



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

Date/Time: **Monday, 13 November 2017 at 1.30 pm**

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

Contact: **Anna Poole (0116 305 0381)**

Email: **anna.poole@leics.gov.uk**

Membership

Dr. P. Bremner CC Mrs H. L. Richardson CC
Mr. G. Hirst Mrs B. Seaton CC
Mr. J. Kaufman CC Mr. S. D. Sheahan CC
Mrs. C. Lewis Mrs D. Taylor CC
Mrs. A. Wright CC Mr. G. Welsh CC
Mrs. R. Page CC

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– Notices will be on display at the meeting explaining the arrangements.**

AGENDA

<u>Item</u>	<u>Report by</u>
1. Election of Chairman.	
2. Election of Deputy Chairman.	
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2017.	(Pages 5 - 12)
4. Question Time.	
5. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).	
6. To advise of any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent elsewhere on the agenda.	
7. Declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.	



8. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.
9. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.
10. Proposals to Consult on Removal (Closure) of Residential Facilities at Maplewell Hall Special School. Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 13 - 18)
11. Early Support and Inclusion for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 19 - 28)
12. Children's Social Care Recruitment and Retention Strategy. Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 29 - 32)
13. Progress Report: OFSTED Continuous Improvement Action Plan 2017- 2020 - The Road to Excellence. Director of Children and Family Services (Pages 33 - 50)

14. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee is scheduled to take place on 15 January 2018 at 1.30pm.

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

QUESTIONING BY MEMBERS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

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

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

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

Key Questions:

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

If it is a new service:

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

If it is a reduction in an existing service:

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

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Minutes of a meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Monday, 11 September 2017.

PRESENT

Mrs. A. Wright CC (in the Chair)

Mr. J. Kaufman CC

Mrs B. Seaton CC

Mrs. C. Lewis

Mr. S. D. Sheahan CC

Mrs. R. Page CC

Mrs D. Taylor CC

Mrs H. L. Richardson CC

Mr. G. Welsh CC

14. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2017 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

15. Question Time.

The following question, received under Standing Order 35, was put to the Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Question by Ms Sue Whiting, resident:

“Statistics released by the Government on 27th July 2017 show that Leicestershire primary schools had 699 identified children with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty) in the academic year 2016-2017. Parents still contact me about lack of provision in Leicestershire primary schools for teaching dyslexic children.

Could the chair please tell me what arrangements have been made for dyslexia awareness week 2nd-8th October to involve primary schools and parents?”

Reply by the Chairman:

“This year during Dyslexia Awareness Week, the Learning Support Service is planning to run a dyslexia awareness workshop for Leicestershire schools. This will include information about dyslexia and will showcase/demonstrate some multi-sensory approaches and resources for use at targeted level for pupils who require extra support. The event will also include a question/surgery slot for attendees to ask questions on an individual basis. There will be at least seven qualified specialist dyslexia tutors present to facilitate this session. This will take place on Tuesday 3rd October 2017 at County Hall.”

Ms Sue Whiting asked the following supplementary question in relation to the question:

“Are parents and children going to be invited to the workshops?”

The Director of Children and Family Services, on behalf of the Chairman, undertook to respond to this question in writing.

16. 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).

17. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

18. 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.

Mrs D Taylor CC declared a personal interest in all items on the agenda as her step grandson was subject to care services in Leicester City.

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

There were no declarations of the party whip.

20. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.

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

21. Funding Requirements to deliver the OFSTED Continuous Improvement Plan.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Families concerning progress to date and future funding requirements to deliver the OFSTED Continuous Improvement Plan. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 9" is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- i. Members were informed that the proposed investment was significant but necessary to meet the recommendations in the OFSTED report. Whilst being mindful of the financial situation facing the Council, the investment would provide a good basis for addressing the OFSTED recommendations to achieve the 'good' rating from OFSTED;
- ii. OFSTED did not give a definitive standard for Social Worker caseloads. The County Council would aim to follow the standards set out by CIPFA and best practice of Authorities who had been rated 'good' or 'outstanding' by OFSTED;
- iii. The County Council would seek to introduce manageable caseloads for social workers to address the OFSTED recommendations as this was crucial in moving to a 'good' rating from OFSTED. Caseloads would be audited to ensure that there was consistency and good quality outcomes;

- iv. The number of Looked After Children had increased significantly since 2010/11, as had the complexity of the cases involved. This required a properly financed legal service to meet demand and, as such, a sum of £500,000 had been included in the request to Cabinet;
- v. Outline timeframes were included in the Action Plan now presented to the Committee. If the request for investment was approved by Cabinet, then the action plan would be amended to include more detailed timelines and milestones.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the comments of the Committee be forwarded to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 15 September 2017 and that the Cabinet be advised that the Committee supports the approval of the growth bid for Children and Family Services for £2.5m for the 2018/19 financial year;
- b. That the Director for Children and Family Services submit a report to the next meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee setting out details of timeframes and milestones related to the actions in the OFSTED Continuous Improvement Plan.

22. Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2016/17.

The Committee considered a report of the Independent Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board concerning the Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2016/17. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 10" is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- i. The final report would be presented to Cabinet on 15 September 2017 and would be signed off by the Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children Board at its meeting on 20 October 2017;
- ii. There was strong partnership working across Leicestershire regarding Child Sexual Exploitation; although further improvements could be made in the leadership and governance arrangements by more consistent representation at Board level;
- iii. The changes to the arrangements for safeguarding children brought in by the Children's Social Work Act which came into force in 2017 would be addressed in next year's report; Government guidance was expected in November 2017;
- iv. The additional resource introduced to address the volume of initial assessments had reduced caseloads and improved the quality of assessment;
- v. There had been a rise in the number of home educated children which reflected the regional and national trend. Systems were in place to monitor all children who were home educated, as part of the monitoring systems in place for all children not in education;

- vi. New software was being introduced to support officers with the work already underway to interrogate performance data;
- vii. Safeguarding training programmes and the accreditation of Social Workers was now being introduced as this was highlighted by OFSTED as an area for improvement;
- viii. Another key aspect of the OFSTED report was management oversight and the Chairman of the Board welcomed the investment referred to in the earlier paper (OFSTED Continuous Improvement Plan).
- ix. With regard to concerns about initial health assessments, the Chairman of the Board advised that he had written to all health providers and Clinical Commissioning Groups seeking an update.

RESOLVED:

That the comments of the Committee be forwarded to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 15 September 2017 and that the Cabinet be advised that the Committee noted the Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2016/17.

23. Quarter 1 2017/18 Performance Report.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Families which provided an update on departmental performance at the end of quarter 1 of 2017/18. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 11" is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- i. A range of provision was now offered to support young people with their emotional health and wellbeing needs and plans were in place to further improve performance and quality of service delivery. The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) was used to identify Looked After Children who were at risk of developing such difficulties. The completion rate for the SDQ was improving year on year, although officers acknowledged that further improvement was needed;
- ii. The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) pilot undertaken during the previous year, provided support to social workers and foster carers who cared for a child with emotional health and wellbeing needs and gave a recommendation around suitable therapy for the child. Members acknowledged that it was important to identify and address such issues early to prevent a cumulative effect moving forward;
- iii. Significant progress had been in reducing the number of children who became subject to a Child Protection Plan (CPP) for a second or subsequent time. Procedures to ensure resources were in place to support children when they came off a CPP were improving. This included routine auditing of cases by the quality assurance team, close working with Leicestershire Police to address mental health, substance misuse or domestic abuse issues within families which were risk factors for children becoming subject to a Plan; and new investments following the OFSTED inspection;

- iv. Members were assured that officers constantly reviewed performance related to CPPs and were informed that cumulative data over a longer period gave a more accurate reflection of performance than data for quarter 1 only;
- v. Members were informed that the County Council performed well in terms of the number of annual health checks completed, although young people had the right to refuse the offer of a check should they wish. Regarding initial health assessments of children and young people, Members were pleased to hear that 100% of those due last month were completed and noted that this would not be the case for this current month as some young people had refused the health assessment and four children were placed out of county, which brought delays due to working with other health authorities. Not all children received a dental check as some were too young at under 4 years old and others had refused the offer. Members were informed that there was close management and monitoring of each child to ensure that checks were carried out where possible;
- vi. Regarding the variance in performance data for ‘% of Care Leavers in suitable accommodation’ compared to the previous quarter, Members were informed that improvements had been made to the consistency of recording methods. However, the data was also affected by a range of circumstances, including those care leavers who chose to return home but did not have their own room or bed and also those young people who were in custody; both of which were deemed to be in unsuitable accommodation;
- vii. Data related to the rise in the number of children refused an initial assessment for an Education and Health Care Plan had not been included in the performance report for Quarter 1 as updated data was not available.

RESOLVED:

That the Quarter 1 2017/18 Performance Report be noted.

24. Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Families concerning the annual report of the Independent Reviewing Officer with regard to children in care and those subject to child protection planning, for the period 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017. A copy of the report marked “Agenda Item 12” is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) A more robust system, with increased management oversight, had been introduced to manage the process of ending a Child Protection Plan (CPP); a number of criteria must be met before a Plan could end. Members were assured that the improvements introduced would positively impact on the process for ending a CPP, although it would take some time for this to be reflected in the performance data;
- ii) Officers worked closely with the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), who now had a more strengthened and robust position within the Children and Families

Department. The IRO was involved at the closure stage of a CPP and ensured that the correct resources were in place moving forward;

- iii) A recent audit of CPPs which were due to end had been undertaken to identify best practice in managing plans and supporting children; the lessons learned would be used to target appropriate support and preventative action for Children in Need;
- iv) Following the OFSTED inspection, Officers had developed appropriate methods of communicating with Children in Care which encouraged them to engage with and participate in the review process;
- v) Regarding the challenges detailed in section 1.7 of the Independent Reviewing Officer Service Annual Report 2016-17, Members were informed that a more robust system was in place, which included a review of all children in care who were subject to a S20 voluntary accommodation arrangement and the requirement for Social Workers to present to the Permanence Panel details of plans for the child concerned;
- vi) A formal process had been developed for Special Guardianship Orders and this would be operational from January 2018.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer 2016-17 be noted;
- b. That the Child Protection Panel be recommended to consider the current arrangements and process for transitioning children from a child protection plan at a future meeting.

