority. In contrast, 38% of young people in care for 2+ years made 3 levels of progress in English and 26% in maths.

2014 Results OC2 Cohort KS2:

Overall, in 2014 attainment at Key Stage 2 was improved on 2013 at L4C+ and is good: 69% Reading, 69% writing, 69% maths and 54% in RWM. In terms of levels of progress in 2014 for those children and young people in care for 12 months there are again improvements on 2013 at

KS2: 2+ levels of progress in Reading is 85% which is good and also in Writing 85% which is good. In maths 69% of children in care achieved 2+ levels of progress which requires improvement.

For those children at Key Stage 2 who were in care for an average of two years or more, the rate of progress at the end of Key Stage 2 was even better with 91% achieving 2+ levels of progress in Reading which was in line with all others national, 91% in Writing which is just 2% below all others national and 82% in maths which was 7% below all others national. Progress made by these children in care is now good, evidencing that the stability brought about for these children by being in care longer has positively impacted on their education.

To date, and for too many young people, the better progress being made at Key Stage 2 for some children is not sustained throughout Key Stages 3 and 4.

Some Feedback from Carers and Children and Young People in Care:

Feedback from Carers and Children in Care about VS Book clubs
Letterbox Club – Carer noted child is excited when the Letterbox club parcels come in the post, she noted he was very proud of his books and enjoys reading them.
Positive comments expressed by a child and her carer in respect of the quality and level of books received. This has contributed towards encouragement of the child's reading for pleasure and has impacted on her English level.
Letterbox – Child likes getting books she hasn't discovered and her favourite book is Narnia – 'The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe' because it is really adventurous and inspirational!
Letterbox Club – Carer stated that child liked receiving the book parcels and reading the books. Child noted he liked the 'Minecraft' book, because it was good.
Letterbox – Child recorded in Pupil voice that 'Letterbox is awesome' His favourite book is 'How to train your Dragon'. His carer said that he loves getting them through the post.
Bookworm – Child enjoys receiving the bookworm parcels. She particularly enjoyed the 'Forest Friends' book. Carer noted she liked this book so much she bought the other books in this series.

October 2015 Governor and Foster Carer Training – Feedback:

Evaluations for these recent training events are scored as 1s and 2s. A synopsis of comments includes:

“Very informative” ... “great grounding” ... “good to cover the basics” ... “will take back to talk with my DT” ... “will work together to develop our policy for children in care” ... “fascinating” ... “this should be included in core training”.

Views about the VS University Taster Day, Tall Ships Scheme and support from Youth Workers at Blueprint:

- “I loved everything about the [University] summer school, and I made a new friend too”
- “I am glad someone could help me sort out College”
- “I really enjoyed the NCS experience and I've already emailed to say I want to come back as a graduate next year”
- “This is the happiest I have ever been”
- “Tall ships is an amazing trip - would love to go again” “Whole experience great! Lots to learn”.

These schemes continue to have good impact on outcomes for our young people.



**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE - 2 NOVEMBER 2015**

**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 the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee about the performance of schools, including inspection outcomes and those of the 11 – 16 schools, statutory tests and examinations and age-range changes.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. There is no longer a requirement for the Local Authority to agree targets annually with the Department for Education (DfE) to support improvements in key stage assessments and GCSE results. However, the Local Authority continues to have a duty to monitor these results for maintained schools and academies. Final results by school and by local authority are made public during the autumn term through the DfE website.

Background

3. 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.
4. 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)

5. The percentage of children in Leicestershire achieving a Good Level of Development has increased by 5.4% to 60.7%. However national levels also increased meaning that Leicestershire remains behind the national average. Girls are still outperforming boys with a similar gap to 2014 - approximately 17 percentage points.
6. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals achieving a Good Level of Development increased by 4.7 percentage points to 39.4%, this is an increase of 15% since 2013. The gap between Free School Meals pupils and 'all pupils' now stands at 24.4%. National data is not yet available for 2015, but for comparative purposes, the 2014 national gap between the two groups was 15%.

Key Stage One (age 7)

7. The percentage of children in Leicestershire achieving the Phonics benchmark at Year 1 was 75.9%. This was a 0.4% decrease on last year's performance and is 1% below the national figure.
8. Leicestershire has achieved improved scores in 9 of the 10 end of Key Stage One measures available, with one score remaining the same. The 10 areas cover:
 - a) Speaking and Listening (Level 2+ and Level 3+);
 - b) Reading (Level 2+ and Level 3+);
 - c) Writing (Level 2+ and Level 3+);
 - d) Science (Level 2+ and Level 3+).
9. Provisional data suggests that Leicestershire will be above national levels in 7 of the 10 measures currently available at Key Stage One.
10. Leicestershire is usually similar and occasionally below the statistical neighbour average at Key Stage One across the range of subjects and levels.

Key Stage Two (age 11)

11. Leicestershire headline performance for pupils achieving Level 4+ in Reading, Writing and Mathematics rose by 1.7% to 80.4%. This is similar to national levels and in the middle of the statistical neighbour group.
12. Overall, 7 of the 10 Key Stage Two attainment measures have seen improved scores in Leicestershire. Measures include pupils reaching Level 4 and 5 in key subject areas.

13. Progress between Key Stage One and Key Stage Two remains an issue in Leicestershire. Leicestershire was behind the national average for progress in all three key areas (Reading, Writing and Mathematics). Progress in Writing improved by 1.4% whilst Reading and Mathematics fell by 1% and 0.3% respectively.
14. The Government sets floor standards for Key Stage Two schools and currently expects schools to have above 65% of pupils attaining level 4 and above in Reading, Writing and Mathematics; 94%, 96% and 93% or more of pupils making 3 levels progress in reading, writing and mathematics respectively between Key Stages One and Two. In 2015, 5 academies and 5 maintained schools were below these floor standards.
15. The attainment of pupils eligible for Free School Meals rose from 57.6% to 60.2%. This increase was slightly higher than the 'all pupils group' meaning that the gap between FSM and 'all' reduced by 1% to 20%. National data is not yet available for 2015 but for comparative purposes, the 2014 gap between FSM and 'all pupils' was 15% at national level.

Key Stage Three (aged14)

16. There is no national collection of Key Stage Three attainment. However, approximately 90% of Leicestershire schools still submit data to the performance team on a voluntary basis for analysis and comparison. Based on the data available:
17. The percentage of children reaching Level 5+ in Maths and English at Key Stage Three rose to 91.6%. This is a 0.9% rise compared to the 2014 figure. Each individual subject area, English, Maths and Science, improved; by 1.3%, 0.6% and 0.6% respectively.

Key Stage Four (age 16)

18. The figures for GCSE results were recently released and are provisional. The percentage of pupils achieving the benchmark 5 GCSEs A*- C (including Maths and English) was 56.1%, a 0.4% decline from 2014. There is no national or statistical neighbour information available yet for this key stage. In 2014, the national average was 55.5%.
19. Expected Progress between Key Stage Two and Four was 68.7% for Maths and 66.7% for English. This represented a 1.4% decrease in English (from 68.1%) but a strong 3.4% increase in Mathematics progress from 65.3%.
20. The attainment of pupils eligible for Free School Meals was similar to 2014, with a marginal improvement of 0.3% to 28.6% (5 GCSEs A*-C inc. English and Maths). Along with a minor decline in non-FSM performance, the gap between FSM and non-FSM pupils is 29.7%, an improvement compared to the 2014 gap of 30.6% (the gap between FSM and 'all pupils' is 27.5% compared with 28.2% in 2014).

21. The percentage of pupils achieving the benchmark 5 GCSEs A*- C (including Maths and English) in Leicestershire's 11 – 16 schools was 57.6% compared to 56.8% overall (these figures exclude special schools. The Leicestershire average including special schools is 56.1%).
22. The Government sets floor standards at Key Stage Four and currently expects schools to have at least 40% of pupils achieving the benchmark 5 GCSEs A*- C (including Maths and English); in 2015, 1 academy and both studio schools were below floor standards. The one maintained secondary school remains above the Key Stage Four floor standards in 2015.

Age-Range Change Schools

23. The percentage of pupils achieving the benchmark 5 GCSEs A*- C (including Maths and English) in Leicestershire's eleven 11 – 16/19 schools was 57.6% compared to 56.8% overall (these figures exclude special schools.)The Leicestershire average including special schools is 56.1%.

Key Stage Five (age 18)

24. Key Stage Five data includes only state funded provision and currently excludes Further Education Colleges. Provisional data shows that the Average point score per A Level entry is slightly lower than 2014 (206.8 points compared to 209.2 points). However, the average grade remains in the same band at grade 'C'.

Free School Meals Eligibility

26. There is a gap between the attainment of pupils eligible for Free School Meals and 'all pupils' at every Key Stage at a national level. However, that gap is consistently wider in Leicestershire than the national average. See Appendix 1.

Children in Care

27. Provisional data suggests that Key Stage Two and Key Stage Four outcomes for children in care will be very similar to the 2014 results; 55.6% achieving Level 4+ in Reading, Writing and Mathematics at the end of Key Stage Two and 7.7% for 5 GCSEs A*-C (including English and Maths). In 2014, this placed the Leicestershire KS2 result in the top quartile and GCSE results in the bottom quartile.
28. Due to the small cohort of children in care, final results can vary significantly from provisional results as one child can represent several percentage points

Not in Employment Education and Training (NEET)

29. The NEET level in Leicestershire was 3.1% at the end of August 2015. This represents 638 Year 12-14 young people. Leicestershire has the lowest NEET amongst its statistical neighbours.
30. In all the vulnerable learner groups, the NEET figures are falling but they are all substantially higher than the overall Leicestershire NEET

figures; 7.7% of learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, 59.2% of teenage parents, 26.9% of young offenders, 15.2% of looked after children and 38.6% of care leavers were NEET in August 2015.