25. Leicestershire Fostering and Adoption Service Statutory Quality Assurance and Performance Reports 2016 - 2017.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Families which detailed the activity of the Leicestershire and Rutland Adoption Agency and the Leicestershire Fostering Service during the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 13" is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) The County Council operated a good quality and efficient adoption service, which was more cost effective than other local authority areas. More adoptive families were being sought so as to achieve best outcomes for children and young people. An additional 70 adoptive families were required to meet demand for placements and achieve a good match for children and work to recruit these was well underway and making good progress;
- ii) Members were informed that the ethnicity of foster carers reflected the ethnic mix of the children and young people seeking placements; this enabled their cultural and language needs to be met;
- iii) Officers worked closely with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and provided a good package of support to foster carers which included

individual training programmes, dedicated placement support and an out of hours support line. The recruitment campaign to attract new foster carers included more promotion of the support available to them;

- iv) The funding available to foster carers varied and reflected the skill level of the fosterer carer required, the complexity and need of the child and the circumstances of the placement. Recently, new foster carers had come forward from outside of Leicestershire, prompted by the good quality support offered to foster carers by the County Council. Plans were in place to develop the service further in the future to continue to attract foster carers;
- v) Officers had found it increasingly difficult to find placements for children, and looked to a wide variety of solutions to do so, which included the use of Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA). A specialist consultant was being used to support officers in developing and expanding the in-house fostering service to ensure that demand could be met and where possible the use of more costly IFA placements be avoided. Good progress was being made and the Children and Families Service was confident of meeting its growth targets.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the activity and performance of the Leicestershire Fostering and Adoption Service during the period 2016-17 be noted;
- b. That a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee detailing plans to expand and develop the in-house fostering service.

26. Dates of future meetings.

It was noted that future meetings of the Committee were scheduled to take place at 1.30pm on the following dates:

- 13 November 2017
- 15 January 2018
- 5 March 2018
- 4 June 2018
- 10 September 2018
- 12 November 2018

2.00pm – 4.35pm
11 September 2017

CHAIRMAN

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**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE - 13 NOVEMBER 2017**

**PROPOSALS TO CONSULT ON REMOVAL (CLOSURE) OF
RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES AT MAPLEWELL HALL SPECIAL
SCHOOL**

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

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the views of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the use of residential facilities at the Maplewell Hall Special School. The Committee is asked to note the proposals for removal (closure) of the residential facilities at the school with effect from September 2018 and to consider the consultation responses. The Committee's comments will be submitted to the Cabinet meeting on 24 November 2017.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The statutory guidance for making prescribed alterations to maintained schools was re-issued by the Department for Education (DfE) in April 2016. The guidance allows for either the Local Authority or governing body of a community special school to propose the removal of boarding (residential) provision, requiring that a statutory process be followed.
3. At its meeting on 15 September 2017, the Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services which sought approval to consult on the removal of the residential facilities at the Maplewell Hall Special School from September 2018. At the meeting it was resolved:
 - (a) That the current position regarding the use of the residential facilities at the Maplewell Hall Special School be noted;
 - (b) That the commencement of informal/pre-consultation, as part of the statutory prescribed alterations process, on a proposal to remove (close) the residential facilities with effect from the start of the school year in September 2018, be approved;

- (c) That a further report be submitted to the Cabinet on 24 November 2017 on the outcomes of the consultation referred to in (b) above in order to determine the next steps.

Background

4. Maplewell Hall Special School, built in 1857 and located in Woodhouse Eaves, currently has capacity for 195 pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), in addition to a 10 bedroom residential facility. The school has maintained status and is therefore directly controlled by the Local Authority.
5. The school caters predominantly for pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) having 183 pupils on roll, including 20 pupils within a designated Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) facility.
6. The school currently receives an allocation of £293,000 per annum (from the High Needs Block) to support the residential provision.
7. Discussions with the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors indicate that the funding provided is used to support extended school activities with regular pupil sleep-overs. This is intended to support curriculum enrichment, but is not designated as either respite or short break provision. Figures provided by the school indicate that the residential facility was used by up to 24 students per night Monday to Thursday, with each student having 12-14 nights' attendance per school year. The number of available beds has now been reduced to below 20, as two of the bedrooms have been taken out of use due to concerns identified during fire risk assessments. More recent information provided by the school, confirms that for the last academic year 69 pupils used the residential facilities; this equates to 37% of the school population i.e. approximately 1 in 3 of the pupils.
8. There are no pupils placed at Maplewell Hall Special School who are assessed as having a need for residential provision stated in their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). These plans are reviewed annually and this has been the case since 2015. EHCPs are plans for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support. They identify education, health and social needs and set out the additional support to meet those needs.
9. The closure of the residential facilities in September 2018 would allow for phased removal, assessments to be undertaken (where required) and adequate measures of support to be put in place (where appropriate) for families and pupils affected by the change.

Statutory Process

10. The process for the closure of a residential provision is defined by the School organisation legislation and the associated Statutory Guidance relating to Opening and Closing Maintained Schools as published by the DfE in April 2016. In summary, the process recommends as good practice:-

- A period of informal/ pre-consultation for a minimum of six weeks. This is the consultation that has just been undertaken jointly by Children and Family Service officers and Maplewell Hall Special School.

The relevant regulations require:-

- Subsequent publication of a Statutory Notice by the Local Authority following consideration of the consultation findings. If Cabinet resolves to proceed with the proposals, it is expected this would commence in mid-January 2018.
- A period of representation (formal consultation) of four weeks.
- A decision to be taken by the Local Authority to determine the Statutory Notice. This decision could be taken by the Director of Children and Family Services following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member unless there are significant objections, in which case the matter would be referred to the Cabinet for decision. It is likely this would be mid-February 2018.
- Implementation of the proposals.

Consultation procedures

11. The consultation comprises two stages; the first a period of informal/pre-consultation which has extended for six weeks, and the second a period of formal consultation extending for four weeks following the publication of the statutory notice (this is defined under the statutory process as the representation period).
12. The formal consultation process will be carried out with the following:
 - Parents and pupils
 - The governing body of the school
 - Teachers and other staff at the school
 - The respective Trade Unions and Professional Associations
 - Leicestershire Special School Headteacher (LSSH) group
 - The local MP; Edward Agar
 - Any other stakeholders/professionals having an interest in the residential element of the school.
13. The consultation to date involves writing to the above individuals and groups to seek their views. In addition, information has been placed on the School's website accompanied by further guidance by way of 'frequently asked questions'. The opportunity has so far been provided for parents to attend two open meetings at the school, and a discussion has taken place with the student council.
14. Following the statutory representation period (of four weeks) the proposals must be determined within two months by the Local Authority.

Outcome of informal/pre-consultation period

15. The informal/pre-consultation period ended on 29 October 2017. By the close of this first stage of consultation there had been 252 responses.
16. An 'e' petition and a paper petition, signed by 11,592 people, was presented to the County Council on Friday 27 October 2017.
17. At the time of writing this report the results of the consultation are being evaluated and will be reported in detail, via a presentation, to Members at the Committee meeting on 13 November 2017.

Resource Implications

18. It is expected that the revenue costs associated with the proposals and process for removal of the residential facilities, if implemented, will be met from within existing service budgets, and this will largely be funded by the Children and Family Service School Organisation Service. However, further revenue costs may arise to provide any individual support to families and pupils as a consequence of the removal of facilities – these costs have yet to be quantified and would be met through the High Needs Budget or County Council funding, depending on the need identified.
19. Initial discussions with the school suggest that any staff displaced by the closure of the residential facility, are likely to be redeployed to other posts within the school which should avoid the need for any redundancy payments. The policy for redundancy costs at maintained schools requires that schools submit a business case which will be considered for financial support through the departmental Premature Retirement Costs (PRC) budget; this is a contribution only towards the cost.
20. The full year saving to the High Needs Budget (HNB) will be £293,000. For the 2018/19 financial year, assuming removal of the facilities from September 2018, the partial saving is projected at £170,900.

Timetable for Decisions

21. The Cabinet will, at its meeting on 24 November 2017, consider whether to proceed with the publication of the Statutory Notice (as referred to in paragraph 10 above) and a further four week period of consultation. This would commence in mid-January 2018. As the petition has exceeded 10,000 signatures, a report setting out the decision of the Cabinet will be presented to the next full meeting of the County Council on 6 December 2017.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

Mrs D. Taylor CC

Officers to contact

Paul Meredith, Director of Children and Family Services
Tel 0116 305 7441 email: paul.meredith@leics.gov.uk

Jane Moore, Assistant Director, Education and Early Help
Tel. 0116 305 2649 email: jane.moore@leics.gov.uk

David Atterbury, Head of Service (Education Sufficiency)
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Relevant Impact Assessments**Equality and Human Rights Implications**

22. The underlying purpose of the proposals is to ensure a more equitable use of the HNB budget to meet priorities for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.
23. Consultation with those affected by the proposed closure of the residential provision will ensure that all proper considerations are given to the equality of opportunity for those affected.
24. In keeping with the Public Sector Equality Duty, an Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) for the proposed change has been completed and will be revised accordingly to reflect the results of the first stage of consultation. The EHRIA will help address any necessary support for pupils and parents arising as a consequence of the closure of the residential facility. The Assessment so far confirms the need to ensure that adequate support is offered to pupils and families (via a social care assessment if deemed appropriate) and to give advice on alternative activities in the community. In addition the school will be encouraged to continue to develop their offer in respect of extra-curricular activities to enhance learning and development.

Risk Assessment

25. The removal of the residential provision will not present any significant risk to either the sustainability of the Maplewell Hall Special School or the educational outcomes for any pupils who attend.
26. Any risks to the Council arising from the proposals will be kept under review by officers within the Children and Family Service.

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CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

13 NOVEMBER 2017

EARLY SUPPORT AND INCLUSION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the current position with the Early Support and Inclusion contract the Department has with Menphys and to note the plan for the delivery of these services post-December 2017.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. Under the Children Act 1989, children and young people with disabilities are defined as *Children in Need* and therefore eligible for an assessment.
3. In April 2011 the short break duty came into effect and created a legal duty on Local Authorities in England to provide a range of short break services including:
 - Overnight care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere.
 - Daytime care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere.
 - Educational or leisure activities for disabled children outside their homes.
 - Services available to assist carers in the evenings, at weekends and during the schools holidays.
4. Under the Children and Families Act 2014 (the SEND reforms), Local Authorities have a duty to support children and young people with Special Educational Needs to facilitate their development and help them achieve the best possible outcomes.
5. At its meeting on 15 September 2017, the Cabinet considered an urgent report of the Director of Children and Family Services concerning the Council's current position in relation to the Early Support and Inclusion contract the Department had with Menphys and plans for the delivery of the services post December 2017. The report was urgent because the issue had

arisen after the agenda for the Cabinet meeting had been published and the subject needed to be addressed at the earliest opportunity. At this meeting, the Cabinet resolved:-

- (a) That delivery of the Early Support and Inclusion Services on the basis of in-house provision be approved;
- (b) That Menphys be advised that the Council's contract and procurement rules do not allow a further extension to the contract, and the Council is under no obligation to re-tender the provision as Menphys has requested.

Background

6. The Children and Family Services Department provides a range of services to children with disabilities and their families. This includes the commissioning of services for Early Support and Inclusion. The provision of such services aims to address equality issues for disabled children and help improve access to provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their parent/carers across Leicestershire's diverse communities.
7. The County Council has commissioned Early Support and Inclusion services from Menphys since 2003, with an initial contract value of £80,000 increasing to £213,700 for the most recent contract, awarded in 2009 and extended to the end of March 2017.
8. In October 2016, the Children and Family Services Department developed a new specification to tender for Early Support and Inclusion Services to be delivered from April 2017. The specification was revised, due to the removal of the requirement to provide brokerage of summer play schemes, and the contract value was set at £170,000. The funding previously allocated for this element is now used to undertake the brokerage in house.
9. The aim of the tender specification was:
 - a) To deliver good quality Early Support to disabled children/young people and parent/carers living in Leicestershire, providing the necessary help for coordination, that can improve accessibility.
 - b) To provide a good range of opportunities for disabled children/young people to access fun and adventurous activities.
 - c) To provide signposting, advice and support for disabled children/young people and parent/carers on accessible resources. Further to this basic requirement, the information should be without delay and available in places where families with children routinely go.
 - d) To provide support and information that focuses on issues and updates regarding economic and social wellbeing matters, as they relate to (or affect) disabled children/young people and parent/carers

i.e. benefit advice, counselling advice, housing advocacy, volunteering opportunities, training and employment opportunities.

10. The procurement process closed on 20 December 2016 and Menphys was the only provider to apply for the contract. The bid was accompanied by a letter from Menphys that stated, in its opinion, that Menphys was unable to provide this service for the budget outlined in the Invitation to Tender. As a result, it was not possible to award the contract as part of this procurement process with a contract value that would have been materially different to the contract value stated in the Invitation to Tender.
11. In order to ensure there was no gap in the provision of services for children with disabilities and their families, it was agreed to extend the contract with Menphys (that was due to expire on 31 March 2017) for 6 months plus an optional 3 months - up to December 2017. During this period it was agreed that a full service review and needs assessment would be undertaken to determine the future commissioning of the services and consider all options for delivery.

Service Review

12. As part of the service review the Department worked with Menphys to look at the services it has delivered and the thresholds applied in delivering the work.
13. The majority of referrals received by Menphys came directly from parents (62%) and only 16% came through the Children and Family Services Department. 92% of the referrals to Menphys were for benefits or other financial advice and for information about play and leisure activities, short breaks and play schemes and only 8% were for early support (one-to-one support).
14. Additionally, already located within the Early Help Services in the Department are the SEND Local Offer and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) which provides information, advice, support and services to children with disabilities and special educational needs and their families. These services have been running alongside the Menphys Service for a number of years.
15. The revised specification for the contract, developed in March 2017, stated that referrals were expected to come from families through a request for services to the Department, to ensure the correct threshold was applied in delivering services to children with SEND and their families. Referrals are not a matter for the provider of the services.
16. It is intended that in future all referrals for information, advice and support for children with disabilities and SEND will come through the Department's Early Help Hub in order to have a single route for families to assess need and provide the required support at the correct threshold, thereby ensuring assessment is undertaken to identify need and duplication of delivery is reduced.

Planned in-house provision

17. Over the last year the Children and Family Services Department has strengthened its response in the delivery of early help services for children with SEND. The Department is confident that it is able to deliver the necessary services in the revised specification in-house, alongside other services already delivered in the Department. This option makes more effective use of resources through the utilisation and expansion of existing Early Help processes and will provide a single point of contact for families.
18. The further development of the Early Help Hub will allow the provision of information and advice, access to more specialist short break services, and information about universal and targeted play and leisure services. For families who need additional support or where needs are not sufficiently clear, an Early Help assessment will be undertaken in order to identify needs and deliver required support through groups or on a one-to-one basis.
19. The Department will be able to deliver all services in the specification detailed in para 15 above in-house, utilising existing resources and adding capacity through the employment of a number of key posts utilising the Early Support and Inclusion funding of £170k as follows:-
 - 2 x SEND Early Help Family Support Officer– £70,000
 - SEND Development/Inclusion Officer – £45,000
 - Benefits training to staff in the early Help Hub- £2,000
 - Training and support to universal providers - £20,000
20. The above posts do not fully commit the existing resources available as ongoing planning is still taking place in partnership with health colleagues around support for children with complex health needs.
21. Notice has been given to Menphys in respect of the present contract extension. This will end on 31 December 2017 in order to enable further analysis and consultation to take place with Menphys and the families that Menphys is currently supporting to ensure their needs can be met.

Menphys Request

22. In July 2017, Menphys wrote to Mr. Ivan Ould CC, in his capacity as Lead Member for Children and Family Services to request a further extension to the current contract (to March 2018) and with a request that the County Council tender again with the £170,000 specification for the Early Support and Inclusion contract, with a start date of April 2018. The letter indicated that if the County Council were to do so, Menphys would be in a position to submit a compliant bid.
23. The County Council was unable to agree any further extension to the contract, as to do so would be in breach of contract procedure rules. Menphys was also advised that following the service review that has taken place over the

last six months, the County Council was no longer looking to procure those services externally.

24. Menphys has subsequently raised concerns in correspondence and through lobbying that it believes that the County Council decision will result in reduced and poorer services for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Resource Implications

25. Legal advice is being sought in order to establish whether TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)) arrangements will apply to the staff employed by Menphys at present. The Council's Legal Services are working with the Children and Family Services Department to compare the current specification against the planned in-house service in order to advise if TUPE applies.

Conclusion

26. The Children and Family Services Department is confident that the proposals put forward to deliver the Early Support and Inclusion Services in-house will ensure services to those children with special educational needs and disabilities and their families remain strong. The Department is also confident that service delivery will be further strengthened through the join up with existing Early Help and Family Support Services. The Department has been and continues to work with Menphys to identify those families who are currently in receipt of a service from Menphys to ensure there is no gap in provision when the contract ends in December 2017.

Background Papers

Report to Cabinet 15 September 2017 -

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MIId=4863&Ver=4>

Circulation Under Local Issues Alert Procedure

None.

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List of Appendices

Appendix A - Letter from Menphys dated 8 August 2017.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

27. The service currently provided works with vulnerable children, young people and families in the County. The above proposals for delivery provide a more holistic approach to the identification of need and delivery of services to meet the identified need. An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment was undertaken in October 2016 as part of the original commissioning process for the new specification. This impact assessment will be re visited in light of the decision to bring the services in-house.



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Patron: Her Grace Frances, Duchess of Rutland
 President: Jennifer, Lady Gretton, D.C.V.O., J.P., H.M. Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire

«Name»
 «Address_1»
 «Address_2»
 «Address_3»
 «Town»
 «County»
 «Post_Code»

08, August 2017

Dear

Challenges faced by Menphys in its relationship with Leicestershire County Council

I am writing to you and to all Leicestershire Members of Parliament to canvass your support and hopefully intervention in issues that Menphys (a registered charity supporting children and young people with disabilities and their families in Leicestershire) is experiencing in its relationship with Leicestershire County Council. Firstly I would like to provide you with a brief history of our charity and secondly explain the challenges which we are now facing and the potential consequences for the disabled community in the county if the County Council pursues its present policy.

Menphys was formed in 1970, initially to provide brief respite care for parents and carers with disabled babies and toddlers. We rapidly became a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. During the seventies the need for support for disabled children under the age of five was identified and a nursery school was built. Menphys acquired the land for this purpose in Launceston Road, Wigston and raised over £500,000 via fund raising events and public donations. This nursery school known as the Menphys Centre (a maintained nursery school) celebrated its 40th anniversary this summer at an event attended by our patron and president. The charity retains the freehold of the Menphys Centre and has granted a long lease to the County Council at a peppercorn rent, the Council being responsible for the maintenance and repair of the property. Despite this the Council has had difficulty in maintaining the property to a reasonable standard and three years ago the charity was asked to pay for repairs and improvements. The cost of these works was £92,000 which the charity raised and provided from its reserves.

In the late 1980s the need for a second nursery school for disabled children in the county was identified. Leicestershire C.C. provided land adjoining Sketchley Hill Primary School in Burbage and Menphys set to raising nearly £700,000 to build a second nursery school, which was opened in 1992. Both nursery schools are maintained by the County Council and the staff are employed by the Council. The links between the charity and the nursery schools remains strong; the charity often supporting fundraising efforts to improve the facilities at both schools.