Ofsted outcomes (schools)

31. The percentage of Leicestershire schools rated as Good or Outstanding is 86.4% (June 2015). This is above the latest national figure available of 83.3% (June 2015) and has improved over the year. The average for statistical neighbours is 84.1%.
32. The percentage of Leicestershire pupils attending a Good or Outstanding school is currently 83.8%. This is a rise of 4.7% compared to 2014 and 2.7% above the latest national figure available. The average for statistical neighbours is 82.4%.
33. 85.5% of Leicestershire primary schools and academies are rated as Good or Outstanding compared to 78% of Secondary schools and academies.
34. The percentage of pupils attending good or outstanding maintained primary schools is 86% which is 1.3% above the percentage of pupils attending Good or Outstanding primary academies.
35. The percentage of pupils attending good or outstanding maintained secondary schools is 52.3% compared to 82.2% of pupils attending Good or Outstanding secondary academies. However, the maintained schools figure contains pupils from only two schools.
36. The number of Special Schools rated as Good or Outstanding is once again 100% with all six schools judged to be good or outstanding

Conclusion

37. The available performance information and most recent analysis indicates that good progress is being made by Leicestershire schools and more children 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. When it becomes available, further analysis is needed to establish a more detailed picture of the performance of different groups, for example, those with special educational needs. The emerging priorities are:
 - a) Improving rates of progress between Key Stages One and Two in Reading, Writing and Mathematics;
 - b) Narrowing the gap between pupils eligible for pupil premium, including Children in care and their peers in all subjects and in all phases;
 - c) Improving attainment and progress at Key Stage Four;
 - d) Reducing the percentage of learners from vulnerable groups who are NEET.

Background Papers

38. 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

39. None.

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Equality and Human Rights Implications

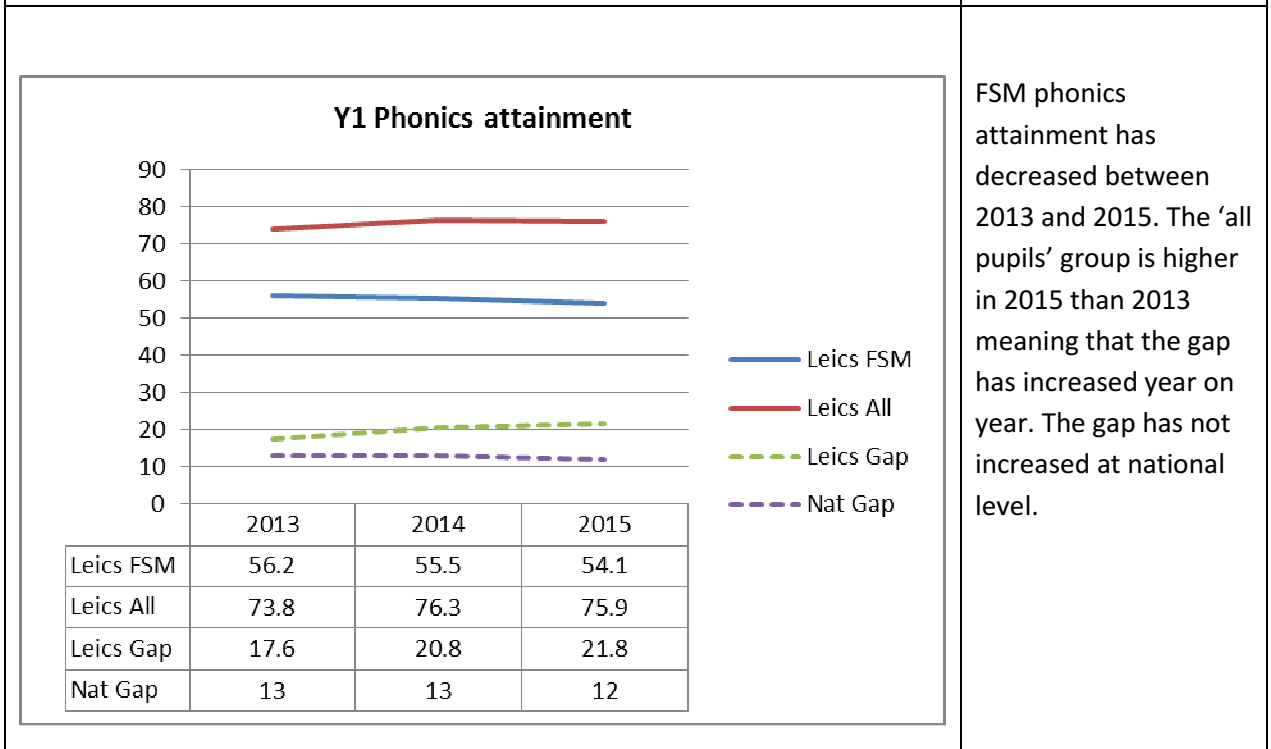
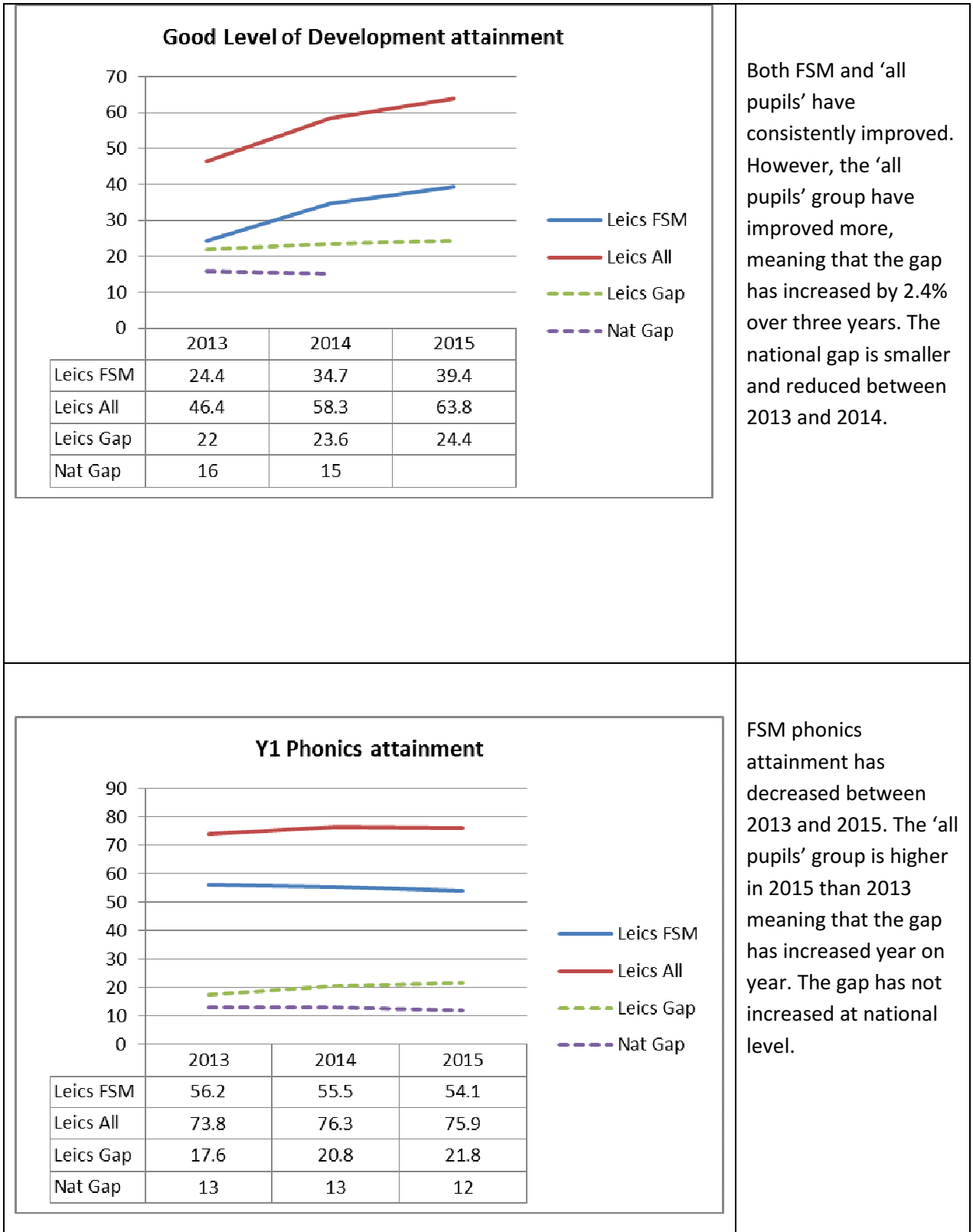
40. These are the results achieved by all Leicestershire children and young people in the summer of 2014. The analysis of groups will inform any further targeted intervention for maintained schools where underperformance is identified.

APPENDIX 1

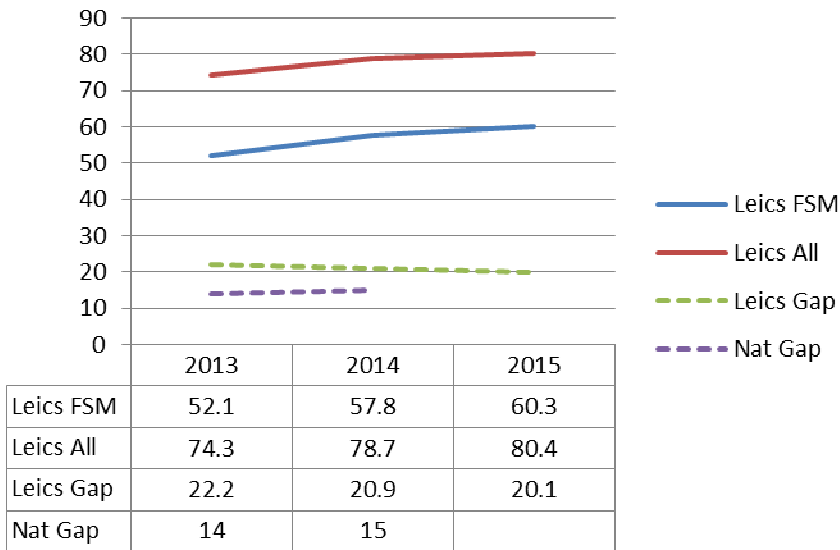
**Free School Meals eligibility and attainment gaps in Leicestershire
(Foundation, Phonics, Key Stage Two, Key Stage Four)**

Summary

There is a gap between the attainment of pupils eligible for Free School Meals and ‘all pupils’ at every Key Stage at a national level. However, that gap is consistently wider in Leicestershire than the national average.