The activities of Menphys and the way we support disabled children and young people is set out in our website (www.menphys.org.uk). For over twenty years our main activity has been the support we have given to the disabled community via the Menphys Special Outreach Service (SOS). From our base in Whetstone our outreach workers provide support and guidance to families with disabled youngsters throughout Leicestershire and Leicester. During this time we have supported 5280 families and last year alone (2016/17) we assisted 450 families. My fellow trustees and myself have received many unsolicited testimonials from council officers and members, as well as from parents and carers. The gist of these testimonials has been, the Council cannot provide such a professional and caring service as that provided by Menphys and certainly not as economically and as efficiently as Menphys does. In 2013 an independent assessment of the added value provided by Menphys showed that for every £1 spent on Menphys SOS, over £7.20 benefit was provided to the disabled community.

For many years SOS has held a contract with Leicestershire County Council to provide the outreach service. From 2013 to 2015 the Council paid Menphys £213,700 p.a. for this service and in 2015 the contract was extended for a further two years to March 2017, however no additional funding was provided and Menphys continued to receive £213,700 p.a. It was acknowledged by council officers that the benefit to the Council exceeded this sum and further that Menphys subsidised the service from its own fundraising and reserves.

In autumn 2016 we were advised that the service provided so effectively by Menphys over many years was to be put out to competitive tender. This was accepted by us and we advised the Council that we intended to bid for the contract. We were asked to provide details of the outreach workers who provided the service since a successful bidder (other than Menphys) would have to take over these members of our staff under the Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment (TUPE) legislation. Prior to submitting our bid members of our staff attended presentations, together with other potential bidders, made by council officers, where we were advised to be imaginative in our bid. However we were advised that the two year contract of offer was only for the sum of £170,000 p.a., although the Council expected the successful bidder to provide much the same service as Menphys had provided for the last four years when payments of £213,700 p.a. had been received. We submitted a bid offering to perform the responsibilities we had successfully discharged for many years, but suggesting that as in recent years we had needed to subsidise the service to the tune of approximately £40,000 p.a. from public donations, we could not increase this subsidy to approximately £85,000 or more allowing for the effects of inflation. Our bid was

made on the basis that the consideration on offer would be the figure we had received for the last four years i.e. £213,700.

In mid-February we were advised that our bid was non-compliant and were invited to a meeting at County Hall with council officers. At this meeting we were advised that our bid was non-compliant as we were not prepared to accept a yearly amount on offer and further that no other bids for the contract had been made. The officers attending this meeting stated that they had no strategy in place to cover the eventuality of there being no compliant bids (the Menphys contract coming to an end on 31st March 2017) , that they were inexperienced and had little or no knowledge of the services that Menphys had been providing to the community of disabled children. The officers stated that they were intending to carry out a review and asked for the assistance of Menphys in carrying out this review. Menphys realising that without our input into this review there was the potential for our clients to be disadvantaged by the Council's lack of preparation, agreed to assist. We anticipated that there would be a realisation at County Hall that there was considerable merit in the local authority and Menphys working together. This was particularly true in respect of summer play schemes for disabled children, the Council having made no provision whatsoever for this feature which is so vital for parents of disabled children over the summer school holidays. Even in February parents and carers were expressing concerns at the failings of the County Council in this regard. After considerable delays by the Council they agreed to extend Menphys' existing contract until 30th September 2017 at a consideration of £106,850 for this six month period, with the Council holding an option to extend this for a further three months to 31st December at a pro rata consideration.

Menphys' officers have met with Council officers monthly since as part of the supposed review process. However it soon became clear that the Council officers were intending to take the service provided by Menphys in house and wanted Menphys to assist them to do so. It was the view of my fellow trustees and myself that to take the service in house would not benefit the children we serve, nor would any cost savings be generated for the Council. I requested a meeting with Ivan Ould CC (lead member for Children and Young People Services) and the Director. This meeting was held on 2nd June attended by Ivan Ould , his deputy Trevor Pendleton CC , senior officers of the County Council and Rob Wade (Menphys trustee) and myself.

On behalf of Menphys I presented the case that Menphys believed that what the Council was working towards was a much reduced and poorer service for disabled children and further that in effect the Council would overall be expending further monies by its strategy rather than effecting cost savings. The council officers refused to accept that by taking the service in house the Council would be faced with considerable costs of TUPE taking on the Menphys staff presently providing the service. It is fair to say that in recent weeks there has been some reconsideration by the Council on this point. During the meeting a council officer stated that the Council wished to work in partnership with Menphys. When asked what monies the Council was prepared to commit to this partnership the reply was nothing. It was said that at some time in future years the Council may wish to commission some service from Menphys. I had to point out to the council officers that if the Council was not prepared to offer any monies for the foreseeable future, Menphys would inevitably have to make

staff redundant and that there would be no professional Menphys team for the Council to commission in years to come. Menphys cannot suffer a loss of income of £213,700 p.a. and continue to employ staff in the possibly forlorn hope that the County Council may wish to purchase some services in the distant future. Unfortunately the council officers showed a lack of understanding of this point.

On 11th July I wrote to Ivan Ould with a proposal that I believed was both beneficial to the children we serve and to the Council. I proposed that Menphys would continue to provide its existing service under the extended contract until 31st December 2017 and would then continue with the service until 31st March 2018, but would not receive any payment from the Council for the period 1st January to 31st March 2018. This would equate to the sum of £170,000 which the Council has already allocated for 2017/18. During the autumn of this year the Council would put the service provided by Menphys out to tender for 2018/19 with a consideration of £170,000; this sum already having been allocated in the tender process in autumn of last year. Menphys would bid for this contract and any other provider would be free to do so. On 2nd August I received an email from Ivan Ould stating that he had every confidence in the council officers and a letter from a senior officer rejecting this proposal. The reasons for doing so I believe are flawed. Although the council officer insists that the Council wishes to continue to work in partnership with Menphys they appear to require our charity to subsidise the Council to an even greater degree.

In the very near future I anticipate that the strategy of the Council will come into the public domain as we will have to advise the families we support and our staff as to the changes that we will have to make to protect the rest of the valuable work we carry out for disabled children. Already, mainly as a result of the failings of the County Council relating to this year's summer play schemes, numerous complaints and concerns about the Council have been received by Menphys and have been passed to Ivan Ould as a result of his request that they be forwarded to him. I believe that these complaints will escalate in the coming months.

I shall be obliged if you will use your good offices to attempt to persuade the County Council of the very real benefits of my proposal to Ivan Ould of 11th July. I recognise that we are in a period of austerity. The needs of austerity have been addressed in my proposal and indeed in the view of my trustees and myself the Council is not only intending to offer to the disabled children of Leicestershire a much reduced and poorer service, but is putting the council tax payers of Leicestershire to greater expense.

If there are any points set out above upon which you would like clarification please ring me on my home number 0116 2858664 or I will be happy to meet you in your constituency office. I apologise for this long and detailed letter but I believe that to understand the issues fully this information is needed.

Yours sincerely

Ian Knight, Chair
Tel: 0116 2858664 and Email; idknight@btinternet.com



**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
13 NOVEMBER 2017**

**CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION
STRATEGY**

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the development of a Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Children's Social Care. The Committee is asked to note the content of this report.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The actions which are currently being considered within the development of the Children's Social Care Recruitment and Retention Strategy can all be implemented within current Council policy.
3. It is possible that further recommendations to implement one off payments such as recruitment or retention payments could be proposed. The Council Pay Policy does not currently have provision for one-off payments and therefore the policy would need to be amended to enable this.

Background

4. A BBC News item from April 2016 (see Background Papers below) highlighted a range of national issues within children's social worker recruitment and retention. The report detailed that almost 20% of all children's social worker jobs were vacant across England. Key points within the report were that almost as many individuals starting in social work posts were leaving social work and that more than a quarter of social workers had less than 2 years' experience.
5. The Children's Social Work Recruitment and Retention Strategy is being developed to respond to an increase in spend on agency workers, challenges in directly recruiting staff and to support the Children and Families Department in adequately resourcing services to meet OFSTED requirements.
6. In developing the Children's Social Work Recruitment and Retention Strategy, the following data has been analysed:
 - HR and payroll data
 - Salary data from other councils
 - 2017 staff survey results
 - Starter and leaver information

- Agency usage and costing data

and these findings related to the recruitment and retention of Children's Social Care staff in the last 12 months Have been addressed in the Strategy.

7. The following strengths have been highlighted:

- At service level there have not been any significant increases in turnover;
- The percentage headcount of experience(level 3) Social Workers has increased;
- The level of turnover of Team Managers and Independent Reviewing Officers has been low.

8. Within the Strategy, areas of concern that have been identified for the Children's Social Care recruitment and retention position over the last 12 months are summarised as:

- an increasing number of Senior Practitioners choosing to leave the Council;
- a high level of turnover of experienced (level 3) Social Workers, and Senior Practitioners;
- the salary for level 3 Social Workers, Senior Practitioners, Independent Review Officers and Team Managers is currently behind the market median;
- a high number of Team Manager vacancies and poor interest in current advertised posts;
- having to regularly re-advertise posts due to poor response;
- regularly losing candidates at later stages of selection due to pay or being offered financial incentives to stay with their current employer;
- absence of regularly collected and monitored leaver data;
- current high usage of agency staff in First Response, Strengthening Families and Child Protection teams;
- other Local Authorities offering more attractive professional development support;
- the role and status of Independent Review Officers requiring review against statutory guidance and other Local Authority models;
- 2017 staff survey results indicating that job satisfaction and work/life balance are of significant importance for individuals working in Children's Social Care. However, responses to questions in these areas were less positive than the Children and Families Departmental average.

Recommendations under consideration

9. In taking into account the findings above, the following recommendations are being considered:

- Review of grading or market premium for specific posts where appropriate;
- Improvements in recruitment marketing resources and approach;
- Improvements in the collection and review of recruitment and retention data;
- Alternatives to agency Social Worker usage;
- Allocated time for professional development;
- Targeted actions to address issues raised in the 2017 staff survey;
- Review of the Assessed and Support Year in Employment (ASYE) development programme (for newly qualified Social Workers in their first year

of employment), the core children's social care development programme and children's social career progression model;

- Utilisation of the apprenticeship levy to appoint Social Work apprentices.

Next steps

10. A draft of the Children's Social Care Recruitment and Retention Strategy will be completed and agreed by the Children and Family Departmental Management Team by December 2017. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be updated on the progress of this strategy during updates on the Ofsted Continuous Improvement Action Plan.

Background Papers

BBC news article 'England children's social worker post almost 20% vacant' 20/04/2016
www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-36026098

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Equality and Human Rights Implications

An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment will be completed for the draft Children's Social Care Recruitment and Retention Strategy before completion in December 2017.

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**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE - 13 NOVEMBER 2017**

**PROGRESS REPORT: OFSTED CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT
ACTION PLAN 2017 - 2020 - THE ROAD TO EXCELLENCE**

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

Purpose of report

1. To inform the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee of progress made against the OFSTED Continuous Improvement Action Plan. The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report and the progress made.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. At its meeting on 11 September 2017, the Committee received a report on the OFSTED Continuous Improvement Action Plan and supported the approval, by Cabinet, of the growth bid for Children and Family Services for £2.5m for the 2018/19 financial year. The Committee asked the Director of Children and Family Services submit a report to the next meeting of the Committee setting out details of timeframes and milestones related to the actions in the OFSTED Continuous Improvement Plan.

Background

3. The Single Inspection of Children's Social Care was undertaken in November 2016 and 17 recommendations were made for improvement. The resulting Action Plan - "The Road to Excellence" 2017 – 2020 was developed. This report outlines progress made against the Action Plan in addressing the recommendations made by OFSTED.
4. The Action Plan addresses the OFSTED's findings by providing a strategic vision for improvement that is founded on four aims:
 - i. Being a Learning Organisation
 - ii. Embedding Excellent Practice
 - iii. Taking the Right Action at the Right Time, and
 - iv. Developing Policy and Performance

The Action Plan and progress made against each OFSTED recommendation to date is attached at Appendix A.

5. Appendix A uses a RAG rating to indicate progress as follows:

- green – shows good progress and moving towards completion;
- amber – on track to deliver in a longer agreed timescale; and
- red – areas requiring further focused work.

The ratings provide a judgement of what evidence exists to demonstrate the departmental response to a recommendation, with some consideration given to the progress of planned actions. This evidence is largely taken from performance and business intelligence data and findings from quality assurance audits that are used together to monitor the progress of the Action Plan.

6. The summary of ratings is:

- 5 recommendations are rated Green
- 12 recommendations are rated Amber
- 0 recommendations are rated Red

The recommendations vary in scale and scope and therefore some areas, especially those that start at a lower baseline, require longer timescales to produce demonstrable evidence of improvement. Progress is monitored via a monthly meeting of senior and middle managers that is chaired by the Assistant Director of Children's Social Care.

7. **Highlights of progress are:**

- i) A review of all processes and procedures in First Response has been undertaken to ensure a timely and proportionate response to all children;
- ii) The level of Children in care with three or more placement moves has improved from 10.5% in September 2016 to 7.6% in September 2017;
- iii) 87% of children's cases that were audited in June 2017 were graded Good or Outstanding for management oversight;
- iv) The number of completed single assessments in September 2016 was 191 (90% were completed in 45 days). In September 2017, 390 assessments were completed (74.9% within 45 days). In real terms, this equates to 120 more assessments completed within timescale;
- v) The rate of re-referrals in September 2017 is 18.5% compared to 25.8% in September last year;
- vi) Published adoption scorecard measures on timeliness show:

- An average of 517 days from entering care to adoption; being less than the statistical neighbour average of 549;
 - An average of 195 days from court authority to place a child and the decision to match being less than the statistical neighbour average of 210;
- vii) The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) measure is in line with the England average at 16;
- viii) A refreshed Special Guardianship Order (SGO) process is now in place. In the last 12 months, 45 young people were discharged from care onto a SGO, an increase of 29 when compared to the point of inspection;
- ix) Care Leavers in suitable accommodation has sustained high performance at 91.8%, which is 11 percentage points above statistical neighbours;
- x) Around 37% of discharges from care have been a return home, which is better than both statistical neighbours and the England average;
- xi) Caseload sizes in many teams, e.g. First Response, Children in Care, Disabled Children Team and CSE are now all within agreed levels. Work is ongoing to address the situation in Child Protection and Strengthening Families teams.
- xii) The action plan attached as Appendix A outlines the progress made to date against all 17 OFSTED recommendations and the further planned work to achieve all targets as outlined in The Road to Excellence: Ofsted Continuous Improvement Plan 2017-2012.

Consultations

8. In developing the Continuous Improvement Plan, the Children and Family Services Department has engaged with partner agencies, primarily through the Local Safeguarding Children's Board where partners were able to feed in their views on the Plan.

Resource Implications

9. Resource implications of responding to the OFSTED inspection have already been agreed through the growth bid. These monies have been used to establish additional capacity across the service. The recruitment process is still ongoing so not all posts have been appointed to on a permanent basis.

Background Papers

- The OFSTED report: Leicestershire Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers - November to December 2016 <http://ow.ly/16uB30gfp7d>
- The Road to Excellence (Plan on a Page).
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s131466/Ofsted%20funding%20Appx%20A%20-%20Plan%20on%20a%20Page%20CIP.pdf>
- The Continuous Improvement OFSTED Action Plan.
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s131466/Ofsted%20funding%20Appx%20B%20-%20Continuous%20Improvement%20Plan.pdf>

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

10. None.

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List of Appendices

Appendix A – Progress against OFSTED recommendations as part of the OFSTED continuous Improvement action Plan 2017-2020- The Road to Excellence.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

11. Responding to the findings of the OFSTED inspection will improve services for all groups of children and families.

Progress against Ofsted recommendations as part of the Ofsted Continuous Improvement Action Plan 2017-2020- The Road to Excellence.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee November 2017

Ref.	Ofsted Recommendation	Progress RAG	Targets	Outturn Performance 2016/17	Performance Q2 17 or month	Target March 18	Target 2020	Evidence of Completion or Evidence of Progress by September 2017	Further Actions in progress	Lead Officer
1.	Ensure that performance management information is based on accurate data, so that all areas requiring improvement can be identified and progressed in a timely way.	A	<p>The service has a suite of performance reports that are accurate, up-to-date and enabling managers to evidence progress against key performance indicators. This will show good performance against statutory indicators enabling managers to see and immediately address any arising concerns.</p> <p>Measure All daily, weekly and monthly reports are in place by June 2017 for First Response, Child Protection and Children in Care.</p> <p>By March 2018, reports for Fostering & Adoption are developed in Tableau (currently manual).</p> <p>Annual returns for the Department of Education show LCC to be performing well against Statistical Neighbours and National Indicators.</p>	N/A	System generated	In place	In place	<p>Reports (daily, weekly and monthly) available for First Response, Disabled Children Team, Child Protection, Child Sexual Exploitation team and Children in Care.</p> <p>Accuracy of data is routinely monitored at Children's Social Care (CSC) monthly performance meeting. Managers increased access to Tableau reports are quickly highlighting performance and data inaccuracy as reports are 'live'. Delays in recording are addressed.</p> <p>Examples of progress made include :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children in care with three or more placement moves. This has improved from 10.5% in the same month last year to 7.6% this year (Sept 17). - Care leavers in suitable accommodation. This has improved from 72.7% in the same period last year to 91.8% this year. <p>Group established, chaired by Assistant Director Children's Social Care is progressing system generated reporting for Fostering & Adoption</p>	<p>Outreach performance management clinics to individual teams will be provided, with dates in the diary up to December 2017.</p> <p>Heads of Service are addressing any accuracy and inputting issues within teams.</p> <p>The annual statutory returns on CSC data will be used to monitor the extent to which accuracy is improving.</p> <p>Electronic reports (Tableau reporting) developed for Fostering & Adoption service by March 2018.</p>	<p>Business Intelligence Performance Manager – Emma Jones / Peter Worthington</p> <p>Assistant Director Children's Social Care – Sharon Cooke</p>

Ref.	Ofsted Recommendation	Progress RAG	Targets	Outturn Performance 2016/17	Performance Q2 17 or month	Target March 18	Target 2020	Evidence of Completion or Evidence of Progress by September 2017	Further Actions in progress	Lead Officer
2.	Ensure that management oversight of practice fully complies with supervision policy requirements and supports effective case progression and decision-making.	A	<p>Case decision processes consistently demonstrates robust management oversight. Evidence of good clear plans for children.</p> <p>Measure Weekly and monthly performance reports show good performance in timeliness of supervisions.</p> <p>Outcome of case file audits are graded good or outstanding for management decision and oversight.</p>	84% (Dec 16) N/A	85% (Aug 17) 87% (June 17)	87% 90%	90% 100%	<p>The frequency of supervision has been monitored on a monthly basis which has helped to secure a compliance of 85% across Early Help and Children's Social Care (Aug 17). Performance is affected by the recent turnover of staff whilst recruiting to permanent posts takes place.</p> <p>The quality of supervisions and management oversight is largely monitored through case file audit. Other options to explore quality and depth of supervision will be developed as part of work by the Principal Social Worker (PSW) role. (PSW post has now been recruited to and will be in post December 2017).</p> <p>87% of cases audited in June 2017 were graded Good or Outstanding for management oversight. Improvement work in this area is on track and will continue to be closely monitored.</p>	<p>Additional work required within Mosaic to enable monitoring of supervisions through Tableau reports is in progress.(March 18)</p> <p>Develop a learning programme for senior practitioners and team managers to include training and mentoring approaches to develop supervisory skills and competence.(June 2018)</p> <p>A focus on the quality of supervisions for Children in Care in line with Signs Of Safety (SOS) is embedded (April 2018)</p>	<p>Head of Service Field Social Work – Anita Gurry</p> <p>Head of Practice Excellence Moira O' Hagan -</p> <p>Head of Service Children in Care – Nicci Collins</p>