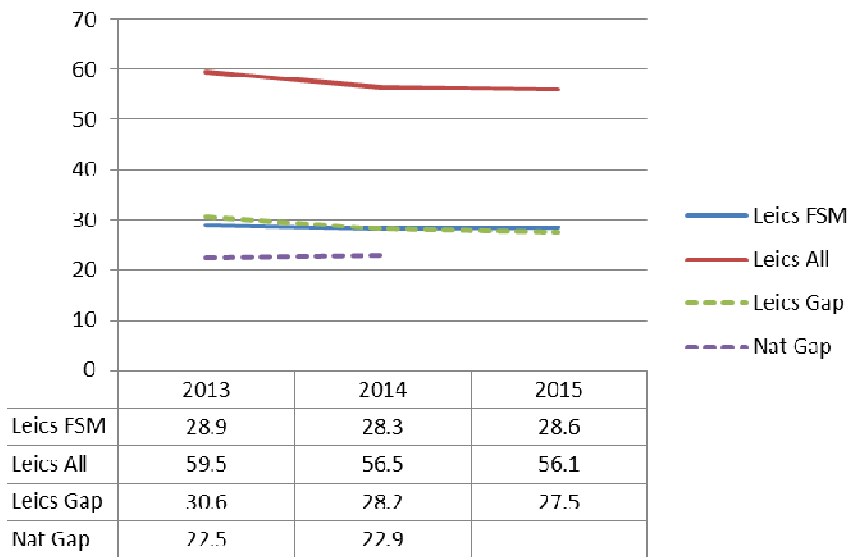


KS2 RWM attainment



At Key Stage Two, the attainment of FSM pupils has improved at a faster rate than the 'all pupils' group and this has led to a reduction in the gap between FSM eligible pupils and 'all pupils'. The Leicestershire gap is wider than the national average but did narrow between 2013 and 2014.

5 GCSE A*-C (EM) attainment



At Key Stage Four, the gap between FSM and 'all pupils' in Leicestershire has narrowed since 2013. Although the national gap is still smaller, the national gap actually increased slightly between 2013 and 2014.

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**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE - 2 NOVEMBER 2015**

**CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE STATUTORY COMPLAINTS AND
COMPLIMENTS ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY
SERVICES**

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to present for the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee's consideration the Children's Social Care Statutory Complaints and Compliments Annual Report for 2014/15.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. A new Corporate Complaints Procedure was adopted by the Authority in April 2010 which requires an Annual Report to be produced, analysing and reviewing complaints received during the preceding 12 months.

Background

3. The Customer Relations Team manages and co-ordinates complaints relating to 3 separate complaints systems:
 - a) Adult Social Care statutory process;
 - b) Children's Social Care statutory process;
 - c) Corporate Complaints process – these are complaints relating to other services provided by the Council where there is no other form of redress.
4. The second category is the subject of this report. The Corporate Complaints and Compliments Annual report 2014-15 was considered by the Scrutiny Commission in June.
5. Complaints regarding Children's Social Care are subject to the requirements of Regulation 18(2) of Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 1681 Local Authority Social Services Complaints (England) Regulations 2006 and Regulation 13(3)

of Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 1738 The Children Act (1989) Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.

6. As detail is included in the Annual Report itself, the purpose of this report is to pick out some of the main, headline issues emerging from the analysis of complaints activity for 2014/2015 and the department's planned activity to respond to this.

Complaints received and outcomes

7. The number of complaints in 2014/15 were as follows:
- 57 complaints considered at Stage 1 compared to 56 in 2013/14;
 - 9 complaints considered at Stage 2 compared to 6 in 2013/14;
 - 2 complaints considered at Stage 3 compared to 1 in 2013/14
8. While the number of complaints at Stage 1 is almost identical to last year this is in the context of a reduction in referrals to Children's Social care. A larger proportion have been escalated to Stage 2 and 3 than previous years, as they have not been resolved at earlier stages, this may be in part due to a change in Local Government Ombudsman practice. No children's' social care statutory complaints were escalated to the Ombudsman in 2014/15.
9. Overall fewer complaints were upheld: 63% of complaints were not upheld compared to 57% in 2013/14 and only 5% fully upheld.
10. Analysis of causes of complaints shows fewer complaints in 2014/15 about the quality of our work compared to 2013/14 (8 compared to 17), however there were notably more complaints regarding sensitivity or empathy of staff (11 compared with 5) and delays in providing service (8 compared with 0), and complaints with multiple causes (7 compared with 1).
11. Complaints about delays in providing service were most likely to be upheld with 75% (6) of the 8 being upheld.
12. 12% of complaints (7) were brought by young people compared with 9% (5) last year.
13. 91% of complaints at stage 1 were responded to within the statutory maximum 20 days and 42% responded to within the best practice indicator of 10 days, this is lower than 63% in 2013-14 – however the level improved towards the end of the year.
14. Only 2 of the five complaints considered under stage 2 during 2014/15 were completed within the statutory timescale of 65 working days.

15. 31 compliments were received in 2014/15 compared to 25 in 2013/14.

Key Learning Points with regard to complaints

16. A review of the complaints partly and fully upheld identifies that preventative improvements are not being identified in the majority of cases. This theme is not unique to children's social care and will be prioritised as a corporate work priority for 2015-16.
17. In addition the following key learning points are highlighted by the customer relations team to improve our response to complaints and fulfil our promises to customers within the Council's Customer Service Standards:
- Timeliness of responding to complaints
 - Data Protection concerns
 - The importance of apologising effectively.

Actions to be taken

- Ensure children are aware of and empowered to be able to make complaints.
- Monitor service delays.
- Continue action already underway re: Life Story Work.
- Ensure addressing complaints remains a priority .
- Reminders to staff and managers re: process for Data Protection and responding to breaches.
- Circulation of guidance re: apologies to all managers.

Resource Implications

18. The annual report outlines the costs incurred through the complaints procedure were £13,130, an increase of approximately £1,000 compared to last year.
19. Improvement activity will be carried out within existing resources. There are no resource implications from this. The Director of Corporate Resources has been consulted on this report.

Conclusions

20. Overall this has been a positive year for complaints management across children's' social care services, though there are areas to improve. The

service has put an action plan in place to further improve our service and our response to complaints.

21. The Children & Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the Annual report and the action to be taken by the service.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

22. None

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List of Appendices

Appendix A - Children's Social Care Statutory Complaints and Compliments Annual Report 2014/15.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

23. None



Customer Relations



Children's Social Care

Statutory complaints and compliments Annual Report 2014/2015

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1. Purpose and Summary of Report

- 1.1 To report statistical information to Members and Officers detailing Leicestershire County Council's (LCC) Children's Social Care complaints activity from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 including any developments and planned improvements.
- 1.2 To meet the requirements of Regulation 18(2) of Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 1681 Local Authority Social Services Complaints (England) Regulations 2006 and Regulation 13(3) of Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 1738 The Children Act (1989) Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.
- 1.3 For the current year the following Statutory guidance remains relevant
 - Getting the best from Complaints 2006
- 1.4 This report provides analysis and comment for Children and Family Services on all complaints managed under the statutory process. Those complainants not qualifying under the statutory process are considered under the County Council's Corporate Complaint Annual Report presented annually to the Scrutiny Commission.
- 1.5 The Customer Relations Manager role is responsible for ensuring that complaints are handled appropriately and providing support to the department in resolving complex cases. In addition, the Customer Relations Manager will highlight key trends that emerge each year and any recommendations that would improve how we work. The Children and Family Services department retain responsibility for actioning any such improvements.