Ref.	Ofsted Recommendation	Progress RAG	Targets	Outturn Performance 2016/17	Performance Q2 17 or month	Target March 18	Target 2020	Evidence of Completion or Evidence of Progress by September 2017	Further Actions in progress	Lead Officer
3.	Ensure that when a child is allocated to a social worker this is reflected in the social worker's caseload and that caseload size and management capacity across the service facilitate good-quality social work.	A	<p>Social Work caseloads are within agreed numbers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessed & Supported Year in Employment 12 – 15 - Senior Practitioner 12 – 15 - Social Worker (full time) 18 - 20 <p>So ensuring capacity for social workers to complete well evidenced assessment and intervention in a timely way, showing that plans are progressed in a child's timeframe. Increase Social work and management capacity.</p> <p>Measure Monthly performance returns show that caseloads are within the numbers above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessed & Supported Year in Employment 12 – 15 - Senior Practitioner 12 – 15 - Social Worker (full time) 18 - 20 	During Ofsted visit in Dec 16, caseloads for SW averaged 20, but in First Response cases averaged 30.	Av 17 Av 18 Av 22 (Aug 17)	15 15 20	13 13 19	<p>The average number of cases per social worker has ranged from 17 to 19 cases since January 2017. There are some outliers to this with some individual workers showing caseloads in the early 20s. Agreed additional capacity will further address this.</p> <p>Management capacity has been sustained through interim arrangements and, more recently, permanent appointments. Permanent appointments include the Head of Service for Fieldwork, the Head of Practice Excellence, the First Response Service Manager and the Safeguarding Improvement Unit Service Manager.</p> <p>Social Worker caseloads within agreed number achieved in First Response, Disabled Children's team, CSE and Children in Care Teams.</p> <p>Child Protection and Strengthening Families include some teams / individuals experiencing caseloads in the early 20s. This is being addressed by additional capacity.</p> <p>Recruitment and retention work has been ongoing with the recruitment to a number of key posts. The recruitment to certain service areas and posts is proving more difficult. This is a national issue. This is being addressed via work on a recruitment and retention strategy.</p>	<p>Recruitment ongoing.</p> <p>Reduce the reliance on agency / interim staff by March 2018.</p> <p>Recruitment and Retention Strategy being developed (Nov 2017) as certain posts are proving difficult to recruit to on a permanent basis.</p> <p>Monthly reporting to senior management team on caseloads will continue to ensure robust oversight.</p>	Assistant Director Children's Social Care – Sharon Cooke

Ref.	Ofsted Recommendation	Progress RAG	Targets	Outturn Performance 2016/17	Performance Q2 17 or month	Target March 18	Target 2020	Evidence of Completion or Evidence of Progress by September 2017	Further Actions in progress	Lead Officer
4.	Review processes operating in the First Response Service to ensure the accurate recording of contacts, referrals, assessments and their timeliness.	G	<p>First Response demonstrates consistently a timely and proportionate response to children in line with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) threshold document and Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2015.</p> <p>Measure</p> <p>Weekly and monthly performance reports show progress in line with Statistical Neighbours and national average.</p> <p>Targets are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referrals – manager 24 hour decision – 100% Re-referral rate Assessments completed in 45 days 	17%	18.5%	15%	14%	<p>All processes within First Response reviewed following inspection. Revised and refreshed operating model in place to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the accurate recording of contacts and referrals good quality assessments delivered in timely manner. <p>Action plan in place to direct and oversee all work streams. Development planning group chaired by Assistant Director Children's Social Care in place since the inspection.</p> <p>On first impression would suggest the performance to hit the 45 day headline has declined. However, the number of completed assessments in September 2016 was 191 (90%) were completed in 45 days. In September 2017, 390 assessments were completed (74.9%) within 45 days. In real terms, this equates to 120 more assessments completed within timescale. Therefore this is a steadily improving picture.</p> <p>The accuracy of recording performance data In First Response is closely scrutinised through live reporting via Tableau. The throughput of work from contact to assessment is high and this does mean that there is sometimes delay in inputting of data. This is being addressed through additional social work capacity.</p> <p>Targeted work with Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) staff has meant they are feeling more supported and confident in their roles. The refocus of administration and business support has relieved some pressures and bottlenecks in the service.</p> <p>The review of the 'Out of Hours' (OOH) component has been completed with the new functional model beginning in May 2017. The consistency of the OOH service is improving and a dedicated team manager is in place working on shift with staff to oversee consistency and quality. The Out of Hours Handbook is currently being updated.</p> <p>Agency staff in place pending recruitment of staff to permanent posts.</p>	<p>Work on the development of an integrated multi-agency front door (March 2018).</p> <p>Agreed prioritisation and grading framework with the police focusing on proportionate and appropriate responses to domestic abuse notifications and referrals. New model in operation October 17.</p> <p>All permanent staff in First Response have undertaken updated training in domestic abuse. This programme is ongoing for new staff.</p> <p>Work in First Response to embed and evidence SOS (June 2018)</p> <p>Senior Management Team (SMT) review inspection visit to First Response is planned for November 2017.</p> <p>Independent review of First Response to be planned for the first quarter of 2018</p>	Head of Service Field Social Work – Anita Gurry

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5.	Ensure that practitioners and managers understand and apply thresholds appropriately at every stage of the child's journey.	G	<p>All cases show the threshold in line with the LSCB threshold document has been consistently applied and children have received a timely and proportionate response in line with their assessed needs.</p> <p>Measure Performance shows a low number of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Re-referrals - Repeat CP plans - Permanence plan in place / CIC by the second review – 100% 	17% (25% Q2)	18.5% (Sept 17) 23.6% (Q2)	22%	22%	<p>The application of appropriate thresholds is generally monitored through repeated social care involvement and case file audits.</p> <p>The rate of re-referrals in September 2017 is 18.5% compared to 25.8% in September last year.</p> <p>The proportion of repeat child protection plans to date is just under 25%. This has been monitored closely as proportions have fluctuated month-to-month and additional analysis has identified 80% of cases coming back on to a Plan after a period of over 2 years not on a plan.</p> <p>Audits of cases, including those completed on children entering care, demonstrate thresholds are being applied appropriately. However, where cases are centred around issues of neglect – particularly long standing neglect, thresholds are extremely challenging to apply consistently. Further work has been undertaken on the following aspects of work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early identification of neglect • Working with issues of neglect • The interface between Early Help and Social Care. 	<p>Development of a neglect resource pack (December 2017), to be used as a learning tool by managers in team meetings.</p> <p>Development of performance report in relation to permanence in plans at second review (April 2018).</p>	<p>Head of Service Children in Care – Nicci Collins</p> <p>Head of Service Field Social Work – Anita Gurry</p> <p>Head of Service Safeguarding, Improvement & Quality Assurance – Chris Nerini</p>

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6.	Ensure consistency in social work assessments, so that they are sufficiently in depth, are informed by good-quality chronologies, reflect the needs and identities of individual children, are updated regularly to take account of children's changing needs and circumstances and lead to outcome-focused plans.	A	<p>Performance reports evidence consistent use of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - chronologies, - assessment, - outcomes focused plans <p>Measure Quality audit demonstrates that all cases have an up-to-date chronology, assessment and outcome-focused plan.</p> <p>Overall good or outstanding</p> <p>Good quality plans</p>	N/A	39% (June 17)	80%	100%	<p>Practice standards for assessments have been developed as part of the Growing Quality in CSC framework. The standards, which have been introduced to all workers, set out clear expectations of good quality assessments across all service areas.</p> <p>A recent audit in First Response demonstrated that progress is being made in the number of cases having assessments graded good overall.</p>	<p>Further practice standards in development with a target of sign-off by SMT in October 2017.</p> <p>EIP2 funding for SOS awarded to the County Council in Sept 2017.</p> <p>Development of Growing Quality 'sister' frameworks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Growing Quality in Early Help - Growing Quality in Support Services <p>Work to improve the depth of practice is ongoing and will be supported by recent additional funding (Practice Excellence posts and social worker capacity to reduce caseloads). Pride in Practice conference for practitioners to showcase good practice and key developments planned for November 2017</p>	<p>Head of Service Field Social Work – Anita Gurry</p> <p>Head of Service Safeguarding, Improvement & Quality Assurance – Chris Nerini</p> <p>Head of Service Practice Excellence – Moira O'Hagan</p>

Ref.	Ofsted Recommendation	Progress RAG	Targets	Outturn Performance 2016/17	Performance Q2 17 or month	Target March 18	Target 2020	Evidence of Completion or Evidence of Progress by September 2017	Further Actions in progress	Lead Officer
7.	Strengthen arrangements for permanence planning to enable all children looked after to be provided with a permanent home and family without undue delay, wherever this is possible.	G	<p>Permanence plan for children evidenced on all cases. The plan will have been agreed and children will be living in secure and stable placements where their long term needs are met.</p> <p>Measure Permanence plan in place for Children in Care by second review.</p> <p>Up to date Pathway plan in place for all young people in Care or Care Leavers aged 15 plus.</p> <p>Number of Children in care with three or more placement moves reduces.</p> <p>The proportion of children in placements for 2 or more years or adopted increases.</p> <p>Published adoption scorecard measures on timeliness :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Average days from entering care to adoption being less than the statistical neighbour ○ Average of days from court authority to place a child and the decision to match being less than the statistical neighbour 	Manual report	*50%	100%	100%	<p>A Permanence Panel has been established to provide improved rigor and oversight to permanency planning. A practice summit on Permanency Planning was held in March 2017 to engage the workforce in a range of improvement workstreams (Special Guardianship Orders, Legal Planning Meetings and Connected Carers). All groups have been reviewing processes, guidance, communications to improve the quality and timeliness of permanency planning.</p> <p>Good progress has been made in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A review of the 'Edge of Care' model has been completed with a new model currently under consideration. - A multi-agency task and finish group has been established to revise stepdown procedures from Child Protection to Child in Need (CiN) - Refreshed CiN guidance has been published. A process to alert of drift and delay on Child Protection cases has been established <p>A rolling programme of case reviews is underway. Performance indicators for permanence show improved performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children in care with three or more placement moves. This has improved from 10.5% in the same month last year to 7.6% this year (Sept 17). - Published adoption scorecard measures on timeliness : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Average of 517 days from entering care to adoption being less than the statistical neighbour average of 549 ○ Average of 195 days from court authority to place a child and the decision to match being less than the statistical neighbour average of 210 <p>*The CiC Manager completed a full audit of Pathway Plans and confirmed that we have achieved 50% completion. There are 77 Pathway Plans that require updating by the end of March 2018, in line with the review cycle.</p> <p>The target for Pathway Plan completion is set at 100%, however there are young people who refuse to engage with their Pathway Plans or the creation of a Plan and this will impact on the figure. Initial indications are that this may equate</p>	<p>Permanency is a strand of the Growing Quality campaign for 2017/18.</p> <p>Permanency will be part of the service training and support offer.</p> <p>Audit with a focus on permanence pending second review to take place in November 2017.</p> <p>There is further developmental work to be done relating to the quality of the pathway plans – specifically improving outcome focus and reflection of the young person's aspirations and views.</p>	Head of Service Children in Care – Nicci Collins