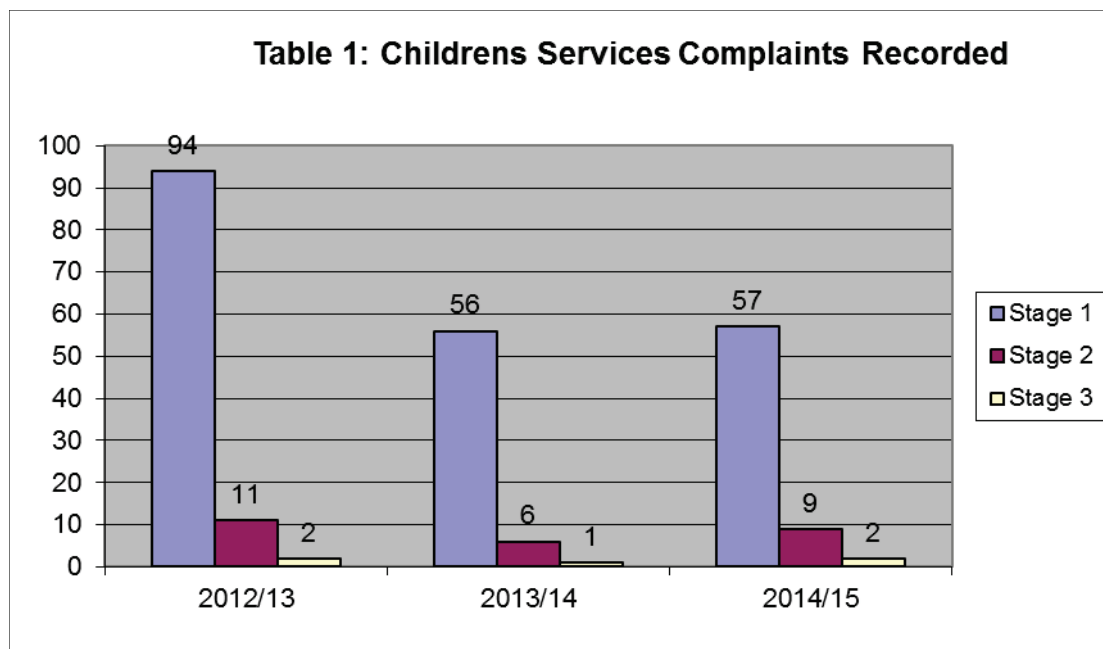
2. Other relevant reports

- 2.1 In March 2015, the Local Government Ombudsman published a report entitled "Are we getting the best from children's social care complaints"
The full report is appended as Appendix C. Whilst the Ombudsman is clear not to take a view on the "fitness for purpose" of the current statutory process, it highlights some of the issues and concerns experienced by both complainants as well as complaints managers.
- 2.2 In June 2015, the Ombudsman published their "Annual Review of Local Government complaints". The key thrust of this report was to highlight concerns that complaints functions are under increasing strain. The report (dated 25 June 2015) can be accessed online at www.lgo.org.uk/news/2015/jun

3. Complaints and compliments analysis 2014-15

3.1 Complaint Volumes

As illustrated below (Table 1), the total number of complaints considered at stage 1 has remained almost identical to last year (2% increase)



Volumes of stage 1 complaints should also be considered in the light of the number of cases which the Children's Social Care service received during the year. There are a number of indicators which might affect complaint volumes but, in general, there was a reduction in contacts to the department.

To provide some context to complaint volumes, the number of referrals to Children's Social Care has been used and using this indicator 1.2% go on to make a formal complaint (0.94% in 2013-14)

Although this is a 20% swing from prior year, as a new measure it is too early to say whether this is a significant point. Future reports will look to track the long term trend using this methodology.

	2013/14	2014/15 (provisional)	% Change 13/14 to 14/15
Referrals to Children's Social Care	5895	4635	-21%
Single Assessments	n/a	3671	
Children in Care at 31st March	455	472	4%
Child Protection Plans at 31st March	439	398	-9%

3.2 Escalations to stages 2 & 3

The number of requests to escalate to Stage 2 of the process increased by three compared with the previous year. As a percentage of Stage 1 complaints this equates to 16%.

Every effort is made to resolve escalated complaints through alternative dispute resolution. This includes conciliation meetings (usually involving both the Customer Relations Manager and a Service Manager) and on occasions externally led mediation.

In keeping with 2013-14, this has again proved successful with four of the nine requests being resolved at this point.

Of the five complaints which completed Stage 2 of the process, four Stage 3 panel hearing requests were received and accepted. It is worth noting that only two were received during the 2014-15 year, the remaining two cases will appear in next year's report.

This means that 80% of complaints which completed Stage 2 of the process escalated to Stage 3. This escalation rate is markedly different to previous years and is influenced by the following

- Changes to the Local Government Ombudsman's policy on early referrals.
- A decrease in the standard of independent investigations carried out.

During previous years, the Customer Relations Manager would discuss cases with the Ombudsman where it was likely nothing further could be achieved through a Stage 3 panel hearing and on most cases, the Ombudsman agreed to accept early referrals. During 2014, a clear statement was issued by the Ombudsman that they would no longer accept such cases and would insist on the complainant completing all stages of the statutory process.

This has implications for the department and highlights the need to ensure every effort is made to resolve complaints at Stage 1 of the process.

During the year, the Customer Relations Manager was compelled to re-assign one internal investigation due to the failure of the Independent Investigator to manage the case effectively. In one other case, quality concerns led to another investigator being removed from our pool. It is proving increasingly difficult to identify external resources who have sufficient and current knowledge of social care processes

It is also interesting to note the failure of Stage 2 investigations to achieve resolution in the majority of the cases. This does raise questions around the effectiveness of this formal stage, themes that have been voiced through a recent Ombudsman consultation and which are explored further in their focus report referenced at section 2.1 of this report (Appendix C)

3.3 Escalations to Local Government Ombudsman

For consistency, this report will use the recently published statistics, which the Ombudsman produces each year as part of her annual report.

In 2014-15, the Ombudsman received 15 complaints under the heading of Childrens and Educations Services. Data is not supplied at a level, which allows for understanding how many of these were complaints falling under the statutory social care complaints procedure, but internal records suggest that none were within this category. One case was accepted back as premature and subsequently has completed all stages of the statutory process.

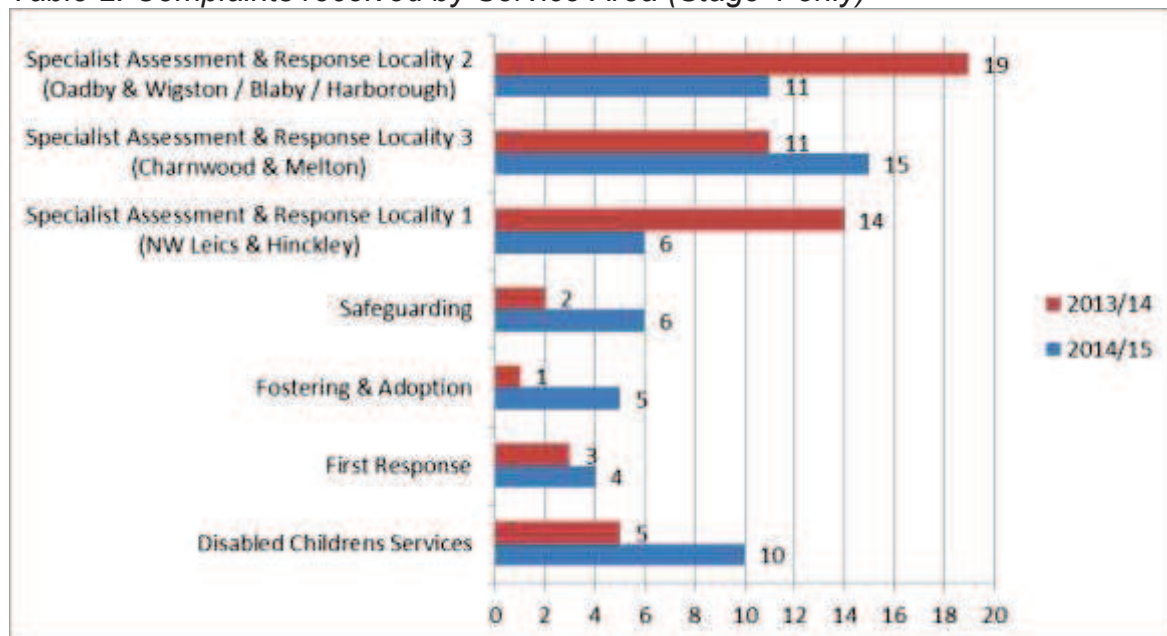
The Local Government Ombudsman also publishes figures on complaints resolved during the year and for 2014-15 there were 16 complaints resolved for Children’s and Education Services, but again internal figures suggest that none of these related to complaints processed under the statutory process.

Further analysis on Ombudsman complaints relating to non-statutory complaints is contained within the Corporate Complaints annual report. It is intended to ask the Ombudsman to consider splitting out statutory complaints for future reports.

3.4 Statutory complaints by Service area

The Customer Relations Manager records all statutory complaints at a service level and table 2 below shows the results for 2014-15 overlaid against the figures from the previous year.

Table 2: Complaints received by Service Area (Stage 1 only)



Whilst some caution needs to be exercised against year on year comparison due to structural changes, there are some noteworthy changes as follows:

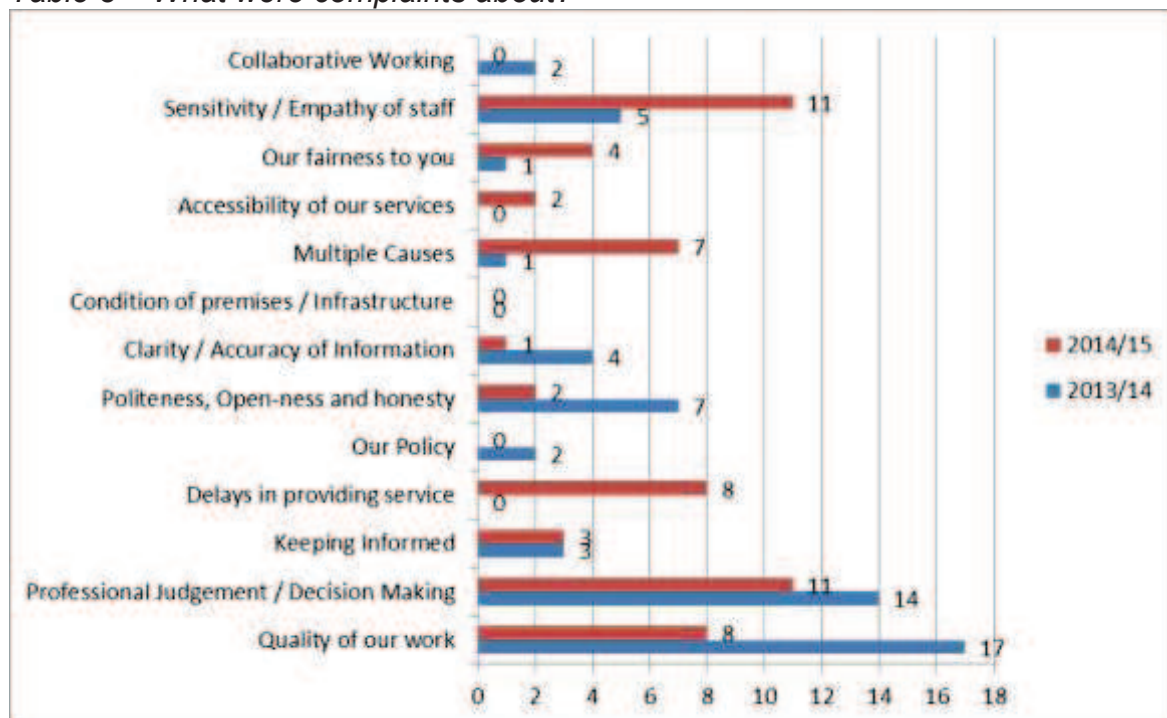
- Increase in Disabled Childrens complaints.

- Increase in Fostering and Adoption complaints.
- Decreases in Locality complaints across most areas.

3.5 Complaint Causes

During 2013/14, a new approach was introduced to try to improve understanding of the main causes leading to complaints. This has been repeated this year and the results for both years are shown below in table 3.

Table 3 – What were complaints about?



There are a number of interesting movements from the previous year shown in the above graph as follows:

- Reduction in complaints about “quality of work”

This is pleasing to see as it was an area highlighted for focus in last year’s report. In particular, notable improvements have been seen in administrative performance around timeliness and quality of case conference materials an area highlighted last year. The Customer Relations Manager is only aware of this issue being raised in two case during 2014-15.

- Increase in complaints regarding sensitivity / empathy of staff

This has now risen to be the joint most significant element prompting complaints, however importantly, only two of the eleven complaints were partly upheld. In both cases it was recognised that the worker was acting with good intent but had

adopted slightly the wrong approach. Discussions were held with both workers during supervision sessions.

The nature of our involvement with families suggests there will always be difficult discussions with families but it is encouraging to see low uphold rates in this area.

- Increase in complaints citing delays in providing service.

There were 8 complaints in this area whereas in 2013/14 this was not identified as the main cause in any.

In six cases the complaint was (at least partially) upheld. Specific situations included

- i) Delay in response from First Response
- ii) Delay in production of Life-story book (2 complaints)
- iii) Delay in allocation of Disabled Children's worker
- iv) Delay in assessment for Short breaks
- v) Delay in processing passport application for LAC
- vi) Delay in completing contract for extension work identified to support a prospective SGO

Inevitably as resources become more strained this is an area that will likely see complaint increases. Whilst numbers are predominantly low the Customer Relations Manager would draw attention to the one repeat theme (Life Story books). It is noted that this is an area already subject to action plans to deliver improvements.

The full breakdown of complaint causes and respective uphold rates are shown in table 4 below.

Table 4: Complaint Causes	Number	% Upheld (Partly or Fully)
Sensitivity / Empathy of staff	11	18%
Professional Judgement / Decision making	11	18%
Quality of our work	8	38%
Delays in providing services	8	75%
Multiple	7	43%
Our Fairness to you	4	25%
Keeping informed	3	33%
Politeness, Openness and Honesty	2	50%
Accessibility of our services	2	50%
Accuracy and clarity of information given	1	0%

3.6 Who complains?

In 2014/15, seven complaints were made directly by children and young people. At 12% of the overall number, this is a further increase on previous year (9%) and

continues the upward trend from 2011/12 where no statutory complaints were received from this group.

Despite the above process, it is dis-appointing that the statutory complaints process is rarely used by the very group it has been designed for. This is far from a unique story, indeed other authorities report significantly less complaints brought by young people.

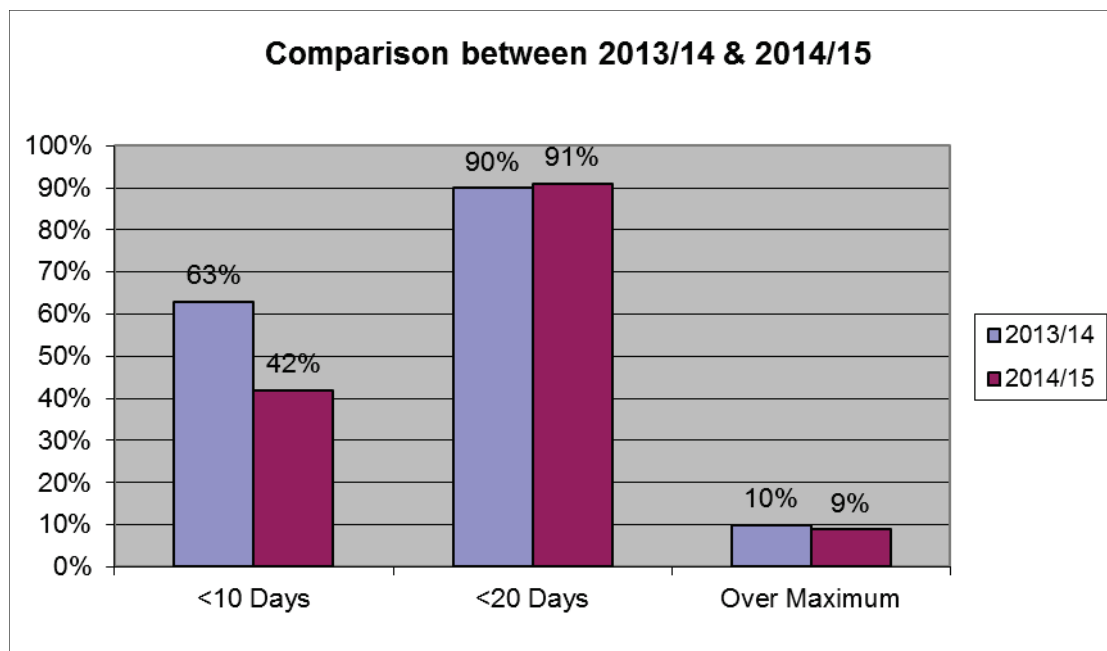
It remains a key priority of the Customer Relations Manager to ensure that everything is being done to improve accessibility of the complaints process to our children and young people and to this end the following steps have taken place this year:

- Continued close working with Corporate parenting unit including quarterly reviews of cases where Children’s Rights Officers are involved
- An away day with representatives of the Children in Care Council to design a new complaints leaflet which looks relevant to them
- A flexible approach to meeting young people to discuss issues and resolve concerns with the emphasis on “sorting things out”

The remaining 50 complaints were brought by parents, foster carers, adopters or anyone else identified as having sufficient interest in the child or young person’s welfare.¹

3.7 Performance against timescales – How responsive have we been?

Table 5: Children’s Services Performance at stage 1



¹ Guidance set out in section 2.6 of Getting the Best from Complaints.

Table 5 above details the time taken to respond to complaints at Stage 1, providing a comparison between the current reporting year and the previous one. Whilst adherence to the statutory maximum timescales (20 working days) is in line with prior year, there has been a significant drop in performance at the best practice indicator (10 working days)

This issue was highlighted in December 2014 with service managers and since this point there has been improvement back to the levels seen in 2013/14.

It is important to stress that, where complainants have not agreed an extension and there is no good reason for a complaint to exceed 20 working days, the Customer Relations Manager is duty bound to offer a Stage 2 investigation. This emphasises the importance of prompt response at Stage 1. This situation did not materialise during 2014-15.

Response timescales at Stage 2

In late 2013, an important decision was made by the Ombudsman² which confirmed that a Stage 2 must be considered to start from the point the Council has a written complaint. Previously Leicestershire County Council's approach (mirrored by other authorities) was to start the clock from the point that the Independent Investigator had met with the complainants and agreed with them a record of their complaint.

This has significant implications for completion of Stage 2 investigations within the statutory timescales of 65 working days and of the five complaints completed under Stage 2 during 2014-15, only two (40%) were completed within this timescale. This compares to 57% in 2013/14.

Whilst LCC has changed our processes in terms of the start point for a statutory complaint, it is felt that the introductory meeting with Independent Investigators and the production of a clear "record of complaint" is essential in a robust investigation and as such this practice has not changed

The Ombudsman has indicated that providing the Local Authority is managing the expectations of a complainant and not unduly delaying resolution, there is unlikely to be criticism of not meeting this timescale, the Customer Relations Manager is exploring ways to speed up the process as the Council is at risk of criticism in this area.