Ref.	Ofsted Recommendation	Progress RAG	Targets	Outturn Performance 2016/17	Performance Q2 17 or month	Target March 18	Target 2020	Evidence of Completion or Evidence of Progress by September 2017	Further Actions in progress	Lead Officer
8.	Ensure that children looked after are able to access timely and appropriate support to meet their therapeutic needs.	G	<p>That children, who are assessed as requiring additional support to address emotional wellbeing /mental health, have their needs identified and a plan put in place to meet their needs results in placement stability.</p> <p>Measure Average Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire measure is in line with the national average – 16</p> <p>Completion rate of SDQ's</p> <p>Quality assurance audits evidence that a young person's emotional health and well-being is assessed and resources to address are in place.</p>	N/A	16	16	16	<p>The Dedicated Placements Support Team (DPST) has been instrumental in ensuring that the therapeutic needs of children in care are met. This is evident in improved placement stability performance measure of 7.6% (top quartile). The work of DPST includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 7 young people remaining in their current placement with intervention from support workers in the team - 3 young people remaining at home with their parents after previously entering care - 33 independent visitors being matched with young people in care <p>Our specialist foster carer provision successfully enables children to return home through solo placements and working intensively with carers/parents. This has been alongside establishing the Placement & Additional Resource Panel and Complex Care Panel with Health and Education services, where decisions are reached about placement requirements and the additional therapeutic services children need.</p> <p>For children in care who do not meet the threshold for CAMHS, we have provided funding for counselling sessions to a number of children. We also introduced CAMHS consultation sessions for carers, with sessions being booked months in advance. We have introduced more information/training and support at foster carer support groups (hubs) that address emotional health and reduced supervising social worker caseloads to improve accessibility and support when such issues arise.</p> <p>The new processes have seen the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduced waiting times for emotional support to the child and carer. - Completion of specialist assessments to inform care planning, contributing to placement stability. <p>Our Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) measure is in line with the England average at 16.</p>	<p>Revised CAMHS contract to be in place by April 2018.</p> <p>Development of Mistle project as part of Care Placement Strategy to support most challenging young people in care to successfully experience family-based placements by summer 2018.</p>	Head of Service Children in Care – Nicci Collins

Ref.	Ofsted Recommendation	Progress RAG	Targets	Outturn Performance 2016/17	Performance Q2 17 or month	Target March 18	Target 2020	Evidence of Completion or Evidence of Progress by September 2017	Further Actions in progress	Lead Officer
9.	Ensure that all children looked after who go missing are offered a return home interview and that information gained from all such interviews is used to inform risk management and shared intelligence.	G	<p>Performance shows reducing number of young people who repeatedly go missing. High completion of return interviews and evidence of these informing plans leads to a reduction in missing episodes, so helping to keep young people safe.</p> <p>Measure The number of young people going missing reduces.</p> <p>Take up of young people undertaking a return home interview (all young people and Children in Care).</p>	<p>Whole year: data for Leicester shire children</p> <p>LAC: 77% RI's completed</p> <p>Non LAC: 80% RI's completed</p> <p>Total for LAC and non LAC: 80% RI's completed</p>	<p>Q2 data for Leicester shire children</p> <p>LAC: 72 69% RI's completed.</p> <p>Non LAC: 92% RI's completed.</p> <p>Total for LAC and non LAC: 84% RI's completed</p>	90%	95%	<p>This work is led by the Child Sexual Exploitation team. All return interviews are now completed by the Listening and Support Service, showing improved percentage of the timeliness of completion and quality. All children looked after who go missing are offered a return home interview. Current take up is 77% (Sept 2017). The remaining percentage is made up of young people who refuse the interview and interviews with some children placed in the County Council area by other Local Authorities (LAs). This latter area remains problematic. The following seeks to address this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Assistant Director receives weekly reports on all missing young people and completed return home interviews. Any necessary action is taken. - a standard letter from the Director has been devised. This is sent by the Assistant Director to any Local Authority who do not meet their responsibility - improved protocols for children that go missing more than 3 times in a 90 day period have been tightened. - monitoring of children who go missing has been refreshed to better inform risk management and shared intelligence. - the Missing policy and procedures have been updated on the LSCB website and promoted at a number of large events. - Monthly reports provided for Lead Member who provides challenge to work completed - programme oversight by the Child Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking Operation Group 	<p>The performance data for Q2 2017 currently demonstrates a reduction in the % of Return Interviews (RI) being completed for LAC. The RI's not completed (22 episodes) can be attributed to 11 individuals; 9 of these missing episodes can be attributed to 2 individuals. These 9 episodes took place at significant periods of change in their lives and work has been completed with them regarding their vulnerabilities whilst being considered a missing person. To date there has not been any further missing episodes for one of the individuals. We are confident going forward that we can achieve the targets identified in this report. We have formulated a plan to take this forward and improve the outcomes/figures for every looked after child who is reported as a missing person. Work will be completed with the relevant Children's teams to review the complex cases with a view to completing an audit of the cases of children who are repeatedly reported as a missing person to measure timeliness and impact of RI. Work will be completed with the relevant professionals regarding the importance of completing return interviews and with the children to reduce their missing episodes. Continue work to address completion of return interviews with children placed in Leicestershire by other LAs (ongoing).</p>	<p>Head of Service Field Social Work – Anita Gurry</p> <p>Service Manager Child Sexual Exploitation – Donna Smalley</p>

Ref.	Ofsted Recommendation	Progress RAG	Targets	Outturn Performance 2016/17	Performance Q2 17 or month	Target March 18	Target 2020	Evidence of Completion or Evidence of Progress by September 2017	Further Actions in progress	Lead Officer
10.	Ensure that, when a child in need plan relating to a child who has disabilities is reviewed, it reflects an up-to-date assessment, informed by the voice of the child and undertaken by a qualified and registered social worker.	A	<p>Disabled children who require a child in need assessment to support their plan have these undertaken, updated and reviewed by a qualified social worker.</p> <p>Measure Audit of CIN cases in the Disabled Children's Service (DCS) demonstrate that assessments and reviews are completed by a qualified social worker, there is a current good quality assessment and the assessment is informed by the voice of the child.</p> <p>Overall good or outstanding</p>	33% (Mar 17)	Available Dec 2017	100%	100%	<p>The review of cases is completed by a qualified social worker and a framework overseen by the interim Service Manager is in place to ensure that assessments are current and informed by the voice of the child. A formal audit was completed in March 2017 that indicated progress on quality was still required as only 3 of 9 cases met the Good grading. The follow up audit in December is expected to demonstrate much improved case recording and quality.</p> <p>Since August 2017 there is a clear direction that all CIN cases, especially the ones managed under the review system will have an up to date assessment, and review by end of December 2017.</p>	<p>Audit due end of December 2017 to review change in process.</p> <p>There has been a cohort of cases identified which will need to be stepped down to Early Help services to ensure appropriate support is provided to families based on threshold of need. These cases will cease to remain CIN. By January 2018, all cases held within DCS will have an up to date assessment prior to their CIN reviews.</p>	Head of Service SEND and Children with Disabilities – Tom Common
11.	Ensure that support plans for special guardians and adopters are informed by a clear assessment of children's and carers'/parents' long-term needs and that good-quality specialist post-order support is made available to those affected by adoption and special guardianship when, and for however long, it is needed.	A	<p>Evidence of a support plan on all cases that is informed by a clear assessment, outlining support to help the young person achieve good outcomes and minimising placement breakdown / disruption.</p> <p>Measure Quality of support plans for Special Guardianship Order (SGO) and adoption orders have improved.</p> <p>Quality assurance by the Agency Decision Maker, evidences quality support plans to address long term needs so reducing the risk of placement breakdown.</p>		*	100%	100%	<p>A refreshed SGO process is now in place. In the last 12 months, 45 young people were discharged from care onto an SGO, an increase of 29 when compared to the point of inspection.</p> <p>Post-adoption support offer has been refreshed alongside a range of accessible resources developed for carers. Increased capacity has been put in place with the establishment of a permanent post.</p> <p>In addition, a pamphlet for independent advice to birth parents is now in place, a dedicated post-adoption support worker has been employed and our first adoption newsletter is about to be published (Nov 2017)</p> <p>A policy on post-adoption support is included as part of our local procedures and this will be used to develop further staff guidance.</p> <p>*Performance report in development. Manual audit by Team Manager shows support plans are in place. Further audits required to ensure consistently good quality.</p>	<p>An audit of post-adoption plans is due to take place. In addition, feedback will be sought from adopters in receipt of services from the adoption service to evaluate the impact of the first 6 months of implementation of the new offer.</p> <p>Audit to take place on SGO support plans.</p> <p>Adoption website updated with new material.</p> <p>A micro-site to support SGO's to be made available.</p> <p>Revised CAMHS contract to be in place by April 2018.</p> <p>Recruitment to SGO social worker is currently underway.</p>	Head of Service Children in Care – Nicci Collins