² Report on complaint no 12 009 203 against Worcestershire County Council – September 2013

3.8 Complaint Outcomes

Table 6: Children's Services complaints recorded by outcome

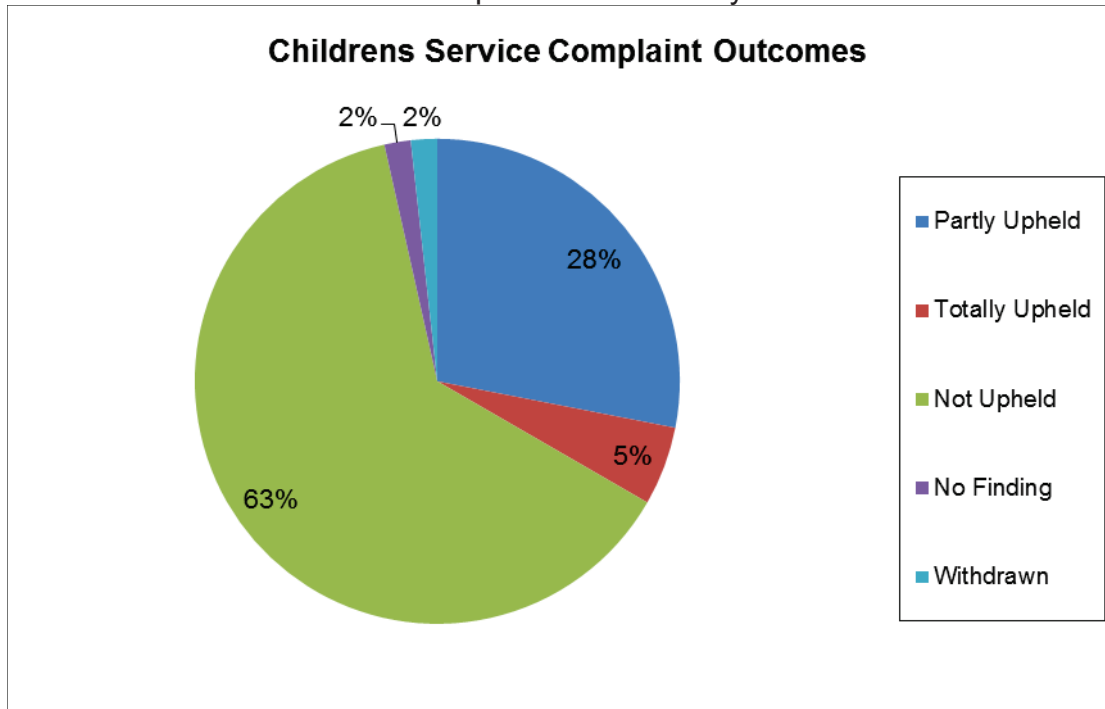


Table 6 above shows that there have been further improvement in the decreasing the number of complaints upheld. 63% were not upheld this year compared to 57% in 2013-14.

Just 5% were fully upheld, with a further 28% having some element of the complaint upheld.

The fact that only 5% of complaints are recorded as “fully upheld” does not necessarily mean that complaints received are not reasonable or have no value. It is always important to listen to what we are being told about our service in order to put matters right at the earliest opportunity, and to learn and improve.

The Customer Relations Manager will review cases and work with the responding manager to look at how we can incorporate any lessons learned. New forms and guidance to help utilise root cause analysis techniques have been implemented this year and a copy of a redacted template is shown in Appendix B.

3.9 Compliments Analysis

During 2014-15 there were 31 compliments recorded regarding Children's Social Care officers. This marks a recorded increase of six from prior year. A selection of the positive comments received appears in Appendix A and provides an important balance to the performance of the department.

4. Financial Implications

Children's Service Complaints expenditure

- There are a number of ways in which the County Council incurs costs as part of the statutory complaints process.
- Stages 2 & 3 of the statutory complaints procedure require independent investigation to take place.
- Stage 2 places a requirement on the authority to appoint an Investigative Officer who must not work in the same area as the complaint being investigated and be suitably trained to carry out investigative work.
- Whilst it is not mandatory that this role is appointed externally, Leicestershire's current policy is to do so. In addition to the Investigative Officer, the Regulations also require an Independent Person to be appointed to ensure the investigation is carried out fairly.
- At Stage 3, the procedure is for a panel hearing to be held to review the Stage 2 investigation. This involves the appointment of 3 external panel members.
- Leicestershire County Council also offers independent mediation as an alternative form of redress through Stages 2 or 3.
- 1 externally run mediation session was arranged this year which prevented a Stage 2 escalation. In addition, eight conciliation meetings chaired by the Customer Relations Manager have been held with six of these achieving resolution of the complaint. This emphasises the power of a well planned meeting.
- Finally, on rare occasions, financial redress is offered as part of the Complaints procedure. Usually this is by way of a Local Settlement with the Ombudsman, but can also be recommended at either Stage 2 or 3 of the procedure.
- Table 7 below details the total costs incurred during the last 3 financial years. Costs are re-charged directly to the department.

Table 7 Costs incurred through complaints procedure³

Spend	Total 12/13	Total 13/14	Total 14/15
Independent Persons	£7,040	£4,040	£2,870
Investigative Officers	£18,820	£7,160	£7430
Stage 3	£1,280	£0	£2410
Mediation	£630	£900	£420
Financial Redress	£1,100	£0	£0
Total	£28,870	£12,100	£13,130

- Costs incurred for 2014/15 remain broadly in line with prior year. Costs have been controlled through:
 - the increased diligence of the Customer Relations team in offering alternative dispute resolution
 - Ensuring that complainants are eligible to use the statutory complaints procedure
 - A review of rates of pay for all Independent Persons (now charged at a lower rate than Investigating Officers)
 - Standard hourly rate agreed with Investigators – reviewed annually

³ Figures are rounded up to nearest £10

5. Learning from Complaints

5.1 Corrective action undertaken for complaints upheld at Stage 1

All of the nineteen complaints that were partly or fully upheld have been reviewed to ascertain what action the department has taken to learn from the complaints and avoid such issues occurring in the future.

It is worth stating that, in all cases, an apology was issued, but in twelve cases there was felt to be no other preventative actions that could be taken.

Table 8 below provides a breakdown of the action taken for the remaining 7 cases. Actions include reviewing respite arrangements and changing the allocated social worker. These appear under the heading Review resource allocation.



Whilst there is some good evidence of managers using complaints to pro-actively change future service provision, it is a concern that we are not able to identify preventative improvements in more cases. This indicates that managers may not be fully equipped to effectively probe and analyse complaints. This theme is not unique to children's social care and will be prioritised as a corporate work priority for 2015-16.

To illustrate some of the complaints made and actions taken, three case studies are included overleaf. These help bring some of the individual stories to life and show how the department flexibly responds.

CASE STUDY 1 – DISABLED CHILDREN’S SERVICES

Eliza’s Story – A request for additional support

Eliza made a complaint as she was struggling to support her disabled son and feeling very exhausted.

Eliza requested some additional support for her son particularly during school holidays and preferably some overnight support.

Actions Taken

- Complaint was not upheld – did not meet the criteria for overnight support and we had offered other support for holiday periods
- Although no fault, Team Manager used discretion to authorise additional daytime support and extra lunch call.
- Complainant also signposted to Adult Social Care for support for older son

CASE STUDY 2 – Specialist Assessment & Response

Nancy's story – Concerns about social worker

Nancy made a complaint about the handling of her case by her child's allocated Social Worker.

Nancy complained that the social worker had not followed up actions which they said they would such as carrying out visits and providing the relevant paperwork at least 24 hours prior to meetings.

Actions Taken

- **Case discussion with worker**
- **Worker reminded of departmental expectations and Customer Service Standards**
- **Additional monitoring checks being made by Team Manager**

CASE STUDY 3 – Specialist Assessment & Response

Sonia's story – Concerned that Social Worker gave false information to school

Sonia had asked her children's Social Worker not to disclose her husband's medical information to the children's school when they contacted them as part of an assessment, in order to protect her husband's privacy.

However the Social Worker then gave the school a false reason for contacting them.

Sonia complained about the Social Worker giving false information and requested that they correct this.

Actions Taken

- **Team Manager agreed that the Social Worker should not have given the school false information. Although she understood that he was trying to protect her husband's privacy, as had been requested.**
- **The Team Manager explained that it is important that Children and Family Services are open and honest regarding child protection concerns. Therefore, the Social Worker would contact the school to correct the misinformation and be honest with the school.**
- **Apology given for any inconvenience or distress caused.**

6. Monitoring the Process

The Customer Relations team continues to support Children's Services to manage and learn from complaints. The key services offered to CFS are -

1. Complaints advice and support
2. Mediation
3. Production of Performance Reports
4. Liaison with Local Government Ombudsman
5. Quality Assurance of complaint responses
6. Complaint handling training for Operational Managers

Assistance continues to be routinely provided to Heads of Strategy in drafting adjudication responses to Stage 2 investigations. This helps ensure a consistency of response and that clear action plans are created.

Quarterly performance reports are produced and presented to the Departmental Management Team (DMT). The Customer Relations Manager also attends the Children's Social Care Services senior management team meeting every 6 months to talk through complaints matters.

Quarterly meetings are held with the corporate parenting team to discuss and review their caseloads and any support that is required.

From April 2015, the Customer Relations Manager is also proactively attending Service Manager team meetings on a rolling 12 month basis (more often if requested) to explore any thorny issues and network directly with team managers. These sessions also provide a platform to continue to promote the corporate customer service standards which if followed by officers would prevent a number of complaints arising.

7. Customer Relations – Work Priorities for 2015-16

During 2015/16, the Customer Relations team will focus on:

- Continuing to ensure the complaints procedure is accessible, particularly to young people.
- Utilise new executive role on regional complaints management group to help inform future debates around the suitability (or otherwise) of the statutory complaints process.
- Continuing to promote alternative dispute resolution, notably to complainants seeking escalation to Stage 2 and 3.
- Promoting improvements to how managers are able to translate complaints into service improvements through the roll-out of root cause analysis techniques.
- Working with the department to help ensure that all managers understand the statutory complaints procedure as well as the support and guidance available to them.

8. Key Learning Points

The Customer Relations Team would specifically highlight 3 key themes which have emerged from this year's annual report process –

- **Timeliness of responding to complaints**

During the 1st 6 months of the year it was evident that the department was in a state of adjustment following structural changes. This began to have a knock on impact to responsiveness to complaints. Whilst the department responded well during the second half of the year, it is important to highlight the importance of making sure that during subsequent re-organisation focus is maintained on complaints which if managed well at the outset will both enhance the department's reputation and save money.

- **Data Protection concerns**

Whilst often combined with other complaint issues, the Customer Relations Manager has become increasingly aware this year of inter-related DP issues / breaches which have not on all occasions been managed appropriately. A reminder has been sent out to all Service Managers of the importance of early liaison with the Business Partner (Information Management) who will assist with ensuring such issues are appropriately handled.