Ref.	Ofsted Recommendation	Progress RAG	Targets	Outturn Performance 2016/17	Performance Q2 17 or month	Target March 18	Target 2020	Evidence of Completion or Evidence of Progress by September 2017	Further Actions in progress	Lead Officer
12.	Improve the quality and management oversight of pathway planning and ensure consistency in the quality of advice and support provided by personal advisers to care leavers. This should include information about entitlements and provision of health histories.	A	<p>All young people in care aged 16+ have a pathway plan in place that is based on assessment of need. Thus ensuring a young person is supported in education, employment and training and in suitable accommodation.</p> <p>Measure Up-to-date pathway plan in place.</p> <p>Independent Reviewing Officers to quality assure plans.</p> <p>Care leavers in suitable accommodation.</p> <p>'In contact figure' (relevant and former relevant).</p>	<p>manual</p> <p>79.3%</p> <p>90%</p>	<p>50%*</p> <p>91.8% (Sept 17)</p> <p>81.5%</p>	<p>95%</p> <p>92%</p> <p>90%</p>	<p>100%</p> <p>95%</p> <p>90%</p>	<p>Service restructure with additional resources agreed has seen good progress made with over 90% of pathway plans showing updates in the last 6 months. There are still 77 which require updating by the end of March 2018</p> <p>*The CiC Manager completed a full audit of Pathway Plans and confirmed that we have achieved 50% completion. There are 77 Pathway Plans that require updating by the end of March 2018, in line with the review cycle. 5 additional Personal Assistants (PAs) are now in post (October 2017) to support this area of work.</p> <p>The target for Pathway Plan completion is set at 100%, however there are young people who refuse to engage with their Pathway Plans or the creation of a Plan and this will impact on the figure. Initial indications are that this may equate to 5% of Care Leavers.</p> <p>Care Leavers in Education, Employment and Training data shows our figure of 48.5% to be higher than statistical neighbours and Care Leavers in suitable accommodation has sustained high performance at 91.8%, which is 11 percentage points above statistical neighbours.</p> <p>A practice summit on care leavers was held in July 2017 that sought to establish consistency in applying standards. The NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) Strategy has been reviewed to ensure a focus on care leavers.</p> <p>"In contact" reflects the frequency with which the LA is in touch with a care leaver – there is no set timescale for "in contact" and it is driven by need reflected in the Pathway Plan. Tracking of this data set is further complicated by: In contact no longer has to be with the PA can be another professional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care Leavers who refuse contact It not being based on full year figure but 2 months before and 1 month after the birth date. <p>The current report reflects a high number of 'null' returns for in contact reflecting the complexity of recording data. The manual confirmation of "in contact" completed by the CiC Service Manager and quality assurance of information on Mosaic, confirms 'in-contact' of 88.2% for September or an average of 81.5% for quarter 2. The new 16+ Team in CiC has been established, staff recruited and cases transferred to that team. This will enable focused, strategic work to improve outcomes for care leavers and will improve accountability.</p>	<p>Application of social networking and other technological platforms available to increase the 'in contact' figure. (March 2018)</p> <p>Service Manager will prioritise:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Setting parameters of the 'In contact' report Ensuring data is accurately recording in Mosaic (ensuring staff have clear instructions) (March 2018) 	Head of Service Children in Care – Nicci Collins

Ref.	Ofsted Recommendation	Progress RAG	Targets	Outturn Performance 2016/17	Performance Q2 17 or month	Target March 18	Target 2020	Evidence of Completion or Evidence of Progress by September 2017	Further Actions in progress	Lead Officer
13.	Ensure that practice for children who are subject to private fostering arrangements meets statutory requirements and that all staff and partners know how to recognise and notify a private fostering arrangement.	A	<p>Young people under 16 years who are living outside of immediate family, in the line with legislation, are identified and have appropriate plans in place.</p> <p>Measure Increased identification of Private Fostering arrangements</p> <p>Assessments completed in timescale.</p>					<p>Despite sustained work to address this area, numbers remain low (5). This is a national problem and numbers in other LAs are low. However, the following have been identified to support the work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Private Fostering Strategy In place - Identify Private Fostering champion in Strengthening Families team to work across teams to improve practice 	Work underway to raise awareness across the County and ensure improved identification. March 2018	Head of Service Children in Care – Nicci Collins
14.	Improve assessment and care planning for children on the edge of care or returning home, or with complex needs requiring a period of intensive intervention (which may include Residential Care) so that it is clear how positive change is to be achieved and sustained.	A	<p>All children on edge of care have a clear plan of action for supporting them at home / in placement.</p> <p>Measure</p> <p>Placement stability rate (3+ placements in the last year)</p> <p>Long term stability - same placement >2 yrs.</p>	8.1%	7.6% (Sept 17)	7.5%	7%	<p>As part of our Permanency Campaign we have focussed on strengthening Edge of Care arrangements, and helping returns to birth families. A review of our Edge of Care model and service has been completed and a new model is currently under consideration. Our Dedicated Placements Support Team (DPST) has provided support so that 3 young people remained at home with their parents after previously entering care. Excluding older children who moved to independent living, around 37% of discharges from care have been a return home, which is better than both statistical neighbours and the England average. A recent audit on children entering care identified 14 of 17 assessments graded as Good and 7 of 14 having plans graded as Good.</p> <p>A review of Strengthening Families role is underway as part of the Care Placement Strategy.</p> <p>The Dedicated Placement Support Team was introduced in June 2016. They have worked intensively with 47 children, their carer's and at times, their parents. Of these, they have successfully enabled 35 children to remain in their foster placements, return home or leave residential care.</p>	<p>Remodelling of the offer in Strengthening Families to take place to strengthen the offer to those children and young people on the edge of care. (December 2017)</p> <p>Work across Strengthening Families and Early Help to provide targeted support to support families in crisis (Feb 2018)</p> <p>Develop family networks model (SOS training) to identify support by summer 2018.</p>	Head of Service Field Social Work – Anita Gurry

Ref.	Ofsted Recommendation	Progress RAG	Targets	Outturn Performance 2016/17	Performance Q2 17 or month	Target March 18	Target 2020	Evidence of Completion or Evidence of Progress by September 2017	Further Actions in progress	Lead Officer
15.	Comprehensively review the current strategic plan for those young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), to ensure that a higher proportion of care leavers move to sustained education, employment or training.	A	Care Leavers are supported in education, employment or Training. Measure Percentage of care leavers in education, employment and training increases	50.4%	48.5% (Sept 17)	52%	55%	The review of the NEET Strategy has been completed and now includes a focus on care leavers. Underpinning actions like the restructuring of the Children in Care Service, access to Information, Advice and Guidance and collaborative work between the Virtual School (Fox Academy) and Leaving Care Team has progressed and the latest Care Leavers in Education, Employment and Training data shows our figure of 48.5% to be higher than statistical neighbours on the back of 3 years of continuously improving rates.	The quality of Pathway Plans ensures care leavers are well supported into further education, employment or training. The new 16 plus (Leaving Care team) with additional Personal Adviser support is embedded and demonstrates improved pathway planning with young people.	Head of Service Children in Care – Nicci Collins
16.	Ensure that when homeless young people aged 16 and 17 need to be accommodated under section 20 of the Children Act 1989 that this is effected without delay.	A	Homeless young people have their needs assessed and if they require section 20 accommodation, plans and support are immediately in place. Measure Regular audits demonstrate compliance. - Homeless young people aged 16-17 have appropriate assessments of need. - Young people deemed to be section 20 are provided with support in a timely manner.	QA audit	QA audit	System generated reports show 100%	100%	The protocol to accommodate young people aged 16 and 17 under section 20 is in place and will be reviewed regularly. Two audits carried out in 2016/17 showed that 5 out of 17 cases did not meet “good”. The re-audit showed that 100% met “good”.	The protocol to accommodate young people aged 16 and 17 under section 20 to be reviewed annually (Dec 2017) Further audit due to be completed. In Nov/Dec 2017	Head of Service Field Social Work – Anita Gurry

Ref.	Ofsted Recommendation	Progress RAG	Targets	Outturn Performance 2016/17	Performance Q2 17 or month	Target March 18	Target 2020	Evidence of Completion or Evidence of Progress by September 2017	Further Actions in progress	Lead Officer
17.	Ensure that appropriate developmental programmes are in place for experienced and qualified staff, particularly for senior practitioners and first-line managers, and that the assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE) programme is appropriately overseen.	A	<p>The development and embedding of an accredited programme to support social workers at all levels from ASYE through to Senior Practitioners and Team Managers in place. Evidence a strong, stable and well informed professional workforce.</p> <p>Measure Stability of workforce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Turnover rate of staff (FTE) - Number of qualified social workers - Vacancy rate - Number of agency staff 	12.4 215.5	TBC TBC			<p>The Social Work steering group has been re-established and targeted support to ASYE workers began in December 2016. A review of ASYE training was also completed in April 2017 and a new model of training is being prepared. A review of the current learning and development offer for the department is underway to inform a revised offer linked to the knowledge and skills framework for social workers.</p> <p>The first annual social work conference was delivered in June 2017 and information on the reforms and future accreditation was presented to staff. The conference showcased good practice and focused on work on neglect.</p> <p>CFS has also established a practice leaders group known as the Practice Development Group to help ensure staff are influencing and shaping practice development. This group has actively contributed to the development of practice standards for first-line managers, senior managers and practitioners across the workforce.</p> <p>The department has agreed with corporate Learning and Development to provide training for team managers on leadership with one session already delivered and the next one scheduled in December, following the second practitioner conference in November.</p> <p>A new post, the Head of Service Practice Excellence, has been appointed to and will manage the Principal Social Worker and Advanced Practitioners that will be driving this area forward.</p>	<p>Launch consultation on a new social work progression pathway.(April 2018)</p> <p>Legislation April 2017 – still awaiting Government guidance.</p> <p>Development of a robust professional gateway via a progression process and panel arrangement.(September 2018)</p> <p>Using the theme of 'neglect', pilot a learning and development cycle called the 'learning loop', led by the Advanced Practitioners. (September 2018)</p> <p>Agree proposal on 'grow your own' Social Worker approach as part of a Recruitment and Retention strategy (Nov 2017)</p> <p>Agree proposal for recruitment and retention policy. (Nov 2017)</p> <p>Develop a central repository to hold good practice. (Jan 2018)</p>	Head of Service Practice Excellence – Moira O'Hagan