- **The importance of apologising effectively**

For the most part complaints are well managed and appropriate responses sent. However there are some opportunities to improve the quality and in particular how an apology is delivered. There have been several cases this year whereby un-necessary escalation has occurred simply because an apology has not been made effectively. Examples include it appears grudgingly given or fails to take responsibility for the errors.

Guidance notes have been circulated offering top tips in this important area and this will be followed up by workshops with identified team managers.

The Customer Relations Team believes that improvements in these 3 areas would help further reduce the number of complaints received as well as fulfilling some of the key promises to customers within the Council's Customer Service Standards.

9. Concluding Comments

Overall this has been a positive year for complaints management across children's social care services. During the year, there have been a number of positive improvements, such as building ever closer working links between Customer Relations and the Children's Rights service, reduction in number of upheld complaints and continued absence of referrals to the Ombudsman.

It is anticipated that by addressing the themes highlighted in this report, further improvements will be seen next year, particularly around the challenge of evidencing lessons are learned.

The Customer Relations team continues to receive good support from managers at all levels within the department.

APPENDIX A – Sample of compliments received

Below are a selection of the positive recognition the social care department has received during the 2014-15 year

- The people who work in Social Care are brilliant - they SO go above & beyond their job descriptions. Hugely valuable – **FIRST RESPONSE**
- I wanted to let you know how much I appreciated and gained from the safeguarding training delivered by Simon and Inga...I felt like it was one of the most comprehensive but not overwhelming presentations of safeguarding I have been to in some time – **SAFEGUARDING UNIT**
- I was very impressed by Anna on this case. She was diligent and thoughtful and it was a pleasure working with her – **SPECIALIST ASSESSMENT & RESPONSE**
- Many thanks to Tom for working on the case and standing up to X. I really appreciated the patience he showed when trying to understand the 'hold' X had over me. Also thanks to Michaela for her very perceptive Parenting Report. Finally thanks to Wendy for her understanding and support and for being so clear about my options for the future – **SPECIALIST ASSESSMENT & RESPONSE**
- I would like to say what excellent work Linzie has done with my son X. Our family and especially X would not have got through the difficult time last year. X was withdrawn and quiet , he wouldn't of disclosed any information if Linzie wasn't working with him I am sure. He is now a very confident and open happy boy now and i cant thank Linzie enough – **STRENGTHENING FAMILIES**
- I wanted to write to you about our positive experience of Direct Payments and the impact it has had on our family. The entire process, from referral, by Abu, who was our named social worker and wonderfully supportive and helpful, to Kerry's visit and the help you gave us to best understand how to proceed and our options – **DISABLED CHILDREN'S**
- K and J had their annual review yesterday and fed back how proactive you (James) have been since taking this case over. They have been really pleased with the support you have provided and also commented on how well you had picked up the case, dealt with issues raised efficiently and effectively, making sure the IRO was aware of relevant information prior to J's review meeting – **FOSTERING**
- I wanted to get in touch to express how impressed I am with the dedication and support of Lucy who is based within the CSE team....Ayshea, Donna and Lucy are are incredibly supportive and open

a fantastic line of communication between all of the local social workers and other specialists – **SAFEGUARDING UNIT**

- It's been a real pleasure to work alongside you (Danielle). I have got to know K and care about her a great deal. I can only imagine the journey you have been on with her over these last 6 years, but I see how important you are to her. She's very lucky to have you as her social worker in all that is so difficult in her life – **SPECIALIST ASSESSMENT & RESPONSE**
- Card received from J to say thank-you for everything you have done...he is over the moon to be getting his own space after nearly 2 years of fighting for it and being turned down twice. – **DISABLED CHILDREN'S SERVICE**

Appendix B: Example of new Lessons Learned Form

Initial Information (To be completed by Complaints Team)			
Customer Name:	XXX		
Complaint Reference Number:	2711		
Acknowledgement sent date:	8/6/15		
Response due:	15/8/15		
Service investigating the complaint:	Welland House		
Assigned to:	K S		
Brief Details of the complaint:	Ill-judged comments by Welland House Worker		
Final Response Information (To be completed by responding Manager)			
Complaint outcome:- Upheld / Not Upheld / Partially Upheld / No Finding:	Partly Upheld		
Were there any lessons learnt (i.e. could this have been avoided)	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No
Details of lessons learnt (including factors of how the issue could have been avoided):	Residential Officer needs to avoid using language that could be construed negatively		
Actions to be taken by service due to lessons learnt: (e.g. policy/practice changes, staff training)	Consider whether any role for LADO Issues to be discussed with Residential Officer and recorded on file		
Date actions will be implemented by:	29/6/15		
Person overseeing, implementation of actions:	K S		
<i>N.B. The customer relations team will contact you to check if actions have been implemented by the deadline date you have set and will be looking for evidence of this.</i>			
Other Comments:			
Completed by:	K S		
Please send this completed form to the customerrelations@leics.gov.uk mailbox			

APPENDIX C: “Are we getting the best from Children’s Social Care complaints”

Filed as an attachment available online at www.lgo.org.uk/news/2015/mar report dated 10 March 2015



**CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
2 NOVEMBER 2015**

**AN UPDATE ON LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO
CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of report

1. This report provides the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on progress in relation to the Council's response to child sexual exploitation (CSE).

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The report is written within the context of national guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', published by the Department for Education 2015, 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 2013. In addition it is written within the context of the statutory guidance 'Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation' published by the Department for Education 2009.

Background

3. CSE has been given national and local prominence following the Savile Inquiry and events in Rochdale, Oxfordshire and Rotherham. A number of high profile national reports have been published; the government has elevated CSE to the level of a national threat and set up a national inquiry chaired by Lowell Goddard. Locally this has necessitated an accelerated response and an equally determined focus. The Strategic Partnership Board (SPB) has made CSE one of three key priorities for this year.

Schools contribution to the CSE agenda

4. An increased focus locally has been on the contribution of universal services to the CSE agenda including schools and colleges. Engagement with the Leicestershire Secondary and Primary Heads group has resulted in:
 - a) Briefing slides on CSE for school staff has been produced and sent to all Head Teachers at start of term to enable them to cascade key messages;
 - b) Endorsed material for school websites and bespoke lesson plans have been added to the Leicestershire and Rutland LSCB website (resources for schools) <http://lrsb.org.uk/cse-awareness---resources-for-sc>

- c) A letter to all school governors was sent at the start of term outlining their responsibilities in relation to CSE;
- d) Presentations on CSE were made to over 100 primary and secondary governors at three recent Leicestershire chairs of governors meetings;
- e) Chelsea's Choice has been re-commissioned to tour local schools across Leicestershire this autumn. An eight week run of the applied theatre production started on 21st September with plans for fifty-eight performances in forty schools. A wraparound package to support the tour has been developed including bespoke lesson plans and the multi-agency specialist CSE team being on hand to offer support in case of disclosure;
- f) Working groups involving secondary schools are currently exploring issues relevant to CSE including how to improve information sharing and referral pathways from schools to Children and Family Services and Leicestershire Police, and conducting research and insight with children and young people to find out how we can more effectively get messages across to them about CSE;
- g) Future engagement is planned with primary schools to ensure messages reach all age groups and bolster work in relation to e-Safety and healthy schools.

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Partnership Bid

- 5. A partnership bid aimed at funding provision over the next two financial years has been submitted for final endorsement at the Strategic Partnership Board Executive on 29th October 2015. The bid encompasses a range of initiatives that intend to build capacity, capability and improve the effectiveness of the partnership in preventing, identifying and tackling CSE. The business case seeks funding for both one-off and non-recurring projects, as well as extending existing projects and good practice. In addition, it seeks a temporary increase in structures and staffing, demonstrating that to do so will provide an evidenced 'step change' in outcomes. Leicestershire County Council will have responsibility to manage the funding on behalf of the partnership.

Joint Targeted Area Inspection

- 6. Leicestershire recently agreed to participate in trialing the development of a new inspection regime. The two day Joint Targeted Area Inspection trial held in September involved the inspectorates for children's services, police, health and probation - Ofsted, HMIC, HMIP and CQC – combining their resources to undertake a multi-agency inspection focusing on the theme of CSE and missing children. No judgement was given and the findings will not be published, however, the feedback from inspectors has helped all agencies involved to identify areas for further improvement.

Multi-Agency Specialist CSE Team

Protocol

7. A protocol for the multi-agency specialist CSE Team has recently been developed. It gives clarity to and outlines in detail the remit, roles and responsibilities of the specialist team and external teams in relation to CSE. The protocol has been developed to begin to outline partner agency remit, roles and responsibilities within the specialist team and how they collaborate. The new procedures will link to a revised LLR CSE Joint Protocol encompassing updated practice guidance and procedures also in its last stages of completion. The protocol includes reference to referral pathways and a new CSE Risk Assessment form to be used by the specialist team in tandem with other assessment processes.

Staffing

8. In September 2015 three new recruits were added to the Council's contribution to the specialist CSE team. To complete the team further recruitment is planned.
9. A CSE Coordinator post for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland started in June 2015. This post holder is line managed by the Council's Strategic Lead for CSE and Complex Abuse, and is currently jointly funded by the Leicester City LSCB and Leicestershire and Rutland LSCB. Twelve months funding has been secured pending further review. Longer-term funding is being sought through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) bid. It is proposed that the CSE Coordinator will be responsible for implementation of the projects arising from the bid.
10. A specialist return interview focusing on children at high risk of CSE who have returned after being reported as missing is due to start late October 2015 initially funded for 12 months. The post funded by the OPCC has been commissioned from Barnardos.

Communications

11. A communications approach has been developed to formally launch the specialist team internally encompassing online channels including Yammer (an internal social media channel) and offline channels including roadshows and inviting onsite visits.

Referral Data

12. From 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 184 CSE referrals were received by the specialist CSE team, up from 85 referrals during the same period in 2013-14. This has been attributed to greater professional and public awareness of CSE, in part due to the local awareness raising campaign, in addition to increased confidence of victims to come forward.

13. Over Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 2015-16, the first six months of this business year, 125 referrals have been received. This has translated into an increasing number of joint investigations and operations with the police.
14. The Council's contribution to the specialist CSE team is coordinating the Council's response to a number of non-recent abuse and CSE investigations and operations working in close partnership with the police. One operation has involved working closely with another region's police force – the operation is now planned to be in two phases taking the investigation into late 2016.
15. A joint operation in North West Leicestershire led to a successful investigation and prosecution, the perpetrator received an eight year custodial sentence for drug offences. In this case, from initial disclosure of CSE by the children to the sentencing of the perpetrator took six months demonstrating the impact of the specialist CSE team. The operation has developed into a second phase, involving close working with local schools and community partnerships. With increasing national and local attention on CSE it is highly likely that more cases will be uncovered showing a clearer picture of the prevalence and extent of CSE.
16. Due to the impact of CSE a number of children have required specialist care placements both in order to keep them safe and protect them from the risk of further abuse from perpetrators and to provide support to them through the post abuse recovery process. Placements that can deliver the desired outcomes are currently commissioned from high cost external specialist residential providers. A number of known victims of CSE as part of their care and protection plan have been placed at a distance from Leicestershire in safe accommodation where they have received wrap around therapeutic support.
17. The specialist CSE team has become increasingly involved in providing a formal response to safeguarding issues related to children placed in Leicestershire by other local authorities. The team has developed links with the majority of the approximately 30 private children's homes in the County and monitor safeguarding concerns where children go missing and/or are at risk of CSE.

Goddard Inquiry Strategic Governance Group

18. A strategic governance group has been formed to ensure coordination of activity in relation to preparation for the Goddard Inquiry, and strategic and operational work in relation to non-recent abuse and CSE.
19. Simon Lawrence has been appointed as the Council's Non-Recent Abuse Coordinator.

Regional Developments

20. A seminar hosted by the East Midlands ADCS Group was held on 23rd October 2015 involving senior leaders from a wide range of agencies from

across the region. Keynote contributors included Ofsted and the Crown Prosecution Service. The event provided an opportunity to reflect on CSE practice and critical issues, highlighted improvement themes and engaged delegates in a discussion about regional approaches.

21. A draft regional CSE framework was previewed at the event. The framework encompasses a range of regional principles and standards. It received wide support and was endorsed as the first step toward developing a regional compact.

Resource Implications

22. Funding has been provided by the government to create regional police CSE Coordinators. One has recently been appointed in the East Midlands.
23. MTFs growth of £560,000 was agreed by the County Council on 18 February 2015 and is funding the Council's contribution to the multi-agency specialist CSE team.
24. Placement costs were not included in the growth bid and those costs are now contributing to the pressure on this area of the budget. Additional resources to enhance the work in relation to CSE are being pursued through the Strategic Partnership Development fund held by the Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner (see section 5 above).

Background Papers

None.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

None.

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Equality and Human Rights Implications

25. Enhancing the Council's approach to safeguarding children and child protection is integral to the work in relation to tackling CSE. National research would suggest that boys and young men, children from BME and LGBT communities are underrepresented in the local numbers of referrals of

children identified at risk of CSE. This is likely to be due to underreporting. Work has been identified to address this.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 2
NOVEMBER 2015

SCHOOL TRANSPORT AND SCHOOL FOOD

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee with information as requested about the activities of the school transport service, located in the County Council's Environment and Transport department, and of the school food service, located in the County Council's Corporate Resources department.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. A range of services previously located in the Children and Young People's Service were moved to other County Council departments during 2011 and 2012, primarily as preparation for the County Council's response to the Academies Act 2010 and the Education Act 2011, but also, at a later stage in response to Public Health being transferred into the local authority. The proposed changes were reported to the Children and Young People's Service Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2nd May 2012, and agreed by the Cabinet on 8th May 2012.
3. Following extensive consultation, changes to the Mainstream Schools Policy were agreed by the Cabinet in July 2013.

Background

School Food Service

4. Every child in reception, year 1 and year 2 in state-funded schools have received a free school lunch from September 2014. The aim is to improve academic attainment and save families money – over the course of a year the average family spends £437 on school lunches per child. At the same time, the government extended free school meals to disadvantaged students in further education and sixth form colleges.
5. Other children may also be eligible to claim a free school meal, providing they receive a qualifying benefit. The current benefits are:
 - a) Job Seekers Allowance;
 - b) Income Support;
 - c) Employment and Support Allowance;
 - d) Child Tax Credit, provided the annual taxable income, as assessed by the Inland Revenue is not in excess of £16,190;
 - e) The Guarantee element of the State Pension Credit;
 - f) Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
 - g) Children who receive Income Support or Income Based Jobseekers Allowance in their own right.

6. From 1st May 2009, where a parent has been entitled to Working Tax Credit during the 4 week period immediately after their employment ceases, or after they start to work less than 16 hours per week, they are eligible to claim free school meals over that period.

School Transport Service

7. The legal minimum for free school transport to be provided is for pupils aged between 5 and 16 years who live over the statutory walking distances of 2 miles for those up to age 8, and 3 miles for those over 8, from home to the nearest school or educational placement with places available. Leicestershire's policy is more generous and provides for distances of 2 miles for primary pupils (up to age 11) eligible.
8. From September 2015 the recognition of traditional 'catchment' areas for transport was changed.
9. The Sustainable Travel Group (STG) carries out transport eligibility checks for pupils who have been offered a school place using the entitlement criteria in the County Council's Home to School Transport Policy. All parents are contacted by the STG to advise them about the school transport processes, including information about qualifying schools and eligibility for free transport.
10. Schools and colleges that are classified as 'qualifying' under the school transport policy are as follows:
 - a) Community, foundation or voluntary schools;
 - b) Community or foundation special schools;
 - c) Non-maintained special schools;
 - d) Pupil referral units;
 - e) Maintained nursery schools;
 - f) City technology colleges;
 - g) Academies, including free schools and studio schools.

Recent developments

School Food – free infant meals

11. The 203 primary schools that buy back into the School Food Service started to receive free school meals for infant children on 28th August 2015. Ten of the eleven kitchen refurbishments were operational for 28th August. The one kitchen refurbishment that was not complete was due to unprecedented national demand for equipment and associated resources. The kitchen was fully operational from 1st September. A hot meal was still provided which was transported in on both days from a neighbouring school. Sufficient staff were recruited and hours increased for existing staff as required.
12. Schools that do not buy back into the School Food Service made their own arrangements for the provision of free infant meals.
13. There was a slow start partly due to a number of schools and parents who assumed that the initiative didn't start until 1st September and also because the reception children do not stay for a full day at the start of term. The table below shows the gradual increase as all children take a meal.

Week Ending 12 Sept	Cumulative Daily Average Meals Current Week Compared To Previous Week	Meal Numbers Increase/Decrease	Percentage Increase/Decrease	Cumulative Percentage Update	Percentage Uptake - Current Week
Primary - Universal Free Meals	11,740	1,027	9.58%	65%	73%
Primary Total	21,743	1,072	5.19%	50%	53%
Senior Total	7,092	-120	-1.67%	32%	32%
Grand Total	28,834	952	3.41%	46%	49%

School Food - strategy

14. The School Food Service has recently agreed a new strategy for achievement by 2020 as set out below.

Overview	Key Drivers	By 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our vision is to provide a quality cost effective service to a diverse customer market. Provide a fully traded catering service to over 200 schools also trade and provide support to all remaining schools in the county. Recently awarded the Silver Catering Mark from the Food for Life. School Food provide an average of 31,000 meals a day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase the profitability of the service. To meet legislative requirements by providing universal infant free meals. Ensure menus and recipes meet the Government Food Based Standards and the criteria for the catering mark. To provide a healthy balanced meal to children and young people. To continue with the development of School Food 's succession plan for management. To confirm and raise staff competence. To continue and further develop our quality performance management system. Expand and diversify the business to existing customers and secure new business with neighbour LA's. Working with partners to develop a whole school approach to School Food. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieved over a 5 year period the total target savings/contribution of £3.8 million. Grown the business by diversifying services to existing customers. ie nursery meals, after school clubs, holiday clubs and hospitality catering. Expanded the market base by gaining business in neighbour authorities. Have an efficient cost effective offering that will reflect a quality service/business. Leicestershire's School Food will have enhanced their already excellent reputation and be recognised as a market leader.

School and College Transport

15. The County Council's web pages provide comprehensive information for parents regarding transport arrangements. These include sets of Frequently Asked Questions.
16. The changes to mainstream home to school transport, as agreed by the Cabinet in July 2014, have now taken full effect. This affects pupils starting primary school for the first time, those transferring to a secondary school and new post 16 students.
17. The phasing out of voluntary aided transport assistance to denominational schools was also fully implemented from September 2015 meaning that no new transport is now provided for a faith school, other than for low income families who qualify under extended rights legislation or families where the faith school is the nearest school to the home address and over the qualifying distance.
18. Leicestershire County Council bus passes can be purchased but parents are encouraged to consider commercially available alternatives as these could be better value and give increased flexibility. More commercially available season tickets enable travel at any time and on any day, including weekends.
19. Home to school transport arrangements can be complex and highly individualised. Full details available to parents can be found at:
http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/highways/passenger_transport/school_college_transport

Resource Implications

20. The School Food Service is a traded service.
21. Changes to school and college transport arrangements have been made in the light of financial pressures.

Background Papers

22. Report to the Cabinet on 15th July 2014 – Mainstream Home to School Transport Policy

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

23. None.

Officers to Contact

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Equality and Human Rights Implications

24. Families in receipt of various benefits that meet eligibility criteria are able to access free school meals and transport.

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